

# Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

MARCH 6, 2012



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## City Updates

**Building Permit Numbers Up 7%:** A whopping increase in the number of new commercial projects—up 175% for the first two months of the year—helped boost the total number of permits issued to 436, up 7% over 2011. The number of permits issued for commercial and resident additions and alterations also saw increases of 47% and 10%, respectively. While new single family dwellings saw a drop of 20%, the value was up by 4% with \$5,332,892 for 2012.

## Council Meeting Recaps

**Council Approves Putting Measure on Ballot On Changing from At-Large to District Elections:** Should Council Members be elected by district or continue to be elected at-large? That will be the basis of a measure the Visalia City Council voted to have the City Attorney draft language for to be placed on the November ballot. Community information meetings will be held in the northern and southern areas of the City as well as one at 210 in downtown Visalia. Council requested that interpreters be provided at the meetings. Information booths will be set up at public events, including the Farmers Markets. A one-page informational piece will be developed to distribute at the community events, and a more comprehensive one will be posted on the City's website. The Council-appointed Election Process Task Force made the recommendation earlier this year to place a question regarding moving to district elections on the ballot. The Task Force also recommended asking voters if they wanted to move from five to seven City Council members. That question is still being considered by the City Council.

**Mid-Year Budget Forecasts \$1 million Deficit in 2012/13:** Despite implementing over \$14 million in one-time and on-going solutions over the past four years to reduce costs in the General Fund, its deficit is projected to be \$2.5 million for Fiscal Year 2011/12 and \$1.1 million in FY 2012/13. Sales tax, which along with property revenues drives the General Fund, is up substantially from last year, but still off \$1.5 million from 2006. The City has used up a significant amount of emergency reserves, down to \$5.1 million as of the end of June, 2011. The City Council approved all of the recommendations made, and directed staff to continue to find ways to reduce the FY 2011/12 deficit and bring back a plan with options for FY 12/13 and FY 13/14 that eliminates the ongoing deficit. For the staff report, click [here](#).

## Convention-Visitors Bureau Paints Positive Annual Tourism Picture:

With an investment of \$275,000, the City will see \$1.78 million in direct convention revenues which has or will be booked in the future by the Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCB). The total economic impact, including transient occupancy tax and other revenues, is estimated to be \$8.3 million. To view the VCB's 2011 Annual Report, click [here](#).

## City Calendar





**Road Work Ahead:** The City of Visalia will kick off the Plaza Drive Interchange Project with an informational meeting on Monday, March 12, at the Visalia Holiday Inn, 9000 W. Airport Drive. The meeting will begin with a continental breakfast at 7:15 a.m., followed by a presentation on the road project at 7:30 a.m. The meeting is open to the public, and specifically for students, business owners and commuters who use the Plaza Drive Interchange on a regular basis. You can also join the construction team for community meetings at 7:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Holiday Inn. For questions or concerns, call the 24/7 hotline at 800-688-3732.

**Mayor Hosts Office Hours:** Visalia Mayor Amy Shuklian will hold her regular office hours on Wednesday, March 7, for Visalia residents to discuss issues of concern. Walk-ins are welcome from 5:30 to 6 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall, at 707 W. Acequia Ave. Appointments from 6 to 7 p.m. can be scheduled in advance by contacting Gladys Ruiz at 713-4314.

**Earth Day Includes Mill Creek Clean-up:** Join volunteers to spruce up Mill Creek during Earth Day, from 8 a.m. to noon on Sunday, April 15. The City's Environmental Committee invites families, service and school clubs to participate in the two beautification projects planned for this year's event. Volunteers will help remove trash and recyclables which have collected along the banks of Mill Creek and plant about 300 trees and 600 shrubs along St. John's River just east of Highway 63. To register or for more information, call 713-4531 or visit [www.GoGreenVisalia.com](http://www.GoGreenVisalia.com).

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