

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

VOLUME 11

SEPT. 9, 2009

WATER TREATMENT PLANT'S RECYCLING PLAN COULD REVERSE CITY'S GROUNDWATER PROBLEM:

Water is perhaps the most significant issue in the Central Valley. Visalia currently uses 2,500 to 5,000 more acre-feet of groundwater than is normally replenished each year. A presentation of a recycling plan for Visalia's Water Conservation Plant could make available up to 14,000 acre-feet of water each year for groundwater recharge. Council members unanimously approved the effluent reuse recommendations made by Provost & Prichard which includes irrigation of Plaza Park, Valley Oaks Golf Course, and agricultural areas near the airport, as well as the negotiation of a water exchange agreement with Tulare Irrigation District (TID). Treated effluent from the Water Conservation Plant would be discharged into the irrigation district's channels. The district could either sell the water or use it for groundwater discharge. In exchange, the City would receive a proportional amount of water from the district for its groundwater recharge efforts. What began as a state mandate with no benefit to the City now has a very real opportunity to become a project that contributes significantly to reversing Visalia's groundwater overdraft problem. The Regional Board issued a discharge permit that required a major upgrade to the Water Conservation Plan in order to continue discharging as it had for more than 40 years. The cost was estimated at \$70-80 million. The alternative was to do a smaller "bare bones" project that would cut the cost to \$50-60 million. With either option, the capacity of the Water Conservation Plant would not increase, the uses of the effluent would not expand, and the City's groundwater level would continue to decline. The project as now envisioned will allow for irrigation of the golf course and Plaza Park with plenty left over for any other irrigation project the City cares to undertake, strengthen the regional water and groundwater partnership between the City of Visalia and Tulare Irrigation District, give farmers in the TID service area access to a year-round source of surface water, helping to protect the economic interests of the region, and make upwards of 14,000 acre feet of water available every year to the City for groundwater recharge.

COUNCIL AWARDS MV TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT: The Council awarded the Operations and Maintenance contract for Visalia Transit to MV Transportation, Inc., of Fairfield from Oct. 1, 2009 to Sept. 30, 2012 for \$14,261,523 with two-three year options. MV has experience with alternative fuel vehicles, electronic fare boxes and automatic vehicle location systems, which exist on all Visalia buses. They have demonstrated a proactive customer service program, resulting in very few complaints from the more than 1.6 million rides MV provided in 2008/09.

GROUNDBREAKING FOR TRANSIT

CENTER EXPANSION ON SEPT. 18: One of the first projects in the region fully funded with Stimulus funding breaks ground on Friday, Sept. 18 with a special ceremony at 10 a.m. at 425 E. Oak Ave. The expansion adds 12 bus bays with shelters, covered walkways, trees, a decorative fountain, solar lighting and plenty of seating. The City continues to see a dramatic increase in bus ridership (5-10% per year). The increase in bus service requires adequate support facilities and the expansion



Project will meet this demand.

FIREFIGHTERS TO HOST 9/11

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY: The Visalia Fire Department will host a September 11th Remembrance Ceremony at 9 a.m. Friday, Sept. 11, at the Visalia Fire Station No. 51, 309 S. Johnson St.

The ceremony, which is open to the public, will include an invocation, lowering of the flag to half staff and the ringing of the bell in memory of the firefighters who were lost on Sept. 11, 2001.

For more information, go to the city's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, and click Fire Department under Departments link.



RAWHIDE SEASON RECAP: The renovated ballpark is off to a very good start with many positive compliments about the design, the construction, the look and feel and of the ballpark from all sides - players, fans, employees. Among the many positive articles in the local and national media on the ballpark renovations was a recognition by Ballpark Watch (the leading national baseball stadium media). This ballpark is one of three finalists for Best Ballpark Renovation (includes all minor league and major league facilities with renovations). The three finalists are a major league stadium (Kansas City Royals' Kaufman Stadium) and two minor league ballparks: Elfstrom Stadium, Kane County, IL; and Recreation Ballpark, Visalia). http://www.ballparkdigest.com/features/index.html?article_id=1735.

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY CHECKPOINT NETS 6 DUI ARRESTS: Members of the Visalia Police Department DUI team and Traffic and Reserve unit conducted a DUI saturation detail within the City limits from Sunday-Monday, Sept. 6-7. The saturation detail brings on additional units during the operation to target drunken drivers city-wide, compared with a checkpoint which is usually set up at a fixed location. During these two days, a total of 996 vehicles were stopped, with 28 field sobriety tests administered. There were 5 DUI arrests, and 1 for possession of methamphetamine as well as DUI, 143 citations issued, 37 vehicles towed, 45 citations for unlicensed drivers, 56 citations issued for other offenses, 3 warrant arrests, and 1 other arrest for obstructing an Officer. The public is encouraged to help keep roadways safe by calling 911 if they see a suspected impaired driver. Funding for this operation is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

HOUSTON ROUNDABOUT PROJECT BEGINS: Work on this project begins this week with significant traffic disruptions. Crawford Construction is the general contractor hired by the City of Visalia to do the work on the Houston Avenue project. The resident engineer is Adam Ennis with the City of Visalia. The project managers for the City of Visalia are Greg Dais and Michael Carr.

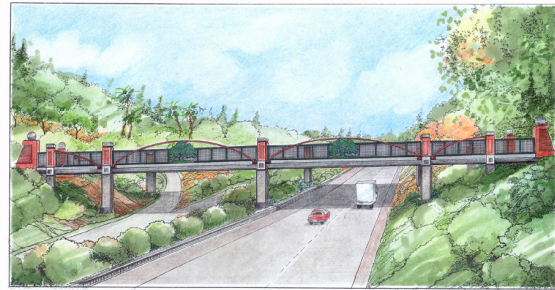
Timeline for the next two weeks:

- **Week of Sept. 7-Sept. 11:** Set up traffic control for the closure of Santa Fe from Douglas Avenue to Houston Avenue for 3 weeks, beginning Wednesday, Sept. 9. Begin grinding out Santa Fe for reconstruction and excavation of the ponding basin east of Santa Fe and south of Douglas. Begin to install new storm drain pipe out of the basin north to Douglas Avenue. Detours will be posted during this period.
- **Week of Sept. 14-Sept. 18:** Douglas Avenue will be closed from Santa Fe east for 400 feet (between Santa Fe and the old Soroptimist Park) for one week for the installation of storm drain pipe in Douglas Avenue.

SANTA FE OVERCROSSING TO

‘CAPTURE’ TIME IN A CAPSULE: In 50 or 100 years from now, what will Visalians want to know about us and life in Visalia today? The community will have an opportunity to provide items which showcase life in Visalia in 2009. Consideration of items to seal in time capsules in two pillars on the Santa Fe Overcrossing will be done by a committee made up of City of Visalia staff, representatives of local chambers of commerce, the Tulare County Historical Society, and the media. Community members are asked to submit photos and descriptions of items they'd like the committee to consider including in the capsule by Sept. 10, via email at

nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us. The selection of items to be placed in the time capsule will be done by committee members. The items selected by the committee must be delivered by Sept. 30, to the third floor of the Transit Center, at 425 E. Oak Ave. A “Sealing Party” reception will be held in October, and all of the items selected for the time capsules will be on display for public viewing before they are sealed in the two towers on the Santa Fe Overcrossing. For information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at 713-4535.



Artist's rendition of the Santa Fe Overcrossing—set to be completed in Spring 2010.

MAYOR NAMED TO VALLEY AIR BOARD: Visalia Mayor Jesus Gamboa was one of four San Joaquin Valley council members recently appointed to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District governing board. The appointments, which take effect immediately for a three-year term ending in 2012, were made by the Valleywide City Selection Committee. These locally elected officials and appointees, acting as policy makers, ensure that implementation of state and federal air pollution mandates in the Valley is tailored to local conditions and responsive to local needs.

CONVENTION CENTER CUTS ELECTRICAL USAGE: The Visalia Convention Center has partnered with Southern California Edison by joining the Demand Response Program and is anticipating to save as much as \$15,000 this year by participating in this program. The Convention Center is being asked to reduce electrical usage during times of peak demand to ensure there is sufficient electricity available for SCE customers. Since joining the program in June, the Convention Center has been called upon to reduce power about 9 times. General Manager Wally Roeben said, “Each time we have a critical energy day, we post signage in the lobbies for all our clients letting them know we are turning off lights and air conditioning in the lobbies.” Light from the windows, doors and skylights keep walking safe, but it is far less light than most have come to expect. Roeben added, “We have only received positive feedback from patrons who appreciate that we are reducing electricity consumption which helps our community and California.” Roeben was quick to point out that air conditioning is not being turned off in meeting rooms where the temperatures remain cool and comfortable. Patrons will only notice the cuts when they arrive for an event or take an afternoon break in the lobby areas.

Inside City Hall is a publication of the City of Visalia.

For more information, visit the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, email nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or call 713-4535.