



COUNCIL CONSIDERS LOCAL STIMULUS OPTIONS: The City Council heard from City staff and Chamber and Building Association representatives on options to stimulate the local economy—everything from impact fee waivers to a “buy Visalia” campaign. Council members urged continued discussions, including the legal ramifications of waiving existing impact fees in the city, and to bring recommendations to the City’s 15-member Citizens Advisory Committee. The committee is expected to provide Council feedback on the stimulus plan at the April 5 Council meeting following a joint meeting with the Visalia Planning Commission. All Council members expressed support of streamlining the building permit process by putting them on-line and providing an on-line tracking of the permit processing. Concerns were raised by three Council members about the Chamber’s recommendation to waive impact fees for residential, commercial and industrial projects initiated during the next 12 months. Mayor Bob Link wants to create a builder-friendly atmosphere to stimulate new jobs, but opposed the Chamber’s idea of providing gift cards. Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian and Council Member Steve Nelsen also expressed reservations about the Chamber’s proposal of fee suspensions, while Council Members Mike Lane and Warren Gubler expressed support of the proposal.

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU BRINGS BIG PROFITS WITH SMALL INVESTMENT FROM CITY: The City Council learned about the \$1.5 million in business in 2009-10 brought into the City by the Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau—almost five times the \$239,000 investment in the Bureau approved last year. The Great Western Fan Festival, a nationally known gospel-music event is coming to the Visalia Convention Center April 29-May 1, bringing with it 3,000 fans and generating about \$800,000 to the local economy. Convention participants in Visalia spend, on average, \$236 per day. In addition to bringing the “Fanfest” to Visalia, the bureau also was instrumental in getting the Amgen Tour of California professional cycling race to select Visalia as a Stage Start city not once, but twice. Amgen returns this year, with the Stage 5 Start on Thursday, May 20, on Main Street in downtown Visalia. This year’s stage will go through Exeter, Lindsay and Porterville and, once again, showcase the City as a tourism designation.

CSET TO HOLD WORKSHOPS FOR THOSE FACING FORECLOSURE: A new resource is available to Tulare County homeowners to address common questions relating to mortgages and foreclosures. The information from this workshop will help families understand the foreclosure process, what its implications are, and ways to avoid the issue all together. The first workshop will be held at 9 a.m. Saturday, March 20th at 312 NW 3rd Avenue in Visalia. “This new workshop series is aimed at homeowners who prefer to prevent foreclosure actions, or for those who are in the very early stages of foreclosure”, said Lily Rivera-Graves, Director of Energy and Housing for CSET. During the 2-hour workshop, attendees will receive information about common lending terms and the best ways to communicate with lenders. Presenters will explain what happens to loans that become delinquent and will explain the timeline for the foreclosure process. Also included will be mortgage solution options including refinancing, possible loan modifications and repayment plans. To receive the full benefit from the workshop, residents should bring in a household budget. CSET staff can make recommendations

based on a family's individual situation. To sign up for the workshop or to learn dates of future workshops, please call CSET at (599) 741-4646.

PARK UPDATE: The Visalia Parks and Recreation Department continues to upgrade park playgrounds throughout Visalia in 2010. The most recent renovations included the installation of new tot lot equipment at Blain Park (attached photos) located on South Court and Parkview in south Visalia. The new playground equipment was opened to the public on February 19. The City has spent over \$500,000 in playground renovations over the past six-months in Houk, Fairview, Jefferson, Summers, Whitedale, Village, and Pinkham Parks. Funding comes from a State grant awarded to the City several years ago. Outdated wooden equipment has been replaced with new ADA accessible equipment that will provide enjoyment for younger children through a variety of new and safe playground toys. Additionally, new bark has been placed in playgrounds replacing the old sand lots. For more information regarding park renovation projects call the Parks Division at 559-713-4384. To reserve a park picnic area, please contact the Recreation Division at 559-713-4365.

FIX A LEAK WEEK IS MARCH 15-21: Did you know that an American home can waste, on average, more than 10,000 gallons of water every year due to running toilets, dripping faucets, and other household leaks? Nationwide, more than 1 trillion gallons of water leak from U.S. homes each year. That's why the EPA's WaterSense is promoting "Fix a Leak Week:" from March 15 to 21, to remind all citizens to check their plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks. For more information, go to: http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/fix_a_leak.html.

CITY TO HOLD PASSPORT FAIR: The City of Visalia is hosting a Passport Fair on Saturday, March 27, from 10 am until 3 pm at City Hall West, 707 W. Acequia Ave., to provide passport information to U.S. citizens and to accept passport applications. U.S. citizens must present a valid passport book when entering or re-entering the United States by air. U.S. citizens entering the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda at land borders and sea ports of entry must present a passport book, passport card, or other travel documents approved by the U.S. government. Information on the cost and how to apply for a U.S. passport is available at travel.state.gov. U.S. citizens may also obtain passport information by phone, in English and Spanish, by calling the National Passport Information Center toll-free at 1-877-487-2778.

CITY SEEKS APPLICATIONS FOR COMMITTEES, COMMISSION

VACANCIES: The City of Visalia is accepting applications from interested citizens for its City committees. The following committees currently have vacancies:

- **Citizen's Advisory Committee** – Acts as a liaison between the general public and the City Council concerning community issues. The Committee has openings for three alternate members.
- **Disability Advocacy Committee** – advises the City on the needs of disabled people. The committee promotes physical, social, communication and attitudinal access for every citizen of Visalia. The Committee currently has three regular member vacancies and two alternate member vacancies.
- **Environmental Committee** – heightens environmental awareness and conservation in Visalia. Issues addressed include air quality, hazardous waste, recycling, water conservation and all other natural resources. The Committee currently has one alternate member vacancy.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee** – serves as a liaison between the City and the North Visalia community. The Committee has openings for two regular members.
- **Parks & Recreation Commission** – advises the City Council and City staff in matters pertaining to parks, playgrounds and recreation centers. The Commission currently has one alternate vacancy.

- **Transit Advisory Committee** – researches and analyzes the community’s continuing transit needs, reviews operations, markets the transit program and makes recommendations about the business affairs of the transit system. The Committee currently has two vacancies for regular members and two vacancies as alternate members.
 - **Waterways and Trails Committee** – Advises on matters related to the Bikeway Master Plan and the Waterway and Trail Master Plan. Advocate for policies, programs, and projects that enhance bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, reviews projects, and advocates to secure additional resources. The Committee currently has four regular member vacancies.
- Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and kept for a period of two years. If you have further questions you may visit our website www.ci.visalia.ca.us “Committees/Commissions” to view the informational handbook and application or you may contact the City Clerk’s Office (559) 713-4512.

MEASURE T DISCUSSION ON MARCH 19: Administrative Services Director Eric Frost, Visalia Fire Chief Mark Nelson and Visalia Police Captain Rick Haskill will discuss Measure T, including the proposed fire station in southwest Visalia, at the Visalia Chamber’s March session of “A Dialogue Among Leaders” at 7:30 a.m. Friday, March 19, at Marie Callender’s. One of the goals of the Chamber in 2010 is to increase the amount of dialogue which occurs between our members and those who are in leadership positions in our community. Each month, a different official participates in an ongoing series of informal discussions about current events facing the city and local businesses. For more information and to register for the session, call the Visalia Chamber at 734-5876 or register online at www.visaliachamber.org.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT UPDATES

CENTER AVENUE: The work consists of installing new landscape curbs along the south side of Center Avenue, between Bridge and Conyer Streets. There will also be irrigation mains installed along this area, to serve the planter islands. Generally, work will commence on the east end of the project, at Bridge street, and proceed west in 2 block construction segments. The south travel lane (westbound) and adjacent parking will be impacted with this project. The City of Visalia project manager is Rebecca Keenan.

Timeline for the next two weeks:

Week of March 14 – March 20: Pavement will be placed in the trenches located between Bridge and Court Streets. This work will take approximately 1 day, depending on the weather. Later in the week, the Contractor will set up forms and pour curbs in the segment between Locust and Floral. There may be some concrete and pavement trucks in the area related to this work.

Week of March 21 - March 27: Work will continue west along Center Avenue. The areas to be impacted by work this week will be between Floral Street and Willis Street, in two-block increments.

HOUSTON ROUNDABOUT AND WIDENING: Crawford Construction is the General Contractor hired by the City of Visalia to do the work on the Houston Avenue project. The resident engineer is Adam Ennis with the City of Visalia. The project manager for the City of Visalia is Michael Carr.

Timeline for the next two weeks:

Week of March 15 to March 19: Houston Avenue will be paved between Burke and Ben Maddox on Monday. Traffic will be shifted as needed to the north or south side of Houston Avenue. Reconstruction and pave-out of the west side of the Houston/Ben Maddox intersection is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday with traffic moved to the single inside lane for southbound Ben Maddox traffic. The signal will be set to the flashing red, 4-way stop mode during construction hours. The connections to the roundabout from NE 3rd and Santa Fe Street will be reopened when striping and signage are completed. Traffic controls and posted Construction Zone speeds are to remain in effect on Houston Avenue until striping is complete and while traffic signal loops are installed.

Week of March 22 to March 26: Southern California Edison (SCE) should be installing street lights. Signing, striping and signal loops should be completed, and all streets coming into the roundabout will be opened to traffic by the end of the week. Southern Work to install cobblestones within the median on Ben Maddox from Sweet to Buena Vista should occur with the left-hand northbound lane closed.

SANTA FE OVERCROSSING: 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 March 15 to March 19: Work on decorative concrete features, fencing and architectural trim will continue. Highway 198 ramp closures are scheduled from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday, for the eastbound Court Street onramp and the westbound Court Street offramp. All work will be done in the daylight hours.

Week of March 22 to March 26: Cleaning exposed concrete along with installation of fencing and architectural features are scheduled for this week. Highway 198 ramp closures are scheduled from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday, for the eastbound Court Street onramp and the westbound Court Street offramp. All work will be done during daylight hours.

Save the Date for Santa Fe Overcrossing Dedication



Dedication of the Santa Fe Bridge/State Route 198 Overcrossing & Sealing of the 50- and 100-year Time Capsules



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