

# Inside City Hall

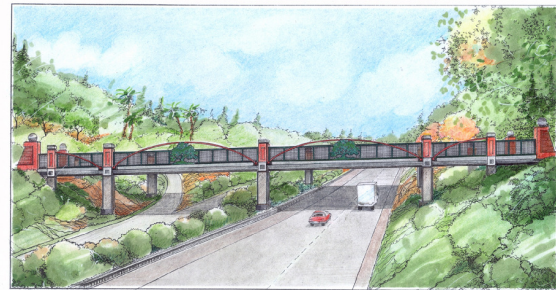
Beyond the headlines

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## **SANTA FE OVERCROSSING TO 'CAPTURE' TIME IN A CAPSULE:** In 50

or 100 years from now, what will Visalians want to know about us and life in Visalia today? The community will have an opportunity to provide items which showcase life in Visalia in 2009. Consideration of items to seal in time capsules in two pillars on the Santa Fe Overcrossing will be done by a committee made up of City of Visalia staff, representatives of local chambers of commerce, the Tulare County Historical Society, and the media. "The bridge itself has so much historical meaning, we thought we'd use the opportunity to capsule life in Visalia in 2009 in the bridge itself," said Deputy City Manager Leslie Caviglia. Some suggested items: essays or drawings from Visalia elementary school children on their vision of what the City will be like 50 and 100 years from now; "what's hot/what's not" lists compiled by local high school students; today's technological advances – Ipods, cell phones, etc. – donated by local businesses; the headlines of 2009; calendars; agricultural highlights; as well as photos and plans of the actual cost of the Santa Fe Overcrossing. Community members are asked to submit photos and descriptions of items they'd like the committee to consider including in the capsule by Sept. 10, via email at [nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us). The selection of items to be placed in the time capsule will be done by committee members. The unique \$5.4 million Santa Fe crossing over Highway 198 will span 120 feet across the freeway and replaces the Santa Fe Railroad crossing that once spanned the freeway. The bridge, with its unique design, will become a feature of travelers along Highway 198 through Visalia. It will be nothing like the bridges that presently cross the highway with its tall pillars. The project is one of Visalia's first using Measure R funds. Measure R was the countywide sales tax hike to provide money for transportation projects throughout Tulare County. The items selected by the committee must be delivered by Sept. 30, to the third floor of the Transit Center, at 425 E. Oak Ave. A "Sealing Party" reception will be held in October, and all of the items selected for the time capsules will be on display for public viewing before they are sealed in the two towers on the Santa Fe Overcrossing. For information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at 713-4535.



**Artist's rendition of the Santa Fe Overcrossing—set to be completed in Spring 2010.**

## **CITY MANAGER APPOINTS COLLEEN MESTAS AS INTERIM POLICE CHIEF; NO RECRUITMENT EFFORT**

**PLANNED:** The Visalia City Council on Monday unanimously supported the City Manager's appointment of Colleen Mestas as the City's interim Police Chief. Chief Mestas, with over 20 years of experience in law enforcement, became the City's Assistant Police Chief on July 7, 2008. The Council approved Mestas' appointment as Interim Police Chief for a period up to six months at an annual salary of \$132,952.37. "As the department looks to restructure its top management, Chief Mestas' broad depth of knowledge and strong leadership and management skills will ease the department



through its transition process,” said City Manager Steve Salomon. There are no plans to recruit for the position. She replaces Police Chief Bob Carden, who along with four other employees in Police Management, made the decision to retire as a result of the incentive program the City Council authorized on July 13. Chief Carden’s last day with the City of Visalia will be Friday, August 28. Salomon said the vacancies will create an opportunity for the Department to reorganize the top management structure to provide long-term budget savings without impacting service to the community. Previously, Chief Mestas had been with the Fresno County Sheriff’s Department since 1988, and was promoted to Captain in 2004. While assigned to the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office, she had oversight for the entire Patrol Operations Bureau, including SWAT, K9, Patrol Detectives, Ag-Task Force and Mounted Patrol. She has worked as Patrol Deputy, a Narcotics Detective, Field Training Officer, Patrol Sergeant, Lieutenant Watch Commander and Area Commander for Fresno’s metropolitan region. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco and a Masters degree in Organizational Behavior from the California School of Professional Psychology. She also is a graduate of the Senior Management Institute for Law Enforcement, graduated from the Marion Bergeson series in public service, and received certification from the Josephson Institute on ethics in law enforcement and police administration.

## **CITY’S MOONEY BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENTS MOVE TOWARD**

**CONSTRUCTION:** Improvements to the Walnut and Whitendale intersections along Mooney Boulevard will widen both streets on the east and west sides with new dual left-turn lanes and increased capacity. The intersection at Walnut also includes the undergrounding of low voltage electrical and communication lines. Engineer estimates for both jobs is about \$4.3 million. In addition 450 street trees will be planted along the sides of Mooney Boulevard using funds from a \$100,000 grant from CSET which must be spent in the next two years. The tree-planting project will be directed by the Urban Tree Foundation. The bidding process for the Whitendale intersection will begin at the end of November, with construction set to start in early January, and the project will be completed by the end of April 2010. This schedule allows paving in warmer weather and avoids additional construction on Mooney during the 2009 holiday season. Revisions to the Walnut intersection are being completed, with approval for construction by Cal Trans expected by the end of this month. Construction work on the intersection is expected to take up 90 to 120 days once undergrounding is completed. The installation of trees is expected to take about 2 to 3 months, depending on the acquisition of easements and right-of-entries from adjacent property owners.

**RAIL LINES FUNDING RAISES CONCERNS:** Requesting more details on the funding commitments of Measure R monies, the City Council delayed voting on the preservation of freight service along an unused 40-mile stretch of railroad in southeast Tulare County. The retention of the rail lines has the potential to provide significant economic development on the east side of the County by providing alternate transportation modes for businesses in that area. There are several risks involved which need to be balanced against the benefits, namely the high cost of acquiring and operating rail lines, the estimated \$20 million in upgrade costs, and the need to acquire a high number of shipments from a limited number of potential users in order to make the operation profitable. Staff expressed concerns to Council that additional monies needed for the upgrade not compromise current programs and projects already committed with Measure R funding.

## **NOMINATION PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR VISALIA CITY COUNCIL,**

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT:** Three City Council and four Visalia Unified School District Board of Education positions are up for election on Nov. 3, 2009. The candidate nomination period opened July 13, and runs until Aug. 7. The nomination period will be extended an additional five days, or until Aug. 12, if an incumbent has not filed. As of Aug. 4, 9 candidates have taken nomina-

tion papers out to file for Council. Of those, five have returned the papers and qualified for the ballot. Six candidates have taken out papers for the School Board, and three of those have returned the papers and qualified for the ballot. Nomination papers can be obtained from the Tulare County Registrar of Voters/Elections Office, at 5951 S. Mooney Blvd., across from Mooney Grove Park. Call the County Elections Office at 733-6275 for more information. Candidates for both City Council and the Visalia Unified School District Trustees are required to file campaign disclosure statements with the City Clerk. Call 713-4512 for more information.

**BUILDING PERMITS DOWN 28% COMPARED TO '08:** A total of 1,846 permits have been issued for 2009, down from 2,564, or 28% from the same time period in 2008. Multi-family unit permits showed the only gain, up from 12 to 15, or 7% as of the end of July. New commercial projects took the biggest dive, down 68%, from 60 to just 19 in comparison for this year. The total valuation of all permits declined 46%, from \$168,425,564 for January-July 2008 to \$90,163,215 for the same period this year.

### **MAKE A SPLASH THIS SUMMER WITH LESSONS, PUBLIC SWIMS:**

Swimming pools will be in full use at Redwood, Mt. Whitney, El Diamante and Golden West high schools offering swim lessons, swim team competition and public swim. Public swim runs through August 10 for only \$1.25 per person Monday through Sunday from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Registration for swim lessons is ongoing until classes are full. Group lessons are \$54 and last two weeks; private lessons last one week and cost \$70 per person. Additional specialized aquatic classes include water polo, diving, lap swim and water wellness. The Family Swim and Movie Night is back by popular demand. This great activity is available for only a \$2 pool admission and a free movie afterward. The event is held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Fridays at Mt. Whitney High School Pool, at 900 S. Conyer. For a list of all summer movies, visit the City of Visalia's website at [www.ci.visalia.ca.us](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us). For information, call (559)-713-4365 or email [hfelix@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:hfelix@ci.visalia.ca.us).

*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](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us), email [nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us) or call 713-4535.*