

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES STIMULUS ACTIONS: All but two of the staff's stimulus proposals were unanimously approved by the Visalia City Council during the work session of the April 19 meeting. Topping the list of priorities for the Council was the review and right size of all impact fees as appropriate and to bring recommendations back to Council for approval in May. Council also approved expediting commercial and large residential development projects in excess of \$1 million until Dec. 31, providing a 50% transient occupancy tax rebate for events with over 1,000 room nights in Visalia held before Dec. 31, 2011; and participating in the California FIRST energy efficiency and solar energy low-interest financing program.

CITY'S HAZ-MAT SERVICE TO CONTINUE: Ending weeks of discussion between City and County leaders, the Council authorized Fire Chief Mark Nelson to terminate existing HazMat Response contracts with Tulare County, Kings County and the city of Hanford and to renegotiate amended agreements with each of the seven incorporated cities in the County, requiring them to pay proportionately to offset the un-recouped costs of the HazMat Team. A fee ordinance will be considered by Council, and they reserved the option to work with Tulare County on future funding.

COUNCIL AWARDS CONTRACT FOR NEW ANIMAL CONTROL

FACILITY: Council members approved a contract, not to exceed \$475,000, for the design of a new animal control facility to WLC Architects, Inc., of Rancho Cucamonga, contingent on a signed Memo of Understanding with the Valley Oak SPCA outlining financial and operational responsibilities for the construction and use of a joint animal control facility and adoption center. To minimize construction costs, the decision was made by a subcommittee and the SPCA Board to build a joint animal care facility on airport property immediately north of the existing facility. The SPCA portion of both the design and ultimate construction of the facility will be paid with private funds to be raised by the non-profit, focusing on owner-surrenders, adoption, voluntary spay/neutering, education, advocacy and outreach. A joint facility provides significant cost savings as it eliminates a potential for duplication of facilities for employee break rooms, adoption kennels, food preparation, and vet/surgery rooms resulting from two separate facilities.

COUNCIL REJECTS GROCERY STORE MORATORIUM; HEARS

UPDATE ON TRADER JOES: The City Council rejected a blanket moratorium on new, large -scale grocery stores in Visalia proposed by a coalition of local grocery store owners. A push for a related proposal to prevent grocery stores larger than 55,000 square feet from setting up within a mile of an existing large-scale grocer was also discounted by Council members. Council's direction was that grocery stores would be reviewed with all other retail uses during the General Plan Update process. Trader Joe's takes another look: Visalia realtor Wayne Millies of the Visalia-based Whitlach Group told Council members that Trader's Joe's executives have agreed to meet at the end of May in Las Vegas to discuss a proposal to bring the specialty food store to Visalia. Millies said data on an expanded market area piqued company executives' interest and prompted the May meeting. Millies worked with retailers, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, and City staff to develop the proposal which was sent to Trader Joes' executives earlier this year. It included a study which showed projected gross annual sales topping the \$23 million needed to justify a store in Visalia. Millies said shoppers as far away as southern Fresno County, northern Kern County and western Kings County would make the necessary 30 to 35-mile drive.

FIRST OF FOUR COUNCIL TOWN HALL MEETINGS SET FOR APRIL

29: A series of four Council Town Hall meetings kicks off Thursday, April 29, at 6 p.m. at St. Mary's Parish Hall, at Garden and Murray. Council Member Steve Nelsen will moderate the informational meeting discussing issues of interest to citizens in the northeast quadrant of the City. Staff will provide brief presentations on the following topics: Update on City efforts related to the flood plain issue; gang suppression; and road projects in the area. The other three meetings will be held in July, September and November, will each be moderated by Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian, Council Members Warren Gubler, or Council Member Michael Lane, and will be held in the other three quadrants of the City. City Council members are available for constituent concerns. 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 Steve 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. 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,

DUMP ON US ON APRIL 24: The event will be held from 7 to 11 a.m. at the Visalia Corporation Yard, 335 N. Cain. Dump-On-Us is limited to City of Visalia residents and proof of residency is required. Commercial waste is not accepted, and participants are limited to one visit, one small truck and/or small trailer per event. A commercial shredding service will be on site. For information on items accepted, visit the website at www.dumponus.org or call 713-4532.





VISALIA TRANSIT MAKES AN IMPRESSION; UNVEILS FLEET OF

RE-BRANDED BUSSES: At the City's Natural Resource Conservation Division's largest Earth Day cleanup held to date on April 17, with 270 registered volunteers helping to remove about 6 tons of trash along the St. John's River, the Visalia Transit Division announced its new brand. Starting immediately, public transportation in Visalia will simply be called "Visalia Transit." With this updated name comes a new look and new busses, allowing Transit to phase out their older diesel busses in favor of alternative fuel. "The goal is to make people feel good about riding public transportation," said Monty Cox, Transit Manager for the City.

MOVIES IN THE PARK: "G Force" will be shown this Friday, April 23, as the Visalia Parks and Recreation Department continue to offer free movies at Riverway Sports Park. Movies begin at dusk. Coming attractions: "Where the Wild Things Are (PG) on April 30; "Planet 51" on May 7; and "Twilight Saga: The New Moon" (PG-13) on May 14. Spring is hoppin' with the Dia Del Nino event from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, April 25 at Riverway Sports Park with free admission (some activity fees may apply; Mother's Day Tea at the Visalia Elk's Lodge beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 8, for \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 17 and under; Visalia's first Duathlon will be held Saturday, May 15, and features a 1/2 mile swim and a 3.1 mile run, beginning at 8 a.m. at Golden West High School. For more information, visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com or call 713-4365 or email recreation@ci.visalia.ca.us.

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.