



The VOICE

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Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- The City of Redding Development Services Department has experienced a significant reduction in staffing. Services once provided at the Permit Center on Fridays have been modified. Consultations with planners, plans examiners, plan check engineers, and land development and engineering staff are only available now by appointment.
- There are currently 58,000 people on Medicare in Shasta County.
- A preliminary site has been selected for the new Shasta County Courthouse. The State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has selected the "Oregon Street" site (across the street from the existing courthouse) as their preferred site to build a new 178,000 square foot Courthouse. Backup sites include Redding's South City Park (softball field) and the former Casa Blanca Motel site on North Market Street. The AOC plans to spend up to \$212 million to build the new Courthouse.

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Giving Thanks ...

In the spirit of Thanksgiving season, Shasta VOICES would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to the people and events that helped us all get through another rough economic year in our community.

Thanks go out to the City Council members from Anderson and Redding, and the Shasta County Supervisors who finally killed the "Fix 5/SCRIP" proposed impact fees in April. After considering all sides of the issue, they just said no to the idea that local new homebuyers should foot the bill for adding a lane in each direction on I-5. As suggested by Shasta VOICES from the beginning, the federal government has agreed that this is, in fact, their responsibility. Federal funding is now being sought for this project.

Redding City Manager Kurt Starman deserves a round of applause for proposing a commercial construction incentive program that helps provide flexible cash flow and a financing option by deferring impact fee payments. This was approved by the City Council in April.

A special thank you to Redding City Manager Kurt Starman, Shasta County CAO Larry Lees, public employee union representatives Chris Darker and Steve Allen for their support and participation in the Shasta VOICES "Privatization of Public Services Study" which was completed in August, and the "Public Pension Forum" held on September 24th. Their input has been and will continue to be invaluable going forward.

Thanks also go out to our Shasta County Regional Transportation Agency, together with all its jurisdictions, for aggressively pursuing any and all Obama Stimulus funds (called ARRA funds) available to our community. Approximately \$25 million has been received so far for transportation related projects, with more pending approval.

Other ARRA funds totaling about \$3.3 million have also been received in the area for "workforce services" and "weatherization" based on the combined efforts of the Shasta Builders Exchange, The SMART center, and Shasta College.

Everyone who drives Bechelli Lane is very appreciative of the recent repaving and other improvements made to the road from Cypress Avenue to Bonneyview Road. During this great recession, it's reassuring to know that the City of Redding is willing and able to maintain its streets.

Thank you to the Redding firefighters who have made wage and benefit concessions that not only offer real money savings in these dire times, but demonstrate the leadership necessary to actually put public safety first.

Lastly, thank you to all the supporters of Shasta VOICES. We are making a positive difference to the economic opportunity in the community because of you. We are looking forward to another successful year in 2010. *Happy Thanksgiving!*



Redding's Radical 10 in 10

It takes true leadership to invest in new ideas that could help job growth in Redding. Kent Dagg, the CEO for the Shasta Builders Exchange, has demonstrated such leadership in creating a *radical* concept he has coined "Radical 10 in 10."

The concept behind the name was to gather 10 other willing and able business leaders in the Redding area to propose at least 10 "out-of-the-box" ideas for creating jobs to boost the local economy, and **do it now** so that they could begin in 2010. Waiting for our government officials to do something just hasn't worked. Those 10 willing and able business leaders who accepted his challenge include:

1. **Les Melburg**, Principal at Nichols, Melburg & Rossetto (Architects)
2. **Tracy Edwards**, Tribal CEO of Redding Rancheria
3. **Greg Clark**, Assistant to the Redding City Manager
4. **Ryan Denham**, General Manager of SJ Denham Chrysler/Jeep
5. **Jerry Wagar**, President of Ochoa and Shehan Builders
6. **Maureen Gaynor**, President of Gaynor Teleysystems
7. **Frank Strazzarino**, CEO of the Redding Chamber of Commerce
8. **Kurt Starman**, Redding City Manager
9. **Mary Machado**, Executive Director of Shasta VOICES
10. **Marie Whitacre**, Government Affairs Director for the Shasta Association of Realtors.

Kent Dagg first announced his radical plan at the Redding City Council meeting on November 3rd. He did outline several rough ideas, which were received unenthusiastically due to lack of detail on how they would actually work. These included impact fee waivers, a one year sales tax increase for local infrastructure projects, and creating a local California Conservation Corp. Of course, each of these and other ideas does, indeed, need to be detailed and refined before actually presenting its benefits. The committee will be charged with bringing such data before the Council, and generating a much more positive and enthusiastic response at the December 1st Council meeting. It should be noted that not every idea to be brought forward affects the City of Redding or requires any action or approval by the City.

The first meeting of the committee was held on November 4th, and was full of the energy needed to make recommendations that could certainly work towards creating jobs, as well as providing a boost for everyone who lives in the area. Many ideas were discussed. Each member will refine an idea and bring it forward at their next meeting.

Radical? Maybe. Creative? Absolutely. Necessary? That would be the understatement of the century.

Privatization Evaluation Committee (PEC) and Convention Center/Visitors Center Update

The PEC committee has chosen an interesting way to determine which City provided services may be considered for outsourcing or some sort of privatization to help solve the budget crisis.

It appears that they are content to just invite various department heads to come to their meetings and justify what they do, how they do it, and how much taxpayers pay for them to do it.

At this rate, the committee will accomplish nothing. Why would they expect any city department head, or employee for that matter, to help them determine if any part of the work they do could be done by somebody else for less? Instead, they get seemingly endless explanations of why things cannot be changed, complete with the history of how it got this way in the first place,

and how dedicated and talented city employees are. But, understanding how they feel, all sides of these issues need to be considered, not just theirs.

The situation with the Convention and Visitors Center is a case in point. The Community Services Advisory Commissioners charged with studying the potential for outsourcing all or part of these departments have spent over 7 months hearing from staff that everything is perfect the way it is, that everyone loves the staff, and there is nobody out there that can do any better, even though they are losing \$1.2 million each year. *Something* has to change.

The commissioners run into staff resistance with every suggestion and request for information. At their most recent meeting, city staff claimed not to know

how to create or obtain a sample "Request for Information (RFI)." The commissioners have, in fact, identified at least three companies that they would like to approach regarding management of the Convention Center. Rather than agreeing to produce an RFI (sample or otherwise), the staff offered no answers when questioned about the process. All they needed to do was contact their own Purchasing Department. That's what the general public does (successfully).

So, if any progress is to be made, it will require that those chosen to pursue opportunities for outsourcing or some other form of privatizing will need to bypass staff members to obtain the information they need in order to properly do their job.

Shasta FORWARD Update

The second and final phase of the Shasta FORWARD public outreach effort concluded on September 30, 2009. This phase included the gathering of surveys from residents in Shasta County. The surveys were intended to determine what the general public wants their community to look in the future, asking them to select one of 4 growth scenarios that had been predetermined during phase one of the project by the project's steering committee.

Over 33,000 surveys were distributed through the local newspaper, and many more at public locations such as the Redding Library, during the months of August and September. Public meetings were also held to "assist" interested people in completing the complex surveys. There was even a video presentation on KIXE Channel 9 television to generate responses.

The results have yet to be officially tallied. Only about 2,500 surveys were actually completed, and the level of awareness about the program was higher than the responses. Though the Shasta County Regional Planning Agency (SCRTPA) seems pleased with this number of returns, it hardly seems representative of a County that includes 180,000 people. But nonetheless, they plan to use it as a tool to influence future transportation and land planning decisions in the region.

A presentation of the final report will be made at the February 23, 2010 SCRTPA meeting, as well as "recommendations for an implementation plan." It will be interesting to hear about such a plan, given the fact that this supposedly "is not a replacement for existing planning processes." \$715,000 in taxpayer funded grants from the California Regional Blueprint Planning Program has been received for the project. Shasta FORWARD is described as such a "Blueprint Planning Program" which serves as a prerequisite to participate in certain transportation funding programs.

Apparently there is money left over from the grants, and plans are to use it for *additional* assessments of high growth areas and infrastructure. It appears that until the money runs out, they will find ways to continue such projects.

And So It Begins... Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Law, SB375

In 2006, the California legislature passed AB 32, "the global warming solution act of 2006" which requires the State to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 1990 levels no later than 2020. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), in 1990 those emissions from automobiles and light trucks were 108 million metric tons, but by 2004 these emissions had increased to 135 million metric tons.

They claim the transportation sector contributes 40 percent of the GHG throughout the state, with 30 percent coming from automobiles and light trucks alone.

Senate Bill 375 (SB375) provides a means of achieving AB 32 goals from cars and light trucks.

In March of this year, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) moved forward with its implementation of SB375 by assembling a Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC). The RTAC was tasked with creating a recommended methodology for obtaining regional greenhouse gas emissions targets. Their work has been completed.

Now, CARB is preparing to propose draft targets by June 2010, and final targets by September 2010.

If you've gotten lost with all these government acronyms, what this all means in simple terms is that our community is being forced to participate and comply with new requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Because we are being forced to do so, public input into the process is also required.

The problem with the government's understanding of "public input" is that they consider one public hearing on the subject matter to be enough public input.

Clearly, every single business and industry in the Shasta County area, as well as anybody who drives a car or small truck, will be affected by these emission reduction "targets." It only makes sense that each and every affected person has an opportunity to have input into the process.

Our Shasta County Regional Transportation Agency (SCRTPA) will be charged with implementing the eventual "targets." They will be the agency gathering public input locally, and creating a recommendation to the CARB based at least in part on public input (we hope).

Shasta VOICES has requested of the SCRTPA that all industries, including (but not limited to) agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, timber, real estate, restaurant, service and retail be included in discussions relating to SB375 "targets." Their initial response was positive. We hope to hear just when such discussions will take place soon.

The next SCRTPA meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 8th** at the City of Anderson's Council Chambers (1887 Howard Street) at **4:00 p.m.** That may be the first opportunity to officially offer your participation in these discussions. Plan now to be there!

Marijuana Dispensaries Causing Great Debate in Shasta County

California's Proposition 215, known as the Compassionate Use Act, was approved by voters in 1996. It allows patients suffering from cancer, glaucoma and other illnesses, as well as their caregivers, to grow and possess the marijuana drug to ease their discomfort without being subject to criminal prosecution under certain state statutes.

Concerns by patients and law enforcement that the law was too ambiguous prompted the Legislature in 2003 to clarify just how much pot could be grown legally. California guidelines, called the Medical Marijuana Program, currently allow half a pound of dried marijuana and six mature or 12 immature plants for patients who obtain a doctor's recommendation. In addition, the law gave cities and counties flexibility to adopt more generous guidelines. State law also permits nonprofit cultivation cooperatives where patients can, in effect, pool individual plant limits.

Officials throughout the State say the law is so permissive that almost anyone can get a doctor's "recommendation" needed to grow their own marijuana or buy it at dispensaries. ID cards, which patients can use as proof they have a physician's recommendation for medicinal cannabis, are voluntary. Some doctors recommend that their patients be allowed to grow many more plants than the suggested ceiling.

And the officials say they're powerless to do much about it.

But in the Shasta County area, officials are trying to craft regulations to deal with the fast-growing marijuana cooperative dispensary "industry" (and we use that term lightly). Some adverse affects from medical marijuana dispensaries and the cultivation of marijuana for medical purposes are being experienced locally, such as strong disagreeable odors, increased risk of crimes such as burglary and robbery, loitering, increases in traffic, noise, the sale of illegal drugs, dispensaries located next to schools, multiple dispensaries in the same shopping center, and degradation of the natural environment.

One such dispensary in Redding even advertises a "free joint" with every visit and "happy hour" Monday-Friday from 4:20 –5:20 pm. It is difficult to believe that this meets the intended purpose and definition of "compassionate use." Without local regulations, our cities and unincorporated areas could be overly populated with these types of dispensaries who are taking advantage of a temporary lack of rules. And it began when the US Attorney General stated recently that "the federal government will halt raids on legal dispensaries."

Unfortunately, local officials did not act fast enough to set up some "rules" to address these dispensaries. Ordinances are now being written and zoning plans are being amended in the cities in Shasta County, as well as the County itself, to deal with the sudden appearance of so many dispensaries, as well as the cultivation of marijuana. Moratoriums are in place as local jurisdictions do their best to come up with the right combination of rules and regulations that make sense to protect the rights and safety of *all* citizens.

The process of developing these local rules and regulations is a *public* process. All sides of the issue need to be heard and taken into consideration. Don't hesitate to take advantage of this opportunity if you live anywhere in the Shasta County area! Check your City Council and Shasta County meeting agendas (available on-line) regularly to see when the subject matter comes up for public discussion.

Join Shasta VOICES today. We depend on membership and other contributions.

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