

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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COUNCIL APPROVES INCREASING PARKING TIME LIMITS IN

DOWNTOWN: While not the end-all to expand customer convenience, the City Council took a step to attract more customers to stay longer in the downtown area by approving a six-month expansion of all two-hour-limit parking spaces to three hours for at least six months, beginning Sept. 1. They also voted 4-0 (Mayor Bob Link was absent) to temporarily cut monthly reserved employee parking permit costs by two-thirds, from \$75 to \$25 a month on third level spaces in the West Acequia Avenue parking structure for the remainder of 2010 and the first four months of 2011. Downtown employees will be encouraged to buy the \$25 monthly permits, sold on a quarterly basis, to free up the parking spaces open for customers.

CHAMBER PRAISES CITY FOR EFFORTS TO HELP BOOST

BUSINESS: Increased cooperation and praise for overall efforts was offered by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce during its work session presentation at the Aug. 16 City Council meeting. Stephen Peck of the Mangano Co., a member of the Chamber's governmental affairs committee, praised the City for its overall efforts and progress made in at least two-thirds of the 43 initiatives proposed by the Chamber to streamline local government and improve the City's business climate. Chamber Director Glenn Morris cited the recently passed local stimulus package that reduced transportation impact fees as providing a much-needed boost.

OTHER COUNCIL ACTION: Council heard an update on gang-suppression efforts by the Police Department, showing incidents of gang violence have dropped 38% since 2007 in a comparison of January-June gang violence statistics; approved a recommendation to start a voluntary program promoting non-smoking in City parks; and directed staff to initiate the public hearing review process for the Zoning Code provisions of the Mooney Corridor Study which is expected to take between three and five months.

CITY'S DOWNTOWN GETS HONORABLE MENTION IN REPORT:

Visalia's downtown received Honorable Mention honors in the California Planning and Development Report's group of Best Mid-Sized Cities with populations from 75,000 to 300,000. Other cities in the esteemed group were San Mateo, Ventura, Riverside and Santa Monica. Pasadena took the No. 1 spot for its second generation of downtown revitalization. At No. 2 was Santa Barbara with its pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly atmosphere and a nightlife that caters to both UC students and tourists. Chico's carefully revamped downtown plaza with new housing on the way helped it earn its No. 3 slot. Berkeley and Santa Rosa rounded out the Top 5. A sense of place and vibrancy was critical in the rankings. Land use mixes, public spaces, architecture, pedestrian friendliness, cultural facilities and activities were also considered.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TRAFFIC SAFETY REMINDER: Students are returning back to school this week, and the Visalia Police Department reminds motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to exercise traffic safety while commuting to and from areas where schools are located. Public roadways adjacent to schools are designated 25 MPH zones, and Traffic Officers will be focusing their efforts in areas around local schools to increase safety. Leave early for your destination to avoid congestion and increase your chances of arriving at your destination on time. Pedestrians are encouraged to use crosswalks and areas which are staffed by crossing guards. Juvenile bicyclists are encouraged to wear a safety helmet as required by law and to ride inside marked bicycle lanes when present. Vehicles

unlawfully double parked or that are using the handicap parking zones without displaying a proper permit or specialized permit plate are subject to parking fines.

PARK AND RECREATION FALL/WINTER ACTIVITY GUIDE

RELEASED: If you didn't get a copy in the mail, check out the online edition at www.liveandplayvisalia.com or stop by the Anthony Community Center at 345 N. Jacob St. to get your copy. Fall special events will be highlighted by the annual Teen Idol on September 11th as well as the August 28th Ping Pong tournament and September 28th and October 30th 5K runs/walks. To make fitness more convenient, try out Lunch Time Fit Pass allowing you to exercise during your lunch hour from 12:15-12:45 pm., with workouts from Zumba to Abs. The Fit Pass acts as a punch card and can be utilized as your busy schedule permits.

LUNCH IS SERVED: All members of the community, age 55 and over, along with their spouse, caregiver or guest, are invited for lunch weekdays from noon to 1 pm., at the Visalia Senior Center at 310 N. Locust St. Please call (559)713-4381 for reservations, which must be made 24 hours in advance. The cost is \$3.50 per meal for those age 55 & over.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT UPDATES

MOONEY-WHITENDALE WIDENING

Week of August 16-August 20: Demolition work will begin this week. Beginning Wednesday, Aug. 18, traffic controls will be in place from the hours of 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. closing off the right-hand lanes in all directions through the intersection. Sidewalks near the intersection will be closed to pedestrians. Pedestrians will be directed around construction areas.

Week of August 23-August 27: Demo work will continue with traffic controls in place. Hours of operation will remain 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. Work on a new storm drain line could begin on Whitendale west of Mooney with a lane closure during construction.