

Inside City Hall

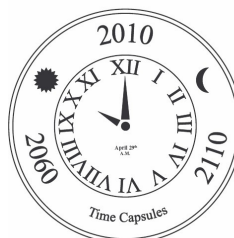
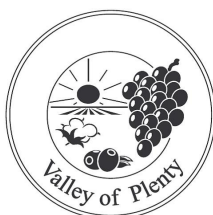
Beyond the headlines

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WINNING PLAQUE DESIGNS FOR SANTA FE OVERCROSSING

UNVEILED: The Visalia Arts Consortium unveiled the winning designs for the bronze plaques for the Santa Fe Overcrossing at the September 20 City Council meeting at the Visalia Convention Center. City Council Member Warren Gubler presented a \$1,000 award to Visalia resident Dana Lubich. Eight Tulare County residents submitted designs, and a committee comprised of visual artists and City representatives selected Lubich's renderings to be placed on the bridge pillars on the Santa Fe Overcrossing. Lubich said he strove for simplicity in his designs. One entitled "Time Capsules" marks the bridge pillar containing two time capsules. The other three, entitled "Highway 198-Santa Fe", "Valley of Plenty", and "Gateway to the Sequoias", showcase the history of the Santa Fe Railroad and State Highway 198, agricultural heritage, and Visalia's nickname from those heading to the Sequoia National Park. The Arts Consortium has put out a request for bids for the installation of the plaques, and the project is expected to be completed by November.



UPDATE ON CITY LABOR NEGOTIATIONS: Visalia City Council members voted 5-0 to settle on a labor contract with Group M, the city's largest group of employees. Earlier, Group M, consisting of 242 employees, agreed to pay an additional 4 percent to the state retirement system previously paid by the City, and to forego any wage increase for this fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2011. Council also authorized continued negotiations between the City's bargaining team and representatives of the three Public Safety bargaining groups until Oct. 4.

COUNCIL AWARDS \$160,000 IN NON-PROFIT GRANTS: The Council awarded \$160,000 in grants to 25 nonprofit organizations. Ninety percent of the funds awarded are earmarked for gang prevention programs. The City's Citizens Advisory Committee screened 29 applications with requests totaling \$500,526. The committee's recommendations were made on the basis of need and purpose. Last year's process was limited to those that had received an award in the past and those agencies that focused on gang prevention. These restrictions were lifted this year with the Council's one requirement that 50% of the award money be given to agencies that focus on gang prevention.

OTHER COUNCIL NEWS: Council authorized a \$971,056 contract to Formost Construction Company to provide the labor and allied materials (pipe, wire, etc), for the installation of a new irrigation system at Valley Oaks Golf Course, and; adopted an ordinance which extends the existing moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries and collective or cooperative cultivation and distribution enterprises for a period of one year, from October 19, 2010 to October 18, 2011.

SEQUOIA SHUTTLE SEASON SEES 40% INCREASE IN RIDERSHIP:

2010 Sequoia Shuttle season ended on Monday, Sept. 20, with a nearly 40% increase in ridership over

2009. In all, 7,846 seats were sold during this season compared to 5,637 seats in 2009, with most of the success being attributed to group sales and repeat riders. “We saw a major increase in sales from families, churches, youth groups and senior groups” says Gamaliel Anguiano, Transit Analysis for the City of Visalia. “We offered a discount to groups of 8 or more, and we were pleased to see riders take advantage of it.” Other successes included pre-sales to previous riders and Facebook fans and a sales blitz on Groupon; a popular one-day online discount site that is available to Valley subscribers- which made a big impact on sales in just a 24-hour period. The advertising also featured custom artwork from local artist John Acosta who illustrated renditions of 4 major attractions inside Sequoia National Park; General Sherman Tree, Crescent Meadow, Tokopah Falls, and Moro Rock. Gamaliel added, “We are happy to see that people are utilizing the shuttle service as opposed to taking their personal vehicles up to the park. With less vehicle congestion on the roads, it gives visitors more time to enjoy the trails and sites, and ultimately helps preserve our National Parks...which has been the focus of the Sequoia Shuttle from its inception.”

HEALTHY VISALIA FESTIVAL SET: The “Let’s Get Healthy Visalia Festival”, a free community event, will take place Sunday, October 3, at the Riverway Sports Park. Event activities will begin at 2 pm with kick-off speakers, live music, health screenings, over 40 health & wellness booths, healthy food, massages, prizes, bounce houses and other activities. Family activities will be available every half hour, including a group walk, zumba, drum event, family fun challenge obstacle course and boot camp. The event will partner with the existing annual Family HealthCare Network Health Fair and the Bi-National Health Week. The event is being organized by the Healthy Visalia Committee, which includes City of Visalia, Kaweah Delta Healthcare District, Visalia Unified School District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency and College of the Sequoias. To take part in the event as a vendor or sponsor call Alma at 624-2416/email altorres@kdhcd.org or Angie at atipton@tularehhsa.org. For more great links to health and wellness visit www.healthyvisalia.com.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK: The week of October 4th marks the beginning of National Fire Prevention Week throughout the United States. National Fire Prevention Week began in response to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 which claimed 300 lives and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. During this year’s National Fire Prevention Week, the Visalia Fire Department will provide presentations to all elementary schools within the Visalia City limits. In addition, the Visalia Fire Department will conclude the week by hosting Open Houses at three of the City Fire Stations on Saturday October 9th from 10 am to 2 pm at Fire Station 51 at 309 S. Johnson, Fire Station 54 at 440 W. Ferguson, and Fire Station 55 at 6921 W. Ferguson. The Open Houses will allow citizens the opportunity to tour each station and interact with the on-duty fire personnel. A bounce house will provide entertainment for the children and a hot dog lunch will be served. In addition, there will also be members of other city departments, such as Parks & Recreation, Crime Prevention, and Natural Resource Conservation Division will be at Station 55 to answer questions about related city services. For more information on Fire Prevention Week, call Battalion Chief Charlie Norman at 713-4265.