

# Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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## **DESIGN OF WATER CONSERVATION PLANT UPGRADE MOVES FORWARD:**

**WARD:** The Visalia City Council authorized staff to proceed with design plans to the City's Water Conservation Plant and to pursue additional funding for the projected \$98.6 million in improvements. The upgrades, which will allow wastewater to be reused, will be completed in 2012. The cost is expected to be covered by grants, incentives, anticipated financing through state loans, and an increase in monthly sewer fees approved by Council in June. The current rate of \$18.80 a month will increase incrementally to \$26.40 by July, 2012, still well below rates charged by other cities in the South San Joaquin Valley. The new design is based on a "membrane bioreactor" that eliminates filters while effectively disinfecting wastewater. The treated water can then be reused for sprinkler and drip-irrigation systems, and can also help deal with the City's critical groundwater issues.

## **COUNCIL APPROVES CONTRACT FOR GENERAL PLAN CONSULTANT:**

**ANT:** The City Council authorized staff to execute a contract with Dyett & Bhatia in an amount not to exceed \$1,129,205 for preparation of a General Plan Update and Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The City Council also approved staff to negotiate a separate contract for a detailed Mooney Blvd. Corridor Study. This project has a Council approved allocation of \$962,500 from the 2008/09 and 2009/10 fiscal year budgets derived from \$860,000 in General Fund unrestricted funds and \$102,500 from the Parks & Facilities fund. An additional \$193,000 for the project will come from General Plan Maintenance Fees. The overall project will involve extensive community stakeholders' outreach over the estimated 36- to 48-month-long process. The 22-member General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC) will maintain active citizen and stakeholder oversight of the process until the new General Plan, Program EIR, and special studies are finally approved by the City Council.

**OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:** The Council approved awarding a contract for \$79,250 to RCC Consultants to conduct a County-wide Consolidated Dispatch Implementation Study as a result of a partnership with City of Visalia and Tulare County agencies. The City's portion is \$31,800, roughly 40 percent of the total amount . . . Approved awarding a contract for \$388,122.33 for the purchase of nine (9) new marked Police patrol vehicles from Surroz Motors Inc., and . . . Voted 5-0 to prohibit aggressive solicitation, while delaying enforcement of a restriction on camping in non-designated areas for 60 days.

**VICE MAYOR TO HOLD MONTHLY OFFICE HOURS:** Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian will begin holding monthly office hours in January to allow the public to meet and discuss issues one-on-one. Monthly office hours will begin Wednesday, Jan. 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall, at 707 W. Acequia Ave., and will continue the first Wednesday of the month. "While I believe the public's best opportunity to seek the help of the City Council is to attend a bi-weekly City Council meeting and speak during public comment, I want to make myself available



for one-on-one interaction,” said Shuklian. She can be reached through 713-4400, then enter 8313, or by email at [ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us). You also can receive information and updates from Vice Mayor Shuklian through Facebook. During the monthly office hours, the first hour, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. will be a time for drop-in visits, and appointments can be scheduled in advance for the second hour, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, contact Office Assistant Gladys Ramirez at 713-4314.

**REFUSE SERVICE CHANGES FOR HOLIDAYS:** Residential refuse service normally picked up on Thursday, Dec. 24 and 31 will be picked up on Wednesday, Dec. 23 and 30. Service normally picked up on Friday, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1, will be picked up on Thursday, Dec. 24 and 31. Commercial refuse will run one day late for Friday service. Commercial service normally provided on Friday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> will be provided on Saturday, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>. City of Visalia business offices will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> on furlough, and Friday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> in observance of the holidays. The Solid Waste office will be open on Thursday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>. Information: 713-4500.

**PARK AND RECREATION RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEES FOR OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE IN 2009:** A number of Parks & Recreation Department employees were recognized for outstanding public service for 2009 at the annual Holiday luncheon held on Wednesday, December 9, at the Anthony Community Center. The Employees of the Year were recognized for both their external and internal customer service skills; ability to work in an efficient and productive manner on a consistent basis; promoting and facilitating a positive work environment; providing suggestions and ideas for improving the department; and overall, somebody who is passionate about their work and loyal to the community of Visalia. Vincent Elizondo, Director of Parks & Recreation for the Department stated, “What really makes these awards meaningful to the employees is that the selection was made by their fellow employees. Being selected by your peers is a great honor.” Employees of the Year were **John Bradley**, Recreation Supervisor in the Recreation Division; **Melissa Tracy**, Senior Office Assistant in Parks & Urban Forestry; **Heidi Conant** and **Trinidad Ramirez**, part-time in Recreation; and **Kevin Mayes** and **Eliseo Martinez**, part-time in Parks & Urban Forestry.

**RECYCLE YOUR HOLIDAY TREES:** From Dec. 26 through Jan. 10, you can recycle your holiday trees free of charge at any one of nine locations in the City. Drop-off locations: SaveMarts at Campus and Demaree and Akers and Goshen; College of the Sequoias Farm; Food 4 Less at 2025 N. Dinuba Blvd.; Neighborhood Church at 5505 W. Riggan Avenue; Parkside Chapel at 3200 W. Walnut Ave.; the parking lot at St. Johns and Lovers Lane; the northwest parking area behind Sequoia Mall; and Sierra Baptist Church at 1437 E. Walnut Ave. Please remove all ornaments, lights, tinsel, and stands. These events are for holiday trees only. For information, call the City of Visalia Natural Resource Conservation Division at 713-4532 or go to [www.GoGreenVisalia.com](http://www.GoGreenVisalia.com).

**BEN MADDOX WIDENING ‘ON THE MOVE’:** A groundbreaking ceremony for the Ben Maddox Widening project will be held on Friday, January 8, at 10 a.m. at the northeast corner of Ben Maddox Way and Noble Avenue. In case of rain, the ceremony will be held at the Visalia Ford Showroom at 1300 E. Mineral King Ave. The project is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and funder funds from SAFETEA-LU, the Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users, and local funding including Measure R.

**PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT UPDATES:** Work continues over the holidays on two major Public Works Road projects: Santa Fe Overcrossing and the Houston Avenue Widening and Round-

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about.

**Timeline on the Houston Roundabout Project:**

**Week of Dec. 21-Dec 25:** The connections to the roundabout from NE 3<sup>rd</sup> and Santa Fe Street will remain closed. Santa Fe Street will remain closed to through traffic between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Houston Avenue. Houston Avenue traffic will split at the roundabout with westbound traffic directed around the north side and eastbound traffic directed around the south. Traffic could be affected around the roundabout as work is done on the ADA crosswalks through the median islands. Sidewalks on Houston will be closed until concrete work is done. Traffic signal work could take place as well as electrical work for new street lights.

**Week of Dec. 28-Jan 1:** The connections to the roundabout from NE 3<sup>rd</sup> and Santa Fe Street will remain closed. Construction detours will be signed to direct traffic around closures. Traffic controls and posted Construction Zone speeds to remain in effect on Houston Avenue.

**Timeline on the Santa Fe Overcrossing Project:**

**Week of Dec. 21-Dec. 25:** Entrance towers on the south side of the bridge are scheduled to be poured along with concrete traffic barriers on the bridge deck. Guard rails will be installed on Highway 198. All work will be done in the daylight hours. Highway 198 ramp closures are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Wednesday for the eastbound Court Street onramp and the westbound Court Street offramp. All work will be done during daylight hours.

**Week of Dec. 28-Jan. 1:** Forms for concrete planters will be constructed on Santa Fe Street. Landscaping is to be installed on Highway 198 slopes and in the median. Highway 198 ramp closures are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Wednesday for the eastbound Court Street onramp and the westbound Court Street offramp. All work will be done in daylight hours.

*Have a Happy and Safe Holiday!*