

COUNCIL DISCUSSES BUDGET PROCESS: In a biennial budget process report, Administrative Services Director Eric Frost laid out a proposed schedule on how the Council would review the 2010-12 budget. The two-year budget, which begins in July 2010, consists of an operating budget and capital budget. The capital budget, typically one-third of the budget, appropriates funds within the two-year budget and projects potential projects for an additional 4 years. Council has great discretion in planning capital projects and will frequently revise the timing of projects. In contrast, the operating budget varies much less because desired services remain unchanged from year to year. The operational budget's revenues and expenditures must be balanced and are supported by anticipated revenues for that budget year. The General Fund tax-supported operations are the most vulnerable to current economic and state budget conditions. Salaries and benefits make up 68.8% of the 2009-10 General Fund Operating Budget. As a result, managing personnel is the single most important aspect of the operating budget. Council will need to closely monitor employees allocations, although Visalia's employees per thousand are lower today than they were 20 years ago.

NEW 2-1-1 TELEPHONE NUMBER WILL LINK PEOPLE WITH IMPORTANT COMMUNITY INFORMATION: United Way of Tulare County updated the Visalia City Council on its recent launch of a new 2-1-1 information and referral telephone service in conjunction with the California 2-1-1 Partnership. "Community members, taxpayers, and service organizations all stand to benefit greatly from this new free service," said Emy Blankenship of the United Way. "It will provide callers with answers—in their own language—to all kinds of questions on housing, health care, nutrition, senior and child care, and many other services. There is even domestic violence and disaster assistance, all under the 2-1-1 banner." The 211 information, referral and disaster assistance system has been in development for the past five years. The goal of the new service is to provide a sustainable, statewide calling network, similar to both 4-1-1 and 9-1-1 that uses local and regional operators trained to help people with everyday information and referrals. Callers also can request referrals for employment information, job training tips, financial assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing and shelter assistance, or to seek out senior services.

PROPOSED SOUTHWEST FIRE STATION FOCUS OF PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETINGS: Visalia Fire Chief Mark Nelson will discuss a proposed Southwest Visalia Fire Station at two public outreach meetings set for April 15 and 21, from 7 to 9 p.m. A meeting will be held in southeast Visalia at the Kings Counties Builders Exchange, 1223 S Lovers Lane, on Thursday, April 15, and in southwest Visalia on Wednesday, April 21, in the boardroom at the Visalia Unified School District Office at 5000 W. Cypress St. For information, call 713-4266.

SANTA FE OVERCROSSING DEDICATION CEREMONY SET FOR APRIL 29: After nearly 15 months, the Santa Fe Overcrossing at Santa Fe and Mineral King Avenue will be officially dedicated at 10 a.m. Thursday, April 29. The dedication ceremony will include the sealing of the 50- and 100-year time capsules into the bridge. Speakers include Visalia Mayor Bob Link, Tulare County Board of Supervisor Chairman Steve Worthley, Tulare County Association of Governments Vice-Chair and Lindsay Council Member Pam Kimball and Mike Rastegar, Caltrans Deputy District 6 Director, Program and Project Management.

CHAT WITH COUNCIL MEMBER SCHEDULED: Council Member Steve Nelsen will hold a "Chat with the Council Member" outreach meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, in the conference room at Café 210, at Center and Locust. The meetings are a chance for the citizens of Visalia to meet with Council Member Nelsen who will be available to answer questions, listen to concerns, and receive input. No appointments are necessary. Council Member Nelsen can also be reached by calling 559-713-4400, Ext. 7313, by email at snelsen@ci.visalia.ca.us, or at his [personal web address at www.stevenelsen.com](http://www.stevenelsen.com). Mayor Bob Link can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 2313 or by email at blink@ci.visalia.ca.us. Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 8313 or by email at ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us. Council Member Warren Gubler can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 3313 or by email at wgubler@ci.visalia.ca.us. Council Member Michael Lane can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 4313 or by email at mlane@ci.visalia.ca.us.

SOUTH VALLEY RESIDENTS CAN WIN PRIZES BY SPARING OUR AIR: The South Valley's annual Dare To Spare week is fast approaching, and this year the Visalia Transit Division along with Tulare InterModal Express is sponsoring a challenge to get residents involved in sparing our air! During the Dare to Spare Challenge, groups of 5 will compete against other local groups to see who spared the most. Each day, groups will log onto the Dare to Spare website www.daretospare.com and enter all the tasks their group completed that helped spared the air; things like taking the bus, walking, riding their bike, carpooling or trip-linking. Each task has a point value assigned to it and the Visalia team and Tulare team with the most points at the end of the week wins. Wining teams will receive awards, prizes, community recognition, and best of all bragging rights! **Teams of 5 must register online before April 14th;** as the challenge runs the week of April 19th. In addition, each registered team member will receive a free Visalia Transit and Tulare InterModal Express Bus pass allowing participants to receive unlimited bus rides during Dare to Spare Week. For more information about this exciting event, log onto the website www.daretospare.com or call 1-877-40 Go Green.

PREVIEW AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA AT KICK-OFF DINNER: Visalia will again play host to some of the best athletes in the world when the Amgen Tour of California returns for the start of Stage 5 on Thursday, May 20. Get a preview of the race at the Visalia Amgen Tour of California Kick-Off Dinner at 6 p.m. Monday, May 10, at the Hall of Fame Club at Rawhide Stadium. Join Dave Towle, the voice of American cycling and on-site announcer for the Amgen Tour of California, as he shares insights and anecdotes about the race and the racers. Participate in a silent auction featuring items autographed by Lance Armstrong, Levi Leipheimer, and other race favorites, as well as unique experiences associated with the Visalia stage start. The reception and silent auction starts at 6 p.m., with dinner and the program at 7 p.m. The cost is \$50 per person and seating is limited. For reservations, call 734.5876, or e-mail steve@visaliachamber.org.

TICKETS NOW ON SALE FOR GREAT WESTERN GOSPEL FAN FEST: Southern Gospel Music lovers from across the United States, as well as several foreign countries will converge on one location for three days of Gospel Music for the **14th Annual Great Western Fan Festival**. With the dawning of a new decade, after 13 years in Fresno, CA, the location for this exciting event moves to the charming city of **Visalia, CA**, during the weekend of **April 29 through May 1**. According to Festival organizers, Visalia will serve as the perfect setting for this exciting musical event. "We are absolutely thrilled by the response we have received since the announcement was made that we would be making the move to Visalia," states Fan Festival Board member, Dean Hopper. "The city has pulled out all the stops to welcome this event. Visalia is such a charming, town, with nearly 50 quaint restaurants within easy walking distance of the Convention Center." The Great Western Southern Gospel Music Fan Festival made its debut in the city of Fresno, CA, in 1997. Since the inaugural year, the event has grown to become the largest three-day Christian Music event West of the Rockies. The event merges the biggest names in Southern Gospel Music with many of the most popular West Coast-based Gospel recording artists, attracting thousands each year. Dozens of Southern Gospel Music's most popular artists will be a part of this exceptional three-day event, which will include nightly concerts and afternoon showcases with many of Southern Gospel Music's most popular names, including **The Hoppers, Greater Vision, The Booth Brothers, Legacy Five, The Mark Trammell Trio and Triumphant, as well as many prominent West Coast groups**. In addition to the evening concerts, exciting showcases featured include the **Remembering The Music Showcase**, featuring former members of the legendary Cathedral Quartet, as well as the **Hymns That Live Forever Showcase**. Organizers also promise several other special afternoon musical surprises. Southern Gospel Music lovers from all walks of life will travel via cars, planes and RVs to take part in this annual Fan Festival event. The event is one the entire family will enjoy. Tickets for the **2010 Great Western Fan Festival** are on sale now and may be purchased by calling **1-800-965-9324** or online at www.iTickets.com. Complete information regarding the **2010 Great Western Fan Festival** may be obtained at www.fanfestivals.com.

VOLUNTEER FOR THE VISALIA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU AND UPCOMING EVENTS: Want to help your community? Volunteers are currently being sought to assist the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau by participating in welcoming attendees to various events in the City. A database of prospective volunteers is currently being developed. Volunteers willing to contribute their time to accommodate the inquiries of individuals attending local functions can contact Jackie Bean at 334-0141 or email her at jackie@visitvisalia.org. Your name will be added to a database of volunteers and you will be notified by email of a list of upcoming events needing volunteers. Duties may include: Sign in/Check in of attendees at functions; distribute welcome/registrations packets and itineraries; assisting attendees with direction and shuttle times; and serving as an usher at events. A scheduled volunteer meeting will be held prior to each event to review details and duties.

