



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **17 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in October 2020, for a total of **152** so far in 2020, and **one** Carr Fire single family rebuild permit issued in October 2020, for a total of **30** so far in 2020. There were **2** permit issued for new commercial buildings in October 2020, for a total of **27** so far in 2020.
- The **Redding Lighted Christmas Parade**, hosted by the Active 20-30 Club of Redding, has been a holiday tradition for decades in downtown Redding. Due to Covid-19, it will be held at the **Shasta District Fair and Event Center this year, on December 5th**, beginning at 6:00 pm. All entries will be stationary displays, while spectators will be in their vehicles driving through the parade route. This year's theme is "Christmas Candyland."



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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 our entire community for doing their best to help fight the COVID pandemic that has had a devastating effect in Shasta County. Despite the many challenges associated with this virus, we are continuing our participation efforts to assist in any way possible, and there are some good things happening locally:

■ We are thankful that Redding City Council approved a plan to support local businesses with **\$750,000** in Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding, with business relief grants up to \$10,000, to help local Redding businesses struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent requirements to implement social distancing measures. As a first come, first served program, the City was able to fund a total of **121 individual businesses**. Shasta County Supervisors also approved a **\$22.7 million** CARES Act spending plan for the period of March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020, with a total of **\$4 million** in the form of grant funds allocated to our local struggling businesses, which has (so far) funded **370 businesses**, and has funding available for perhaps 100 more. We are extremely grateful to Jake Mangas, President and CEO of the Redding Chamber of Commerce, for taking the lead on distributing these CARES Act grant funds quickly through the Forward Redding Foundation.

■ We are thankful that Redding Electric Utility (REU) gave back a total of **\$2 million** to all of its 44,000 customers in the form of a "volumetric refund" on electric utility bills in March and April of this year, just when the lockdowns due to the pandemic began. REU also has temporarily suspended late fees and utility shut-offs.

■ We are thankful that despite the pandemic, **building activity in Redding continues to boom**, as construction and related support services and employees were deemed as an "essential service" and allowed to continue during this pandemic. The total number of new permits drawn through October 2020 exceed those for the same period in 2019, including 30 additional Carr Fire rebuilds.

■ We are thankful that Redding City Council approved both the \$50 million **Dignity Health Redding North State Pavilion Project** to be located at the southwest corner of Cypress and Hartnell Avenues, and the **River Crossing Marketplace/Costco Project** to be located at the northeast corner of South Bonnyview Road and Bechelli Lane.

■ We are thankful that the Shasta County Board of Supervisors approved a new zoning amendment in June 2020 that finally allows **wireless internet facilities** in the rural areas of Shasta County, providing the availability of reliable and affordable internet services. We are grateful to regional wireless internet service providers, led by Andy Main from Shasta Beam, for their efforts to craft and help implement this amendment and regulations.

■ We are thankful that Shasta County is in the process of updating and improving their existing Facilities Impact Fee Program for the first time in 12 years, and we continue to participate in that process. We are also grateful for changes made to Shasta County Planning Division fees beginning in 2020 which **decreased** many (but not all) fees.

Lastly, thank you to all the supporters of Shasta VOICES. We are making a positive difference in the economic opportunity in our community because of you, as we participate in and advocate for these and many other businesses and issues.

County Provides Report on Facilities Impact Fees and Finally Refunds Over-charged Traffic Impact Fees

On May 6, 2008, Shasta County adopted Public Facilities Impact Fees by County Ordinance No. 665. These impact fees were implemented on July 1, 2008. California Government Code section 66006(b)(1) requires an annual report be made. The **current** annual report for the Public Facilities Impact Fees was approved by the Shasta County Supervisors on November 3, 2020. It details impact fees collected during the period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, public improvements made in which fees have been expended, and remaining fund balances ending June 30, 2020:

Total Fees Collected current period plus interest: \$ 1,345,158.62; Total Ending Fund Balance: \$5,873,836.88

Shasta County has only had **one** public improvement in which fees have been expended since the inception of the fee program in May of 2008. That was for the Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility in the amount of \$170,000 in 2011/12 and \$40,000 in 2012/13. The County has approved in the 2020/21 budget process to utilize impact fee funds towards the \$7 million South County Fire Station. Currently, there is a total ending balance in the Fire Protection Fee revenue account of \$1,045,341, all of which has been dedicated towards the South County Fire Station.

The only other expenditure to date since the establishment of the fees is \$82,288 for administration and professional services. A total of \$39,829 of that amount was spent in 2019/20 for the new and currently pending **Impact Fee Study** which is set to be completed in 2020/21. Shasta VOICES is continuing to participate in this study.

Additionally, as reported in our August newsletter, on August 25, 2020, the Shasta County Supervisors voted unanimously to approve an **ordinance amendment** for Ordinance 665 of Shasta County.

The amendment establishes a **traffic impact fee** exclusively applicable to **mini-storage development** retroactive to May 6, 2008. "Mini-storage" is defined as a building in which a number of storage units or vaults are rented for the storage of goods; each unit is physically separated from other units, and access is usually provided through an overhead door or other common access point.

The amendment to the impact fee ordinance **retroactively adjusted the traffic impact fee rate** for mini-storage facilities back to 2008; therefore, **the County will issue partial refunds** (including interest) to those who overpaid traffic impact fees for mini-storage development from May 6, 2008 through August 25, 2020. It was anticipated on August 25th that that the total amount to be refunded was about \$190,000 plus interest. Fast forward to the Board of Supervisors meeting on **November 17th**. A budget amendment was needed "increasing appropriations by **\$464,800**," along with the use of restricted fund balance monies in the Traffic and Administration Impact Fee Accounts for traffic impact fee refunds. It may have taken 11 years, but finally the appropriate refunds are being made!

City's General Fund Remains Stable Despite Covid-19

At the November 17th Redding City Council meeting, a financial report for the first quarter of fiscal year 2020-2021, which ended September 30, 2020, was presented. Total revenues to date are very close to projections. Here are the highlights:

Total revenue to-date is \$17,292,206, only 1.4 percent below staff's cash flow projection. Here are the sources of revenue that were actually **above** projections: **Sales tax revenue** totaled \$7,656,827, which was 15.6 percent above cash flow projections. **Licenses and permit revenue** totaled \$625,709, which was 26.4 percent above projections. **Charges for current services** totaled \$940,792, which was 42 percent above projections.

There was also another source of revenues that was above projections, **Fines and penalties**, with "reported" revenues totaling **\$15,816,709** (no, that's not a misprint), or \$15,571,900 above projections, which requires some explanation. This is largely due to cannabis enforcement fines that are somewhere near \$1,000 per illegal plant. City staff has deemed the majority of these fines as uncollectable, and made an adjustment to bad debts of \$14,637,739. Apparently, when code enforcement makes a citation for illegal grows within the city limits, the next day the plants are cut down and gone - making the culprit compliant again. It is unclear why this was even reported as revenue, but nonetheless, it was in the report. Perhaps upcoming changes to the cannabis ordinance will prove to be more enforceable when dealing with the black market.

Property tax totaled \$331,041, which was 54% **below** projections. There is apparently some lag time on receiving these funds, which should be corrected in the next budget to better reflect the receipt schedule.

Revenues from other governmental agencies totaled \$515,619, which was 75 percent **below** projections. This is due to the timing of various capital projects.

All remaining revenues were 39.4 percent below projections, largely because of the decision to waive utility late fees projected to be about \$425,000 for July to September. As of September 30th, the General Fund Cash Balance was \$11,612,925 (14.1 percent, with year end projections at 13.1 percent).

County To Spend \$3,850,000 To Purchase Building for “Future Needs”

On November 17th, Shasta County Supervisors were set to approve the purchase of real property located at 6590 Lockheed Drive in Redding for **\$3,850,000**, saying it would “provide versatility to meet current and future County needs.” A budget amendment was set to be approved transferring “appropriations in the amount of \$3,850,000 from the General Fund Balance to the General Fund Capital Asset Fund.” The purchase agreement agenda item, however, was continued to a future date due to a timing issue by the seller, and will come back for approval as soon as possible.

The property is a one story 15,860 square-foot office building with a 1,220 square foot fully conditioned shop and 73-space marked parking lot. County staff anticipates that the immediate use will be an **Emergency Operations Center**. Historically, the County has leased space or have set up a command post at the Fairgrounds for various local, state and federal emergencies that have occurred in the north state over the past several years.

The property also has been approved for an additional 6,000 square foot office building on an undeveloped area of the property. Future growth of this area is anticipated to be for the **Sheriff's Patrol Division**.

Where is the purchase money actually come from, one might ask? There is a program budget unit in the County's annual budget documents called the “Accumulated Capital Outlay” program, labeled as Fund 0040, budget unit 161 in the County's **2020-2021** annual budget document. This program is a designation of funds to be held in **reserve** for future capital projects. This reserve provides resources for capital programs that would otherwise adversely impact the General Fund. In that document, specifically page 83, there is a budget request listing \$12,744,025 as a “transfer-out” for these projects:

Jail ADA and **other Sheriff projects**—\$6,755,000; South County Fire Station—\$5,849,025; Burney Library—\$140,000.

There is a fund balance remaining in this Accumulated Capital Outlay program after these appropriations are made of about \$13.3 million. Within the next five years, the County will undertake a number of significant projects, including repurposing the old Courthouse and Courthouse Annex, and the Justice Center, using this program.

Department of Interior Revokes Agreement and Halts Redding Rancheria's Casino Expansion

In a critical announcement on November 16th, the Department of the Interior has officially **invalidated** the Rancheria Restored Lands “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU), which was enacted in 2016 between the Department of the Interior and the Redding Rancheria. The Redding Rancheria (Tribe) **cannot proceed as previously proposed with their Casino relocation and expansion at Strawberry Fields in Shasta County**. Here are excerpts from the letter sent to the Tribe that provide some historical context to help explain this determination:

“In **2003**, the Redding Rancheria (Tribe) submitted a request to the Department of the Interior (Department) to take lands known as “Strawberry Fields” into **trust** for the Tribe. In **2008**, the Tribe requested that the Department determine the Strawberry Fields would qualify for **gaming** under the Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) pursuant to IGRA's “restored lands” exception. On December 22, **2010**, the Department **denied** the Tribe's request, concluding in part that the Strawberry Fields did not constitute restored lands because the Tribe was already gaming on other Indian lands. In **2015**, the United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit disagreed in part, because the Secretary of the Interior had not considered the effect of the Tribe's willingness to close its existing gaming facility and move it to the Strawberry Fields, and remanded the Secretary to do so.

In October, **2016**, the Tribe, the Department, and the National Indian Gaming Commission executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) memorializing the parties' mutual understanding that the Strawberry Fields could satisfy the restored lands requirements if the Tribe permanently closed its Win-River Casino or any other gaming operation. Not only did the Department enter the MOU **without** opportunity for public comment or consultation with other federally recognized tribes, since then the Department has received numerous comments expressing concern over the MOU from public, tribal, and private parties.

Recently, the California Supreme Court issued a decision confirming the authority of that state's Governor to concur in a two-part Secretarial determination under IGRA. In light of that decision, the Department reconsidered the MOU and determined the MOU to be inconsistent with the long-standing interpretation of IGRA's implementing regulations. **Specifically, the Department's 2010 prior Restored Lands Decision that the Strawberry Fields parcel is not eligible for gaming was the correct application of the regulations. Accordingly, the Department has withdrawn its participation in the MOU.**

As noted above, the California Supreme Court has confirmed that the **two-part** Secretarial determination section of the IGRA provides an established, valid and legal avenue through which the Tribe can pursue a new gaming venue.”

The two-part determination means that gaming can occur on the land if the Secretary of the Interior, **after** consultation with appropriate state and local officials, and officials of nearby tribes, determines that a gaming establishment on newly-acquired land will be in the best interest of the tribe and its members, and **not detrimental to the surrounding community**. The Governor of the state in which the gaming activities are to occur must concur with the Secretary's determination.

Updated News and Notes

Shasta VOICES is continuing to monitor and follow many issues of interest to our supporters and the community. As part of our efforts to keep you updated and informed, here is a brief update of some of these issues.

Costco Purchases Property That Will Anchor River Crossing Marketplace—As of October 30th, 2020, public records show that Costco Wholesale Corporation purchased the property at the northeast corner of South Bonnyview Road and Bechelli Lane from the Rother Family Revocable Trust for \$7.1 million. This is the location where Costco plans to build a new 152,000 square-foot discount warehouse with up to 30 fueling stations in the River Crossing Marketplace, which plans to have an additional 62,000 square feet of complimentary retail, service and restaurant uses. On October 20, 2020, Redding City Council approved the transportation infrastructure agreement with Costco Wholesale Corporation and Rich Development Enterprises (Costco-Rich) for transportation improvements for the I-5/South Bonnyview interchange and South Bonnyview Road and Bechelli Lane. Construction of the improvements should begin in summer 2021 and be completed the following spring.

Stress Ribbon Bridge on Sacramento River Trail Receives Generous Gift—On November 17th, the Redding City Council accepted a generous gift in the amount of **\$1 million** in memory of Susan Emmerson for public art, maintenance and improvements to the City of Redding Stress Ribbon Bridge on the Sacramento River Trail. This project is generously funded by George Emmerson and his family in honor of Susan Emmerson, who passed unexpectedly in July 2020. She was a wife, mother of four sons, and a “Grammie.” She was an artist and taught art for many years at local schools. The Sacramento River Trail was one of her favorite destinations, and she walked the trail regularly with her husband and friends. An artist with relevant experience to design, construct and install a unique public art experience piece will be selected and commissioned, and a dedication plaque/monument will be located near the Stress Ribbon Bridge. The bridge improvements will include adding a thin layer of polyester concrete over the 450-linear foot, sanding and repainting the steel railings, and sandblasting abutment walls and coating with an anti-graffiti seal. To ensure the artwork, the bridge, and the surrounding area are to be maintained regularly, a year-round part-time position will be added to the City staff, with \$350,000 of the total gift amount to be held in an interest-earning account dedicated to funding the future maintenance. It is anticipated that the work will begin by spring 2021, and completed by spring 2022.



First Building Goes Vertical in Stillwater Business Park—It's been just over four months since PACE Engineering broke ground at Stillwater Business Park in Redding, on Parcel 3 in Stillwater Business Park, located at 5155 Venture Parkway. PACE is a consulting engineering firm currently located in Redding on South Street near downtown. They have outgrown their current facility, and are currently building a new 22,000 square foot single story office building to become their new company headquarters. This is the **first actual building** being constructed in Stillwater Business Park since its development by the City of Redding, which began in earnest in 2006, to provide large “ready-to-go” sites for industries with all entitlements in place, flexible zoning, and utilities extended to each of the 16 developed sites. The vision for Stillwater is that it will be a magnet for companies seeking access to western markets.



Shasta County Has Historically Largest Voter Turnout For November 3rd General Election—The November 3, 2020 General Election saw a record 112,723 total registered voters in Shasta County (as of 11-19-20): 56,351 Republican (50%), 25,951 Democrat (23%), 22,999 No Party Preference (20%), and 7,422 Other (7%). There were a record 91,378 votes cast during the election. That is another record with over 82% in voter turnout.

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We depend on membership and other contributions.

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