

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

Volume 24

June 25, 2008

COUNCIL APPROVES BUDGET: The City Council approved the budget June 23 for Fiscal years 2008-09 and 2009-10. Facing perhaps the greatest financial uncertainty in its history, Council members agreed with city staff's recommendations for a conservative budget which positions the City to withstand State take-aways and further economic declines without creating a crisis in City services or the organization which provides those services. For Fiscal Year 2008/09, the approved budget is \$165,710,131, and for Fiscal Year 2009/10, the proposed budget is \$166,150,650. The budget recommends, in part, appropriating only \$750,000 of General Fund capital projects each year, freezing remaining proposed projects and freezing personnel, representing \$1.4 million.

NEW ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF NAMED: Captain Colleen Mestas from the Fresno County Sheriff's Department has accepted the position of Assistant Chief of Police for the City of Visalia Police Department. Captain Mestas has been with the Fresno County Sheriff's Department since 1988. She was promoted to Captain in 2004 and, while assigned to the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, had oversight for the entire Patrol Operations Bureau including SWAT, K9, Patrol Detectives, Ag-Task Force and Mounted Patrol. In addition, over the past 20 years of service for the County of Fresno, she has worked as Patrol Deputy, a Narcotics Detective, Field Training Officer, Patrol Sergeant, Lieutenant Watch Commander, and Area Commander. While serving as Area Commander, Captain Mestas was responsible for Area Two, Fresno County's metropolitan region. Captain Mestas holds a bachelor of arts degree in organizational behavior from the University of San Francisco and a masters degree in Organizational Behavior from the California School of Professional Psychology. She is also a graduate of the Senior Management Institute for Law Enforcement and recently graduated from the Marion Bergeson series in public service and received certification from the Josephson Institute on ethics in law enforcement and public administration.



VI-CYCLE PROGRAM KICKS OFF: Over 25 attended the June 25 kick-off of the City of Visalia's Vi-Cycle Program in front of Sierra Bicycle Werks on Main Street in downtown Visalia. City Council Members Amy Shuklian and Don Landers, and Brian Rouch, chairman of the City of Visalia's Environmental Committee all spoke on the benefits of the program, which promotes bicycling as an effective alternative transportation measure while increasing commuter bicycling in Visalia's downtown area. Partners in the project include: California Department of Corrections-Corcoran Substance Abuse and Treatment Facility; Visalia Police Department; Southern Sierra Cyclists; and the Jeff Barnes Brain and Injury Foundation. Participants who picked up their bicycles at the kick-off event include Link's Mens and Women's Wear, Tri-Counties Roofing Co., Essentials, First Presbyterian Church, Watson's Veggie Garden, INERG, and Provost & Prichard. The Vi-Cycle program recycles recovered bicycles

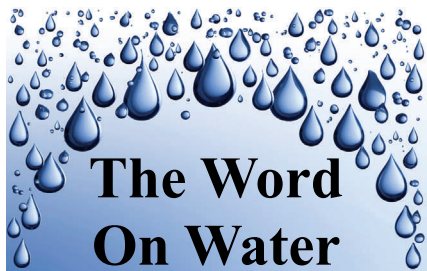


from the City of Visalia's Police and Transit Departments. The bicycles then are refurbished and distributed for \$25 to selected businesses for use by their employees or customers. For more information, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Division at 713-4532.

FIRST EVER FIRE CAMP A HUGE HIT: Names are already on a waiting list for next year based on the huge popularity of the first ever Youth Fire Camp, sponsored by the Visalia Fire Department, in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Department. The camp, which was held June 17-20 at the main fire station at 309 S. Johnson St., and at the station located at the Visalia Municipal airport. A total of 22 boys and girls, ranging in ages from 5 to 11, attended the four-day camp, where topics included station tours, search and rescue in a smoke-filled room, the workings of thermal imaging cameras to locate victims and to "rescue" an infant from the smoke-filled room, as well as an entry-level physical agility test. The youth also learned how to connect hoses and shoot water, basic ropes and repelling, first-aid, how to safely climb ladders, and rode in the ARFF, the airport rescue fire-fighting equipment resembling something out of "Star Wars". A water ball and knot competition, a bucket brigade, and a pizza and ice cream party and graduation ceremony culminated the week-long event. Instructors included Inspectors Vorisia Henderson and Kurtis Brown, Engineer/Paramedic John Greenwood, Firefighter/Paramedic Wendi Pineda-Gregory, Firefighter Tom Van Grouw, Reserve Firefighter Mike Parks, Firefighter/Paramedic Mike Durham, and Fire Marshal Charles Norman. Special thanks to sponsors Best Buy Market, Food-4-Less, California Pretzel, Phoenix Fire Protection, Visalia YMCA, In-Shape, and All Pro Pizza.



WATER YOUR LAWN WISELY: Watering the lawn is almost always the largest user of water in a home. If you're looking for a way to save water it makes sense to focus on the big uses. It doesn't get any bigger than the lawn. Summer irrigation is the highest use of water within the Visalia District; over 64% of all the water used. Through education and planning, it is estimated that landscapes can be well maintained using 20-50% less water. Here are some best use water conservation tips for your irrigation system:



- Check for and repair leaks. Most leaks occur because a valve fails to shut completely
 - Maintain your sprinkler heads and valves.
 - Avoid oscillating sprinklers and sprinkler heads that produce mists or fine sprays. These devices result in evaporation losses.
 - Use buckets rather than a hose or automatic system to water small gardens, flowers, plants, and shrubs. You have much more control over how much water goes on the plant and where it goes.
- Adjust your irrigation controller to match your landscaping needs.
 - Install a rain shutoff device, soil moisture sensor, or humidity sensor to help stop irrigation when it is not required.
 - Replace misters with drip emitters.
 - Program your controller for multiple start times. More frequent, shorter irrigation cycles can reduce runoff and unnecessary deep percolation.
 - Only water your landscape after the sun has gone down to reduce evaporation losses.
 - Check the sprinkler system's required operating pressure against the actual water pressure. Differences in pressure can affect operation and efficiency.
 - Convert to low water use and drought resistant grass, plants, shrubs, and trees in you landscape.
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CLEAN THE AIR—WIN A PRIUS: The City of Visalia has pledged to be a Healthy Air Living partner during Healthy Air Living Week, scheduled for July 7-13. As a pledged Healthy Air Living partner, employees are eligible to enter into the contest to win a Toyota Prius. To enter, visit the Healthy Air Living website at www.healthyairliving.com. Friday, July 11, is “Try Transit Day”, and city residents can ride for free all day on all fixed routes service, excluding Dial-A-Ride. Other activities include tree plantings by the Urban Tree Foundation, and a Vi-Cycle distribution for city departments in the downtown area. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control designated Healthy Air Living Week to celebrate Healthy Air Living, a year-round initiative that aims to reduce emissions Valley-wide and improve the health and quality of life of Valley residents. Strategies to reduce emissions include: car-pooling; biking to work; telecommuting; and other alternatives to help the Valley reach health-based, clean-air standards years ahead of deadline.

CALENDAR PROMOTES COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR FREE: Looking for a way to get more interest in your events? Check out <http://www.visaliainc.com>. This FREE Community Events Calendar is linked to the City of Visalia website and the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau website. It's very easy to use and is an essential tool for promoting local events. This calendar also has options for a RSS feed, reminders, a way to download directly to your calendar, and many more features! If you would like to add events, use the RSS feed and reminders options, you can sign up with only a username and password. You can also add pictures to your events for more visibility. When you add an event, you will be asked to pick 1 to 3 event types. Be sure to attach websites, flyers, photos - the more information, the better. Your event will not automatically appear, but will go through a moderator to be sure it is appropriate for this venue. Approval is usually received in less than 24 hours. For any questions, read the FAQ and the event guidelines, or e-mail Erin Capuchino at the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau at ERIN@VISITVISALIA.ORG.

SAVE MONEY, ENERGY WITH THESE SUMMER SAVING TIPS: Living comfortably during a Central Valley summer can be challenging, but it does not have to be costly. What are some of the easiest ways to stay cool and save?

- Have a professional, reputable contractor clean and inspect your air conditioner. This should be done every year, whether you have window or central units. Southern California Edison has information on rebates available on air conditioner tune-ups at <http://www.sce.com/RebatesandSavings/Residential>. You can also go to the City of Visalia's website, look for Energy Efficiency in the Natural Resources Conservation Department at www.ci.visalia.ca.us.
- Check your air conditioner's filter every time you receive your utility bill. Look for a dust build-up that can restrict the airflow and place stress on the system. This added stress places wear and tear on the unit, and increases operation costs.
- Always replace the filter cover. By creating a tight seal around the filter opening, you can block any unconditioned air that is being pulled into the unit.
- Set the thermostat at 78 degrees or higher for the most energy efficient operation. Each degree below this setting adds 6% to your cooling costs. A programmable thermostat will routinely raise the inside temperature while you are at work or routinely away from home for 4 hours or longer. Pre-set the thermostat to adjust back to your normal comfort range a half-hour before getting home.
- Use fans to move the air inside your home. This gives the sensation that it is 5 degrees cooler than the actual temperature.