



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- **Shasta County has reduced their workforce from 1,923 FTE's down to 1,791 FTE's, deleting 131.5 vacant position allocations for fiscal year 2009-2010. This represents over \$13 million in unallocated salary savings since the 2006-2007 fiscal year.**
- **J.F. Shea Construction, Inc., a local contractor, has been awarded the contract for construction of the Shasta County 2009 Asphalt Concrete Overlay Project, funded by the Obama Economic Stimulus Program, in the amount of \$2,578,430.**
- **There were a total of 4 single family home permits issued in Redding in June, 2009. The total issued for the year is 42. This is 42% less than last year. The total of all permits issued this year for new and remodeled properties is 21% less than last year. The total valuation for all permits issued this year is 38% less than last year.**

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Public Pension Forum Panel Set for September 24th Event

Mark your calendars! You won't want to miss the Shasta VOICES Public Pension Forum to be held on **September 24, 2009**. It is shaping up to be one of the most highly anticipated events of the year. Tickets will be on sale in August, but we will gladly accept your reservations now (details at the bottom of this page).

The format for this event includes an expert panel representing all sides of the issues relating to the Public Employee Pension System in California and locally. This panel will be answering questions and providing information about public and private sector pension systems. Here are the distinguished panel members who will be participating:

- **Gene Bell** (Becker and Bell Consultants)— Union Negotiator for Shasta County.
- **Marcia Fritz** (or one of her representatives from the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility or CFFR) - Provided the \$100,000 pension club movement and is promoting a ballot initiative that would raise the retirement age and reduce benefits for future public employees.
- **Ed Bond** (Ed Bond Consulting) - Private Sector Pension expert.
- **Chris Darker** (UPEC and Business Manager for the Joint Council of Redding Employee Unions) - Union Representative for UPEC in Shasta County.
- **Larry Lees** (CAO for Shasta County).
- **Kurt Starman** (City Manager, City of Redding).

Also invited to sit on this panel was Rob Feckner, the President of Cal Pers Administration. As of this writing, he has not responded to our invitations.

We also have another distinguished group of local people who will be posing the questions to our panelists:

- Patricia A. "Trish" Clarke, Retired Shasta County Supervisor.
- Dave Scott, CPA in Redding.
- Maureen Gaynor, Local Business Owner, Gaynor Telesystems.

The questions will be solicited from those who live and work in our community. If you have questions for any of the panelists, or general questions about public employee pension benefits, submit them in advance to mary@shastavoices.com, or (530) 222-5251, as well as your requests for **advance reservations**. Here are the event details:

SHASTA VOICES PUBLIC PENSION FORUM (Lunch Provided)
Thursday, September 24, 2009
11:30 am—1:30 pm
Holiday Inn, Redding
1900 Hilltop Drive, Redding, CA 96002
Tickets: \$25 each or \$250 for a table

Privatization Study Under Way

One thing you learn quickly when involved in the research and information gathering process is that there is no shortage of information to gather on subjects of great interest to the masses. That is certainly the case with the Shasta VOICES study on the concept of "Privatization of Public Services" in the Shasta County area that is currently under way.

There are plenty of interesting opinions about privatizing public services, and all of these will be described in depth in our final study document, but we have found the actual facts and figures about which government services are currently provided by the private sector in Redding and Shasta County to be just as interesting.

Just to give you a taste of what we've learned, the City of Redding, for instance, has awarded private contracts on City projects from just about every department that total **\$202,794,424.08** since January 1, 2004. These include everything from street maintenance and repair to water, wastewater, recreational facility, airport improvements, and other operational services. This amount does not include such things as City janitorial services, landscape maintenance, and animal control, among many other services that are contracted out on a regular basis.

The County of Shasta contracts out services such as software maintenance and support, computerized inmate education, fire protection, conflict indigent defense services, mental health services, a host of social services, and construction and engineering services, to name just a few. A good 80 percent of County services are mandated, creating great challenges in determining how to best provide those services. Considering all options seems to have become the norm for Shasta County management.

Of course, we will detail many more examples of privatization in our area, including great success stories as well as unsuccessful experiences. You will learn about the cost-effectiveness and efficient provision of public services by our local governments. We will discuss potential opportunities that could be explored for an effective and efficient way to provide desired public services. You will learn about the various forms of privatization beyond "outsourcing" or contracting. You will learn how our government officials view the various forms of privatization. You will learn how our local unions and the employees they represent view the concept of privatization. You will hear from the business community and some elected officials as well. All points of view will be presented. Stay tuned for the final document, which should be completed in late August.

Shasta FORWARD Project Update

The Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency (SCRTPA) has been the lead agency for the Shasta FORWARD Regional Blueprint Project, which began in 2006. The primary goal of this project was to "attain regional consensus on a preferred regional growth vision for Shasta County through the year 2050; a vision that best reflects the values and priorities of local residents and accounts for available resources." In plain English, they are supposed to find out what the general public wants regarding future growth in their community. At least, that is what the public has heard.

So far, the SCRTPA has been awarded **\$715,000** in grant money from the Department of Transportation. In accepting the grants, SCRTPA agreed to partner with the State to improve mobility and help advance the practice of blueprint planning in California. The *real* motivation behind the Shasta FORWARD project is specifically to "look for ways to maximize the benefit of existing transportation investments." How has this taxpayer money been spent so far?

The grant money continues to be spent on the "modeling of alternative growth scenarios" to be presented to the SCRTPA Board at its next scheduled meeting on July 28, 2009 in the Shasta County Supervisors Chambers. The Board will be asked to approve the second phase of "public outreach" and the selection of a preferred growth vision. You may recall the last effort at "public outreach" last summer. It produced a mere 1,700 responses in a County of 180,000 people. This is not exactly what you would call a regional consensus, but even at that level, the majority of respondents said they rather liked their community to continue to grow the same way it has already. Oddly enough, this is not one of the choices being presented in the "alternative growth scenarios." So much for the desires of the general public.

We already have a general plan process in place, and it has been publicly acknowledged that the Shasta FORWARD program will not be a replacement for existing planning processes. But, regardless of the fact that the cities of Redding and Anderson and the County of Shasta have *not* expressed support for the continuation of this program, nor have their respective planning commissions, the Shasta FORWARD program forges on. One has to wonder why.

Nevertheless, a final report containing findings and recommendations of the Shasta FORWARD project will be presented for Board consideration at the December 8, 2009 regularly scheduled SCRTPA meeting. Having no jurisdiction over the planning processes in each of their cities and the County, we can only speculate what they will do with such findings.

“Matrix” Revisited

Back in late 2007, Shasta VOICES created a “Matrix” of traffic impact fees and other building and development impact fees in the City of Redding to demonstrate the cumulative effect of such fees on the local community. At that time, additional new fees, particularly (but not only) for traffic, were being proposed, and we wanted City staff and City Council members to pay attention to the negative implications of adding even more fees to those that already existed. And, pay attention they did. It took 2 years of opposition by our organization and others, but those proposed fees were defeated.

Let’s take a look at what has happened since then. The full “Matrix” document is continually updated to reflect changes that occur. Here is a *reduced* “Matrix” table to show the “then” and “now” numbers for just two types of construction: a typical 2400 square foot single family home in Redding, and a 100,000 square foot high generation commercial or retail building in Redding.

Fee Description	2400 SF Single Family Home January 2008	2400 SF Single Family Home July 2009	100,000 SF High Generation Commercial/Retail	100,000 SF High Generation Commercial/Retail
Existing Traffic Impact Fees	\$ 4,753	\$ 5,149	\$ 2,040,700	\$ 2,348,500
<i>Additional</i> Citywide NRTBD Traffic Impact Fee (Oasis Road area)	\$ 407	\$ 441	\$ 183,200	\$ 187,800
<i>Additional</i> NRTBD Traffic Impact Fee if Building in that District	\$ 4,058	\$ 4,396	\$ 1,826,300	\$ 1,872,000
TOTAL TRAFFIC FEES:				
Citywide	\$ 5,160	\$ 5,590	\$ 2,223,900	\$ 2,536,300
NRTBD	\$ 8,811	\$ 9,545	\$ 3,867,000	\$ 4,220,500
TOTAL ALL OTHER TYPICAL BUILDING AND IMPACT FEES	\$ 28,270	\$ 30,818	Varies Greatly	Varies Greatly
TOTAL ALL FEES:				
Citywide	\$ 33,430	\$ 36,408	Varies Greatly	Varies Greatly
NRTBD	\$ 37,081	\$ 40,363		
Proposed Additional Fees				
Fix 5 or SCRIP	\$ 1,697	\$ 1,697	\$ 426,200	\$ 426,200
Joint City/County	<u>\$ 4,171</u>	<u>\$ 4,171</u>	<u>\$ 189,600</u>	<u>\$ 189,600</u>
TOTAL DEFEATED	\$ 5,868	\$ 5,868	\$ 615,800	\$ 615,800

It could be a while before the economy recovers, and builders are building again. We can only hope that when it does, the cost to build something in Redding is not out of reach for those consumers who would be buying once again.

Rancho Road Retail Center Approved; Appeal Followed

At the City of Redding Planning Commission meeting held on June 23, 2009, a public hearing was conducted to receive comments on the use permit application for the Rancho Road Retail Center, to be constructed at the northwest corner of Shasta View Drive and Rancho Road.

This shopping center will include 92,200 square feet of retail shopping on ten acres that is zoned as a Shopping Center District. It consists of a 60,000 square foot grocery store and six retail-pad buildings, two with drive-through service, adding another 32,000 square feet.

The planning commission, after hearing 4 1/2 hours of testimony from concerned homeowners in the area, approved the use permit and adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Area homeowners did not waste any time filing appeals of this decision to the Planning Department, which will be brought to the Redding City Council.

Though most of these property owners say they are not opposed to the project, they are concerned about a noise study that seemed inconsistent, the proposed height of sound walls, the location of proposed loading docks at the grocery store site, the hours of operation, parking lot lighting effects, impacts on adjacent vernal pools, and traffic congestion issues on Shasta View Drive and Rancho Road.

At the hearing, there were many questions asked that went unanswered, and the affected property owners would like those questions answered. There were also alternatives suggested by those property owners, and they would like to have their potential solutions seriously considered.

The tentative date for the appeal to be heard by the City Council in the form of a public hearing is during the regularly scheduled City Council meeting on August 18, 2009.

HelioMist Systems Approved Despite REU Objection

A company by the name of AC Research Lab has developed a new energy-efficient product known as the HelioMist. The product is designed to attach to residential air conditioners to reduce energy consumption. They sent a proposal to the Redding Electric Utility (REU) to install these pre-cooling mister systems at qualifying homes in the Redding area, asking for an opportunity to meet with REU management for consideration. It has been clearly publicized that REU is looking for ways to reduce energy consumption, and employ methods that are "green."

But, the REU management personnel did not meet with this company. They instead just said "no." That did not seem to be fair treatment to AC Research Lab, who asked for and obtained a hearing before the Redding City Council at its June 16th meeting.

The City Council was surprised to learn that REU management, who wrote an unfavorable review of the HelioMist proposal, had never even met with AC Research Lab owners to discuss the benefits and potential of installing their product in Redding.

After listening to the AC Research Lab owner and creator of the HelioMist product, along with testimony from Jay Gibson of Gibson Heating and Air in Redding, the City Council voted 3-1 to authorize installation of 25 HelioMisters at an approximate cost of \$1,450 each, or \$36,250. They felt that this *did* fit right in with the City's goal of reducing energy consumption, and providing older homes with upgrades through the REU funds that are set aside specifically for this purpose.

REU has a limited amount of "Public Benefit" funds available for energy-efficient rebates and initiatives. These are allocated for customer assistance programs, as required. This is the program that will be utilized to pay for the installation of the HelioMisters, once the homes that will benefit the most have been identified.

Perhaps REU will not be so quick to dismiss other forms of new energy technology products in the future.

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**.

Mary B. Machado, Executive Director