



The VOICE

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Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- The City of Redding now posts the agenda and staff reports for City Council meetings one day earlier than in past years. Mayor Patrick Jones changed the status quo so that the general public has access to this information on the Thursday prior to the upcoming Council meetings, which are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month.
- There are 94,393 registered voters in Shasta County as of 1-26-10.
- The **Gubernatorial Primary Election will be held on June 8, 2010. Declaration of Candidacy begins on February 15th and ends on March 12th. Local offices up for election June 8th include: Judge of the Superior Court (2); County Superintendent of Schools; District 1 and District 5 members of Shasta County Board of Supervisors; Assessor-Recorder; Auditor; County Clerk; District Attorney; Sheriff-Coroner; and Treasurer-Tax Collector.**

Inside this issue:

Blatant Disregard for CSAC Commissioners	1
Small Decrease in Building Impact Fees	2
City Council Agrees to 5% Local Preference Policy	2
USDA Talks Job Creation in Shasta County	3
Local Venture Capital Idea Moves Forward	3
Shasta Forward Comes to a Close	4
Join Shasta VOICES	4

Blatant Disregard For CSAC Commissioners Is Inexcusable

The Redding Community Services Advisory Commission (CSAC) has been charged with making a recommendation to the City Council on ways to reduce or eliminate the financial loss of \$1.2 million annually by the **Redding Convention Center**. It is not an easy task by any standard. It has been a controversial subject, and all sides of the issue are being taken into consideration before a recommendation will be made.

For the past seven months or so, the commissioners have been studying, analyzing, receiving testimony from community non-profits and others who utilize the Redding Convention Center, and sending out "Request for Information" packets to outside companies who specialize in the operation of Convention Centers. They have held countless public meetings on the subject, and collected a tremendous amount of data, suggestions, and proposals to solve the existing financial dilemma. They are continuing to schedule meetings. Their work is not yet complete. They have given their time and effort voluntarily. They have been all-inclusive in their efforts to understand how the community feels about the future of their Convention Center. They have done everything right thus far.

So why are these Commissioners being treated as if all this effort doesn't matter?

Though it is not unusual or wrong for members of the general public to contact the City Manager with suggestions about issues such as the financial future of the Convention Center, it is unusual and wrong for the City Manager (or anybody else) to undermine the efforts of the very Commissioners who have been appointed to consider any and all options relating to the subject matter. Everybody has an opportunity to be part of this very public process.

There is no legitimate reason that the formerly "secret" but now publicly announced suggestion for closing the 40 year old Convention Center was **not** brought to the CSAC Commissioners to be included in their vetting process. But that is exactly what happened. Special interest groups chose not to participate in the public process, but to try and find a way around the system that would benefit their causes. For City staff to assist these special interest groups is just plain wrong, and inexcusable.

These special interest groups include Turtle Bay and Shasta Cascade Wonderland. Both receive subsidies from the City of Redding, and are looking to shore up their own budgets, suggesting that this should be done at the expense of the Convention Center. They also suggest spreading the money to preserve police and fire protection. Having skipped the vetting process, these groups seem unaware of the fact that if the Convention Center were just shut down, there may not be any "money" to spread anywhere. Whatever the pros and cons of such suggestions, they should be brought to the CSAC Commission and vetted in a public forum, just as all the other suggestions regarding the Convention Center have been. The fact that these weren't only exasperates feelings of mistrust and lack of transparency in our local government.

This blatant disregard for the appointed CSAC Commissioners is bad enough, but this is not the first time such disregard for appointed committees and commissions has occurred. It seems that a potential solution to such disregard and behind closed-door meetings, is to **not** appoint committees and commissions to do the work that should be done by our elected representatives in our Republic form of government.

Small Decrease in Building Impact Fees A Welcome Change!

Each year on January 15th, the City of Redding's Building Department implements changes to the fees it charges those building homes and commercial buildings in the City limits. Normally, these changes are *increases* in the fees, based on the Construction Cost Index (CCI). But, not this year.

Effective January 15, 2010, the CCI was **reduced** by 0.1%. That reduces the price of obtaining a building permit in the City of Redding by about \$25.00. Yes, it seems insignificant, but it's the first time in recent memory that the fees have not increased.

Based on this small decrease, here is a sampling of the "Estimated Fees for a Typical Single-Family Dwelling" effective as of January 15, 2009:

<u>1,500 Square Foot</u>	<u>2,100 Square Foot</u>	<u>2,400 Square Foot</u>	<u>3,000 Square Foot</u>
\$ 32,487	\$ 34,798	\$ 36,408	\$ 38,799

These amounts represent the total estimated fees including building fees, development fees, water and sewer fees, school fees of \$2.97 per square foot, and a technology surcharge.

For homes built in the North Redding Traffic Benefit District (NRTBD) in the Oasis Road area, there is an additional traffic benefit district fee of \$4,155.

The City last year implemented incentive programs for construction of new homes that now allows the impact fees to be paid at time of occupancy, rather than up front. Perhaps together with this slight decrease in fees, people will no longer feel discouraged from considering new construction.

City Council Agrees to 5% Local Preference Policy...Sort Of

One of the ideas that came forward from the business community during the Radical 10 in '10 process to help jump-start the local economy was to raise the City of Redding's local preference policy from the current 1% to 5%. This became an agenda item for the City Council meeting on February 2nd.

The existing policy allows a business located in Redding, who is bidding for goods and services to be provided to the City, to win the bid if they are within 1% of a bid from a company outside of the Redding area, giving them a 1% advantage.

A lengthy discussion took place at the February 2nd City Council meeting about the pros and cons of raising that percentage to 5%.

Research indicated that there are many cities and counties in the State, including our own Shasta County, who have bid preference policies as high as 10%. Their reasons stated in their policies for doing so include:

- They recognize the importance of creating and retaining jobs, and supporting the businesses that are already there.
- They want to address the competitive disadvantage faced by local businesses that seek to enter into contracts with their agencies.
- They want to help grow jobs for residents by keeping

more spending within the local economy.

- They want to encourage local companies to do business with the City or County and speed the growth of local jobs.
- They want to create and keep sales tax revenues locally.

The Councilors didn't disagree with the concept, but did not all agree on the best way to implement a 5% policy.

The motion that was unanimously approved was to raise the local preference policy from the current 1% to 5% for two years. However, rather than a simple "raise" in the percentage, local companies who present the lowest local bid will have an opportunity to **match** the lowest bid from an outside firm if they are within 5% of that bid, within a certain time. City staff was directed to craft an ordinance for the Council to officially approve at the next meeting.

On the surface, this seems to be a win-win situation for all involved. There needs, however, to be some clarification in the actual ordinance, which will come back to the Council for final approval. If the 1% local preference no longer applies, and a local bidder is within that 1%, they would now need to match the lowest bid under the new policy. That was not the intent of the request, which could actually put local bidders in a worse situation than before, but could be the result unless the language is clarified in the actual ordinance.

USDA Rural Development Talks “Job Creation” in Shasta County

USDA Rural Development partnered with the Economic Development Corp. of Shasta County and the City of Anderson to host a **countywide round table on job creation and economic growth** on January 26th at Anderson City Hall Council Chambers. About 50 people attended, mostly from small rural businesses and government agencies in the area.

Discussions about jobs of the future, obstacles to job creation in our area, “green” jobs, USDA (US Department of Agriculture) programs to strengthen business, and issues to be considered in the creation of jobs in our area gave an accurate picture of what is needed in order to move forward with successful job creation in the Shasta County region.

The USDA representatives were given an earful of suggestions to take back and perhaps incorporate into their own future plans to assist rural communities in the State. Among these are:

- Strengthen current businesses—enhance availability of funding, and provide Shasta County with our fair share.
- Provide money for the plans and specs (which can be extensive) to even apply for grants and loans.
- Provide access to capital—banks are not lending, even to qualified businesses. Short-term unsecured financing is not available.
- Use our area benefits and natural resources to draw those businesses here that may otherwise go elsewhere.
- Provide the proper educational foundation for companies to relocate here, focusing long-term on our natural resources, and bringing students to where the natural resources already exist (i.e., bring a UC to our area).
- Bring more people into the economy that are making things. We currently have an unstable ship, with twice the per capita retail space of most cities.
- Address environmental concerns and government regulations in the State that are unnecessary, contradictory, and do not enhance the environment.

Overall, the group felt that 60-80 percent of the economy is small business, and the USDA should do what it can to help private industry grow in Shasta County.

The USDA currently has a variety of programs available to deliver assistance to rural businesses and communities:

1. Business and Cooperative Programs (financial partnerships with banks and lenders, economic development groups, local revolving loan funds etc.)
2. Community Programs (lending for community facilities)
3. Single Family Housing Programs (direct loans and other partnerships)
4. Multi-Family Housing Programs (direct loans and other partnerships)
5. Special Initiatives in California (targeted assistance to rural communities with greatest need)

At the conclusion of the forum, which was one of 43 held concurrently around the State, input was analyzed during a statewide videoconference. This live roundtable networked 20 USDA offices throughout the state and gave local forum leaders an opportunity to share and discuss their individual findings with the USDA state leadership and partners.

Here is Greg O’Sullivan from our Shasta County Economic Development Council sharing his findings from this forum during the live videoconference on January 28th.



Radical 10 in '10 “Local Venture Capital” Idea Moves Forward

One of the ideas that came out of the Radical 10 in '10 workshop held on January 7th was to create a local venture capital program that would be accessible only to local businesses who would create new local jobs. The program, most likely in the form of a revolving loan fund, would gather its funds from local people, businesses, or corporations who would receive an interest incentive. A cooperating local lender or lenders would manage the loan program, and a local organization with the proper resources and expertise, such as the Shasta County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) would need to be established to coordinate the entire program.

Redding City Councilman Dick Dickerson assisted in having this idea brought before the SCEDC Board on January 27th. They had many questions about just how the details would work, but believed the program fit into their mission and wanted to pursue it further. They instructed their Executive Committee to meet with presenters Joe and Mary Machado to work out such details and come back to the full Board with an actual framework for their consideration. In the meantime, additional interest has been shown by the local Superior California Economic Development District. A joint meeting will occur later this month to work out those “details” and bring forward a viable program. Stay tuned...more updates to follow.

Shasta FORWARD Project Comes to a Close **\$375,000 Remaining Grant Funds Focused on “SCS”**

The Shasta FORWARD Regional Blueprint process is complete, with a final report to be distributed after approval by the Board of the Shasta County Regional Transportation Agency (SCRTPA) at its February 23, 2010 meeting.

In total, 1,379 surveys were received from local residents of the entire Shasta County community. These surveys asked respondents to choose between 4 predetermined growth scenarios for the area over the next 30 years, and at least 40,000 surveys were distributed. Despite the somewhat dismal return, the SCRTPA considers the results to be a “fair sampling” of how the community wants to grow. Here are the results of those surveys that were returned:

	Current Trend	Scenario A: Rural &	Scenario B: Urban Core	Scenario C: Distinct Cit-	# of Votes by Jurisdic-
Residence	# votes	# votes	# votes	#votes	# votes
<i>Redding</i>	14 (1.7%)	42 (5.1%)	427 (52.3%)	334 (40.9%)	817 (100%)
<i>Anderson</i>	4 (4.5%)	5 (5.6%)	45 (50.6%)	35 (39.3%)	89 (100%)
<i>Shasta Lake</i>	3 (6.7%)	4 (8.9%)	21 (46.7%)	17 (37.8%)	45 (100%)
<i>County</i>	14 (5.7%)	10 (4.1%)	109 (44.5%)	112 (45.7%)	245 (100%)
Total Votes	35 (2.9%)	61 (5.1%)	602 (50.3%)	498 (41.6%)	1,196 (100%)*

**Excludes 183 surveys that did not provide a zip code.*

The entire Shasta FORWARD exercise has been described by the SCRTPA staff as **conceptual**, and they continue to state that this will not serve as an implementation plan. However, in light of the recent introduction of SB 375 legislation to force cities and counties in California to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks, and the planning requirements that go along with it, the entire Shasta FORWARD “blueprint” process is coming to a close and the \$375,000 in remaining grant funds are being directed towards a new process, the **Sustainable Communities Strategy** (SCS) planning process to address SB 375.

And what is this SCS, you may ask? This is, in fact, a **planning document** that will be required by 2014, and will indicate how the Shasta County region will reach greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that will be set for us by the State. Step one will be to “develop and apply a GIS-based “Mobility Assessment Tool (MAT)” in order to **objectively identify high-priority locations for new development.**” Step two will be to “develop a community-driven ‘Regional Priorities Compact’ for uniform local agency consideration.”

The MAT will show those areas where the VMT can be reduced, and will be generated for the SCUR towards achieving SCS goals. Are there enough acronyms here to confuse you? Perhaps if we dedicate an entire newsletter to this complex issue next month, there would be enough space to try and decipher just what all this means to our community. In the meantime, you can learn more by attending the SCRTPA Board Meeting on Tuesday, 2-23-10 at 4:00 pm, at the Shasta County Supervisors Chambers, 1450 Court Street, Redding.

Join Shasta VOICES today.

We depend on membership and other contributions.

If you are viewing this issue of “**THE VOICE**” on our website, click on the **membership tab** for information and to download a membership application or contributor form. Or, you can obtain more information by going to our website, **www.shastavoices.com**, or calling **(530) 222-5251**.

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