

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

VOLUME 11

May 6, 2009

COUNCIL APPROVES STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS ON FEMA

FLOODPLAIN MAPS: On a 5-0 vote, City Council members approved staff recommendations and options regarding the upcoming implementation of the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, which take effect June 16. The recommendations approved:

- Identify areas within the community which could be shown to be above the Base Flood Elevations (BFE) and to solicit proposals from engineering firms to provide the appropriate data at competitive costs to citizens seeking to determine whether or not their properties are above the BFE.
- Evaluate the various FEMA breach scenarios and identify potential cost-effective options to prevent or reduce the impact of potential flooding which could remove additional parcels within the City from the Special Flood Hazard Areas.
- Work with the County to potentially share staff resources and costs and explore the possibility of activating existing levee districts or create a flood protection agency to effectively govern the management of levees and other flood control structures.
- Establish an informal steering committee to deal with floodplain related issues.
- Write a letter to Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, and Congressman Devin Nunes requesting them to sponsor legislation to establish a mechanism to 'return' a portion of the flood insurance premiums to fund local flood control projects.
- The City Attorney will evaluate matters related to due process, notification during the review period, and proper peer review.

RIBBON CUTTING/OPEN HOUSE SET FOR VISALIA'S NEWEST FIRE

STATION: The official ribbon cutting for Visalia Fire Station No. 55 will take place at 10 a.m. Friday, May 8, at 6921 W. Ferguson. The event includes a short ceremony and light refreshments. The Fire Station also will be open for the community to tour the facility and meet many of the firefighters who work at the station. This station and training facility was funded through "Measure T", the quarter cent sales tax that was passed by Visalia voters in March, 2004. On Saturday, May 9th, the Fire Department will hold an Open House from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to allow citizens to observe fire department personnel perform training drills in the new facility. In addition, there will be a bounce house and hot dogs for the children. The City's Fire Department began operation from its newest Fire Station on April 1st. Fire Station #55 is located at 6921 W Ferguson in the northwest portion of the city, and this station will help to reduce fire and emergency medical response times in this area of the city by approximately 30 percent. The new 7,288-square-foot Fire Station will house a full service paramedic engine company as well as the City's hazardous materials response team. The 6,832 square-foot "state of the art" training facility will allow fire personnel to train in realistic scenarios.

EARTH DAY RESULTS: The April 25 Earth Day event drew 125 volunteers who cleaned up 1,940 pounds of wood and 2,920 pounds of trash from the Mill Creek clean-up, planted 31 trees in Plaza park along Baseball Diamond No. 1, and used 5 gallons of paint to cover about a half-mile of graffiti along Santa Fe Street north of Houston Avenue. About 50 "Do Not Dump—Drains to Creek" placards were placed along storm drains during the cleanup along Mill Creek.

WORK ON SANTA FE OVERCROSSING CONTINUES: Regular updates will be provided as work progresses and significant aspects of the project occur. Agee Construction is the General Contractor hired by the City of Visalia to do the work on the Santa Fe Overcrossing. The resident engineer is David Vallejos with Mendoza and Associates. The project manager for the City of Visalia is Fred Lampe.

Timeline for the next two weeks:

- **Week of May 4-May 8:** Most of the construction will be on Highway 198. Work will include clearing slopes, removing oleanders and metal guard rail. Concrete drainage pipe will be installed in the median.
- **Week of May 11-May 15:** Construction on Highway 198 will include both daytime and nighttime work. Removal of the existing bridge decking will be done at night and will cause highway lane closures and elevated noise levels.

Construction of the City of Visalia's Santa Fe Overcrossing Project is completely funded by Measure-R, a Tulare County tax initiative which provides local funding for transportation projects. For more information concerning this project, please contact City of Visalia Project Manager Fred Lampe at (559) 713-4270.

VISALIA POLICE OFFICER RECEIVES 'HERO AWARD' FROM MADD:

On Saturday April 18th, Visalia Police Officer Bryan Pinto was awarded a "California Hero Award" by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.) for his DUI enforcement efforts throughout 2008. During 2008, Officer Pinto arrested 57 drunk drivers in the City of Visalia. Due to his extreme dedication, Officer Pinto was recently selected to be the Visalia Police Department DUI Instructor. Approximately 100 different Law Enforcement Agencies from throughout the state attended the Sacramento event which was sponsored by M.A.D.D., The California Office of Traffic Safety, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Association. The Visalia Police Department currently has three grants involving DUI enforcement. The grants cover DUI check points, saturation details, DUI warrant details, and county wide DUI consolidation efforts. These grants are provided through the California Office of Traffic Safety. In 2008 the Visalia Police Department arrested 740 individuals for driving under the influence offenses.



VISALIA'S POPULATION GROWS BY 2.6 PERCENT: The City's population grew by 2.6 percent according to new city and county population data released April 30 by the state Department of Finance. Visalia's total population as of Jan. 1, 2009 was 123,670, compared to 120,543 from Jan. 1, 2008. Woodlake, which added a proportionally large number of new housing units relative to its overall population size, was the fifth fastest growing city in the state on a percentage basis, increasing 4.1 percent from 7,463 in '08 to 7,769 in '09. The state added 409,000 new residents in 2008 to a total population of 38,293,000 as of Jan. 1, 2009. Fresno replaced Long Beach as the state's fifth largest city, estimated to have 495,913 residents.

BUILDING PERMITS DOWN 31% OVER '08: The total number of permits issued by the City year to date was down 31% over the same time period in 2008. Since Jan. 1, a total of 1,008 permits were issued, compared to 1,466 in 2008.



DARE TO SPARE WEEK MAY 11-15: The City's annual Dare to Spare week is May 11-15, and this year, the Visalia Transit Department is sponsoring a new challenge to get residents involved in sparing our air! During the Challenge Week, groups of 5 will compete against other local groups to see who spared the most. Each day, group leaders from each group will log onto the Dare to Spare website (www.daretospare.com). They can enter in all the ways their group spared the air like taking the bus, walking, riding their bike, carpooling or trip-linking. Each task has a point value assigned to it and the team with the most points at the end of the week wins. Teams must register before May 6. Each registered team member will receive a free VIP VCC Bus Pass allowing unlimited VCC bus rides during Dare to Spare Week. For more information, call Jessica Blanchfield at 260-8759.

SENIOR PRIDE RECOGNIZED BY STATE PARK & RECREATION: The Visalia Parks & Recreation Department recognized the local non-profit organization Senior Pride on May 1 at the California Parks & Recreation Society District VII awards program. The program is held annually to recognize individuals and/or organizations for their contributions toward community Parks and Recreation programs. Senior Pride was recognized for their many years of devoted service and contributions to the seniors of the Visalia Community Center. Senior Pride operates the highly successful Bingo Program at the Visalia Senior Center on Saturdays and several days during the week. Funds generated from the bingo operations are reinvested at the Center or distributed to senior programs throughout the City. Improvements at the Senior Center with these funds include a kitchen remodel, restroom improvements to meet new ADA standards, equipment purchases, and carpeting. Long-time employee Kathe Denny was recognized with an Outstanding Full-time Employee Award. The "Chief Chef" at the Senior Center since 1973, Kathe is responsible for preparing the daily meals served to the seniors. It's estimated she has been responsible for preparing over 1 million meals at the Senior Center. Dan Taylor also was recognized as an Outstanding Volunteer for his longtime services as a Japanese Karate-Do instructor.



MAKE DAD'S DAY: The City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department and the Fresno Grizzlies will be hosting Father's Day at the Ballpark on Friday, June 19. Give your dad an early Father's Day present. There will be fireworks after the game! Also kids and their dads will be able to go on the field following the game. The game begins at 7:05 p.m. Transportation will be provided by a Charter Bus and will be departing around 5 p.m. from the Visalia Senior Center located at 310 N. Locust and returning around 10 p.m. The cost will be \$25 per person, which includes transportation, game ticket, and snacks on the way to the game and back. Space is limited! This event is open to all ages. Register at the Anthony Community Center located at 345 N. Jacob Street. For more information, contact Hugo Felix (559) 713-4528 or email hfelix@ci.visalia.ca.us

CENSUS BUREAU NEWS—ADDRESS CANVASSERS

TAKE TO THE STREETS: The 2010 Census has launched its next operation, Address Canvassing. The preliminary wave began on March 29, and the mass effort was launched on April 6. The entire phase will conclude by June 19. During Address Canvassing, the Census Bureau will put to work about 140,000 people to canvass all known streets and roads throughout the country. The canvassers will identify every living quarter where people live or could potentially live, and verify more than 145 million addresses. Census workers will confirm, add, and delete addresses using a GPS-equipped hand-held computer. Census workers will also update maps by adding new roads.



*Inside City Hall is a publication of the City of Visalia.
For more information, visit the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, email nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or call 713-4535*