

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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CITY UPDATES



Ken Smythe



Jed Grant



Jim Potts



Noele Riedmann



Kim Mirelez

Police Salute Officers, Employees of the Year: The Visalia Police Department recently honored four individuals for their outstanding service to the Department. The awards are given out on an annual basis. This year’s honorees are:

Ken Smythe, 2012 Officer of the Year: Detective Ken Smythe began his law enforcement career in 1991 with the Visalia Police Department and served as a Patrol Officer, Commercial Police Officer and SWAT Officer. In 1998, he was awarded the Medal of Valor. In 1999, Detective Smythe began his employment with the Tulare County District Attorney's Office where he worked as a Gang Homicide Investigator for 10 years. He also worked with the Tulare Police Department for a short time before returning back to Visalia where he has been for the past 3 ½ years. Since returning, he has worked as a Patrol Officer & Field Training Officer and is currently a Detective with the Violent Crimes Unit.

Jed Grant, 2012 Reserve Officer of the Year: Reserve Officer Jed Grant completed the College of the Sequoias Police Academy in 2009, graduating first in his class. He then joined the Visalia Police Department as a Level 1 Reserve. Reserve Officer Grant volunteers an average of 30 hours each month on Patrol. In addition to answering calls for service, Reserve Officer Grant assists the Reserve Unit with administrative duties. When not volunteering with the Police Department, he works as a Physician Assistant practicing Emergency Medicine.

Jim Potts, 2012 Civilian Employee of the Year: Jim began working with the Visalia Police Department as a Senior Identification Technician in January 2005. He is responsible for handling major crime scenes & processing evidence for fingerprints., and also supervises the Department’s Property & Evidence Unit. He was responsible for the successful implementation of the Digital Image Management System for the storage & retrieval of digital photos and assisted with the implementation of the Department’s Interview Tracker System.

Noele Riedmann, 2012 Records Employee of the Year: Noele has been a Police Records Specialist for the Visalia Police Department’s Records Unit for four years. Her duties include working with the public, handling parking and fix-it-ticket payments and processing vehicle releases and report requests for the public as well as for other agencies. Prior to her employment with the Visalia Police Department, Noele worked in the healthcare industry for 13 years dealing with medical records.

Kim Mirelez, 2012 Communications Operator of the Year : Kim began the first five years of her law enforcement career with the Kingsburg Police Department as a Dispatcher and Reserve Police Officer. In 2000, Kim was hired by the Visalia Police Department and has worked in the Communications Unit for the last 12 years. She has served as a Communications Training Officer, S.W.A.T. Tactical Dispatcher, and as a Senior Communications Operator. She worked several high

S.W.A.T. Tactical Dispatcher, and as a Senior Communications Operator. She worked several high-stress critical incidents during her tenure and is a valuable member of the Communications Unit.

Visalia Fire names EMS Coordinator Firefighter of the Year: Captain Dustin Hall started with the City of Visalia Fire Department in 2000; he was part of the first class of four the fire department sponsored to go to paramedic school and graduated in 2005. He was promoted to the rank of Engineer Paramedic in 2005 and then in 2009 was promoted to the rank of Captain Paramedic. In early 2010, Dustin assumed the roles and responsibilities of EMS Coordinator while working on Engine 51. He has assisted with instructing recruit academies, serves as an adjunct fire instructor with the College of the Sequoias, and was instrumental in establishing the Firefighters for Christ Chapter in the local area. Dustin is a member of the CA Type II Medium Rescue Team and of the Visalia Fire Department Honor Guard.



Dustin Hall

He developed and improved the Emergency Medical Service Program, which oversees all Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics. He has worked with other EMS Coordinators throughout the State to bring the recognized “best practices” to the department. Dustin has worked diligently to improve the training and evaluation that is provided to Paramedics. He is also working with the private ambulance providers to ensure consistency in training and scene management.. Dustin and his wife of 12 years, Corinne, have two daughters, Makaila (11) and Carissa (9). He is a graduate of Reedley High School class of 1994 and is currently in the process of completing his AS degree in fire science and a BA in business.

Building Permits Post Gains in New Single Family Dwellings and New Commercial:

2012 started off with a 4% increase in the total number of permits issued in January as compared to the same month in 2011. Permits for new commercial projects posted the highest gain of 150%. New single family dwellings were up 20%, and an increase of 68% in value compared to the previous year.

COUNCIL MEETING RECAPS

Election Process Task Force Gives Recommendations: Putting a measure on the November ballot which gives Visalians the option of electing Council members by district and increases the number from 5 to 7 were the key recommendations presented by the Election Process Task Force at Monday night’s meeting. Task Force Chairperson Darlene Mata noted that with a population of 125,000, the Task Force felt these were appropriate steps for the City to take. Specific reasons include:

- Significant underrepresented areas in the community, including the Northeast, North Central, and the Southeast;
- Candidates may find running for Council more realistic because of the reduced cost and time commitment associated with running a District-wide campaign;
- Expecting the same number of Council members to represent a community of 125,000 that represented the City 100 years ago when the population was less than 10,000 is unrealistic, and;
- It may result in a more diverse Council makeup (more minorities and women).

It also was the general consensus of the Task Force members that the Council should consider putting a Charter Amendment before the voters in November. In its discussion on the recommendations, Council members agreed that community outreach to gauge the public’s views on moving to district elections was needed. Staff will bring its recommendations on the process to the Feb. 21 regular Council meeting. To read the Task Force’s full report, click [here](#).

Council Moves Forward with Animal Care Campus Project: Council members voted to move forward on the City’s Animal Care Campus Project. While the City of Tulare intends to build its own shelter, the Council approved accepting its animals at the Visalia shelter as long as is reasonably possible. The design of the project will be modified by the architect to reflect Tulare’s decision not to be a part of the new center. Discussions will continue with Dinuba and Exeter, both of which have indicated an interest in considering an agreement for the use of the new facility. For more information, click [here](#).

Other Council Action:

- The City Council voted to recommend to the Tulare County Transportation Authority that Dr. Tom Weise serve as Visalia’s representative on the Measure R Citizen’s Advisory Committee to fill an unexpired term that will end June 30, 2012. Dr. Weise, who has been a volunteer with the SPCA and the Visalia Boys and Girls Club has a specific interest in becoming more involved

- of CH and the Visalia Boys and Girls Club, has a specific interest in becoming more involved with government oriented organizations. He will be eligible to be reappointed.
- The Council received a mid-year report on marketing efforts of the Sequoia Tourism Council during its first six months of operation. The council has garnered the support of the County, six cities, two communities, and the concessionaires for the National Forest Service and the National Parks Service. Local government members will make a contribution based on their Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues with a minimum buy-in of \$1,000, and associate partners are also assessed a \$1,000 fee. Council members also previewed its visitor's guide, supported by \$27,000 in advertising from the tourism industry.

CITY CALENDAR

Mayor to Hold Office Hours, On-Line Chat: Mayor Amy Shuklian will hold her monthly office hours on Wednesday, February 8, and host an on-line chat. Office hours will be held from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall, at 707 W. Acequia Ave., for drop-in visits. For information, contact Gladys Ruiz at 713-4314. From 6 to 7 pm, Mayor Shuklian will participate in an online chat at www.VisaliaTimesDelta.com. She will field comments and questions in real time during the chat, which will then be archived online on the Visalia Times-Delta's website. Those who want to direct questions in advance to Mayor Shuklian can post them online on the Visalia Times-Delta website's Voices and Views page under the Forum labeled "Questions for City Council." You may also email questions to Community Conversation Editor Paul Hurley at phurley@visaliatimesdelta.com.

Council to Hold Annual Retreat Feb. 10-11: The City Council will hold its annual retreat to set its priorities for the coming year Friday and Saturday, Feb. 10-11, at the Hall of Fame Club at Rawhide Stadium. The retreat will be held from noon to 7 p.m. on Friday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday. The retreat is open to the public.

You can now self-subscribe to receive issues of "Inside City Hall". Go to the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, click on About Visalia and go to Inside City Hall Newsletter. For information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or call 713-4535.