



# The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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### Did you know...

- There were **15 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in May 2021, for a total of **70** in 2021. There were **2 Carr Fire** single family rebuild permit issued in May 2021, for a total of **16** in 2021. That is **19 fewer** than for the same period in 2020. There was **one** permit issued for new commercial buildings in May 2021, for a total of **5** in 2021. That is **7 fewer** than for the same period in 2020.
- Annual inflationary adjustments to City of Redding fees, if applied, will be either **3.94%** for those fees using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for annual increases, or **5.01%** for those fees using the Construction Cost Index (CCI) for annual increases. Not all City fees charged are subject to inflation clauses and increases. A Master Fee Schedule is available on the City's website for a very long list of fees taking effect on July 1, 2021.
- There are 5,100 persons unemployed (drawing unemployment benefits) in Shasta County, and there are **4,396 open jobs** in Shasta County. Workforce shortages are occurring in almost all job sectors in the County.

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## Planning Commission Denies Use Permit for Fountain Wind Project Appeal To Supervisors Will Be Filed

A Shasta County Planning Commission meeting specifically for the Fountain Wind Project Public Hearing was held on **Tuesday, June 22, 2021**. The marathon meeting, which was held at the Shasta College Theatre with a 425 seating capacity, started at 1:00 pm and did not conclude until after 11:00 pm. The Theatre was almost filled to capacity.

The Fountain Wind Project is a renewable wind energy generation development proposed on about 4,464 acres in unincorporated Northeastern Shasta County, near the existing Hatchet Ridge wind farm near Burney. The Project would provide **many benefits** to Shasta County including a Community Development Program up to **\$2 million** with direct investment in Round Mountain and Montgomery Creek, partnering with SHASTABEAM to provide **high-speed internet service** in the Intermountain Region, badly needed **fuel reduction** projects, 200 well-paying construction jobs, \$60 million in total economic output, \$60 million in new property tax over 30 years, and \$4 million in one time sales tax revenues.

The Shasta County Planning staff recommended approval of the use permit for the Project. But after 10 hours of testimony, the Planning Commissioners **voted unanimously to deny the use permit for the project**.

The procedure for this hearing was **unusual** in a number of ways. There were 13 “groups” who provided extensive comment letters to the Final Environmental Impact Report, some in favor of the project and others opposed to it, who were given more than the traditional 3 minutes to speak during the public comment period. Those select groups who spoke in **support** of the project (in addition to County staff) included Shasta VOICES, California Trade Council, Construction Council (Apprenticeship Program), and the Shasta Builders Exchange. Those select groups who spoke in **opposition** to the project included the Wintu Tribe, 3 Bands of the Pit River Tribe, Moose Camp, Aerial Firefighters, California Pilots Association, Shasta Environmental Alliance, and Citizens in Opposition.

Another 30 people and businesses from around the Shasta County area who were able to take time off work also spoke to offer their support of the project, as well as 28 people living in and around the project area who were opposed to the project. Phone calls were also taken during the proceedings, with the majority who called in offering support for the project. Additionally, there were 485 letters of support for the project contained in the Final Environmental Impact Review document.

But perhaps most unusual was the fact that the Commissioners **did not ask one question of staff, of the applicant, or of any of the multitude of experts in attendance**, including personnel from Cal Fire, who spent 11 hours of their precious time waiting their turn to speak and were never given that opportunity. The applicant for the project, ConnectGen was given a very brief period of time for rebuttal to the comments, but the experts to support their rebuttal were **not** given an opportunity to speak at all. It was not just an oversight, and it was highly unusual. Additionally, ConnectGen was not given an opportunity to offer options and/or changes to the project to address concerns.

ConnectGen has **filed an appeal** of the decision to deny them a use permit to the County Board of Supervisors. A meeting will be scheduled soon for that hearing. Perhaps it will be conducted differently. For information on where and when this meeting will be held, and perhaps how it will be conducted, stay tuned! Shasta VOICES will keep you informed.

## *Funds Approved for Emergency Sleeping Cabins Shelter Crisis Declared*

At the June 15, 2021 Council meeting, Redding City Council approved the use of Housing Division Community Development funds in an amount not-to-exceed **\$150,000** for the purchase of Emergency Sleeping Cabins.

At the same meeting, the Council adopted the ordinance amending the Redding Municipal Code (RMC) Title 18 related to establishing the criteria for permitting “Emergency Housing Sites” and the operation of the same, adopted the companion ordinance amending RMC Title 16, and **declared a shelter crisis**.

The \$150,000 appropriation will be funded by a combination of the following resources: Successor Housing Agency Low-Moderate Income Housing Asset Fund, Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program, and/or Permanent Local Housing Allocation Program. Collectively, these funding sources have more than \$2 million available. According to staff, providing funding from this allocation will not negatively impact other planned projects.

City staff will now develop a request for proposal for the selection of a specific emergency sleeping cabin manufacturer. The funding of \$150,000 would allow the City to purchase approximately 20 emergency shelter cabins that could be leased to approved emergency housing site operators for use at their approved sites.

Utilizing Community Development funding for the purchase of the emergency sleeping cabins will assist the emergency housing site operators, and help develop their respective emergency housing sites in a cost effective and timely manner.

## *Countywide Drought Emergency Declared Other Local Water Agencies Ask for Voluntary Reductions*

On June 15th, the Shasta County Supervisors declared a “Countywide Drought Emergency,” enacted “An Urgency Ordinance” declaring a **water shortage** emergency and a necessity for a water conservation program, and adopted a “Water Conservation Program” for the following areas:

County Service Area No 2—Sugarloaf Water; County Service Area No. 3—Castella Water; County Service Area No. 6—Jones Valley Water; County Service Area No. 8—Palo Cedro Water; County Service Area No. 11—French Gulch Water; County Service Area No. 13—Alpine Meadows Water; and County Service Area No. 23—Crag View Water.

The County Service Areas received a 75% reduction to their water allocations, effective June 1, 2021, from the Bureau of Reclamation. Therefore, there is a need to backfill that loss of allocation, so Shasta County has purchased water from the McConnell Foundation (at higher rates) to do so.

The water conservation measures, which were set up by Governor Newsom, include:

- No outdoor landscapes are to be watered within 48 hours of rainfall
- No runoff from watering landscape area are allowed
- No water can be used to wash vehicles without using a shut-off nozzle
- No water may be used for washing driveways and sidewalks, or for recirculating fountains

The Ordinance also allows appropriate County staff access to customers properties, with consent of the owner or tenant, to determine violations. The penalties for violations include a warning (1st violation), \$25 for second violation, \$100 for third violations, and \$500 for fourth (or more) violations. The County has expressed that they prefer **voluntary compliance**, because penalties won't solve the water shortage.

Additionally, on June 4th, the **Bella Vista Water District** implemented a Stage 3 drought declaration, after receiving only 25% of their normal allocation for municipal customers, and **0% of their allocation** to the Agriculture community. There is now a livestock water shortage, and those customers are hauling water and having to feed hay to their stock. This is particularly concerning to the cattle industry in the County, and directly affects the local agricultural economy. All customers are asked to reduce their water usage by 20% of what was used last year, or they will see their water rates greatly increased.

The City of Shasta Lake is also asking their customers to voluntarily reduce their water use, particularly outdoors, after they, too, received an allocation reduction from the Bureau of Reclamation.

The City of Redding, so far, has not put any mandatory water conservation programs in place. Redding gets its water from three sources—the Sacramento River, Whiskeytown Lake, and 17 municipal ground water wells. This year, the State came out with a 75% reduction in surface water for one of the contracts, but the City is able to supplement that reduction with groundwater. The City suggests voluntary conservation, including cutting back lawn watering to 3 days per week and adjusting sprinklers so that they are not wetting the sidewalks.

## *New Redding and Shasta County Budgets Approved Effective July 1, 2021*

The Biennial Budget is the expenditure plan for the City of Redding for the next two fiscal years, beginning July 1, 2021. On June 15th, Redding City Council approved the budget for the first year of \$358,302,530 and \$345,585,020 in the second year, as follows:

### City of Redding Budget Overview

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</u>
General Fund	\$ 96,539,570	\$ 96,017,300
Enterprise Funds (Utilities)	251,720,160	255,144,790
Special Revenue Funds	25,541,300	11,456,570
Internal Service Funds	99,375,480	103,580,790
Less Charges Between Funds	<u>(114,873,980)</u>	<u>(120,614,430)</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 358,302,530</b>	<b>\$ 345,585,020</b>

Revenues to pay for the **General Fund** expenses come from the collection of property taxes (\$25 million of revenues) and sales tax (\$29 million of revenues), \$4.5 million from Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), up to \$19 million from internal departments, and the rest from investment income, fines, other agencies, service charges, and licenses and permits. City Manager Barry Tippin explained at the meeting that a total of 80% of the General Fund costs are for public safety, with 38% going directly to the police department, 24% going directly to the fire department, and 18% for public safety support from other City departments.

**Enterprise Funds** include Redding Electric Utility, Water Utility, Wastewater Utility, and Solid Waste Utility. **Special Revenue Funds** include items such as development impact fees, the Community Development Block Grant Program, and the Rolling Stock Replacement Fund, to name a few. **Internal Service Funds** account for programs and services that are designed to support operations throughout the City, such as information technology, fleet management, and risk management.

The **bright spots** for the City’s budget include stable revenue despite the pandemic, robust grant funding success, and making a dent in deferred maintenance. Additionally, at least a 10.7% reserve will be maintained through 2023. **Challenges** still remain in the areas of staffing shortages in General Fund departments and pension costs. The City’s contribution to the CalPERS employee pension program and unfunded liability continues to increase.

The Shasta County Supervisors also approved the County’s fiscal year 2021-2022 budget on June 15th, which totals \$599,363,044, as follows:

### Shasta County Budget Overview

\$ 198,308,877	<b>General Fund</b> (33.09% of budget)
\$ 313,890,444	<b>Special Revenue Funds</b> (52.37% of budget)
\$ 16,285,094	<b>Capital Projects Funds</b> (2.72% of budget)
<u>\$ 3,666,042</u>	<b>Debt Service Funds</b> (.61% of budget)
<b>\$ 532,150,457</b>	
\$ 31,201,870	<b>Internal Service Funds</b> (5.21% of budget)
\$ 22,267,935	<b>Enterprise Funds</b> (3.72% of budget)
<u>\$ 13,742,782</u>	<b>Special Districts/Other Agencies</b> (2.29%)
<b>\$ 67,212,587</b>	
<b><u>\$ 599,363,044</u></b>	<b>Total Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget</b>

The County’s **discretionary** revenues come from various taxes, including \$59,115 million in property and sales taxes, and \$7.6 million from such things as fines, licenses fees, permits, and charges for services. **Public Safety is now included in the General Fund** for better accountability, and with realignment tax funds, brings the General Fund total to \$198.3 million. In addition to discretionary sales tax revenues, additional sales tax is dedicated to the **non-discretionary** areas of public health, mental health, social services, and public safety (\$313.8 million). The County’s General Fund reserve is \$18 million.

The County’s share of CalPERS retirement costs is 24.890% of each dollar of payroll for miscellaneous employees, and 64.990% for each dollar of payroll for public safety employees. This continues to pressure the budget. There are currently 2,148 full-time equivalent employees, an increase of 10.5 full-time equivalent employees from fiscal year 2020-2021.

Included in the budget is **\$9 million committed to Public Safety towards future development of a detention and probation facility**. This would provide accountability for lower level offenders as a long-awaited expansion of jail services, designed to reduce recidivism and have a place for those that misbehave. This was one of the major objectives of the March 2020 1/2 cent countywide sales tax measure that failed by a very large margin. Stay tuned for updates on this particular issue!

## *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.

**Holiday Marketplace Shopping Center Approved**—On June 8th, the Redding Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Holiday Marketplace shopping center at the corner of Shasta View Drive and Hartnell Avenue. The developer is North State Grocery Inc., the parent company of Holiday Market, in a joint venture with TJG/Summit Development. The anchor store, Holiday Market, will be 30,000 square feet and surrounded by a drive-thru Starbucks Coffee, Quick Quack Car Wash, a fast-food restaurant, a potential gas station, and other smaller retailers. There is also a mini-storage facility planned for a portion of the development. Traffic improvements for the project include financial contributions to future traffic lights at the intersection of Shasta View and Goodwater Avenue, and Hartnell at Alta Mesa Drive; a three-lane section of roadway on Shasta View from Hartnell to about 575 feet north of Kerry Avenue, with pedestrian crossings; and a five foot sidewalk where gaps exist on the eastern side of Shasta View. When completed, the current Holiday Market store at the southwest corner of Shasta View Drive and Hartnell Avenue will relocate to the new center. The project is scheduled to go before Redding City Council in mid-July for final approval.



**Supervisor Moty Censured by Board of Supervisors**—On June 8th, Shasta County Supervisor Leonard Moty was officially censured by unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors in response to a Grand Jury recommendation, after an investigation concluding that Moty committed “misfeasance” of office by using the authority of his position to get through roadblocks and gain access to his home during the 2018 Carr Fire. The Grand Jury said that Moty went to his home to refuel a generator. The Grand Jury defines misfeasance as “improperly doing an act that a person might lawfully do, but in a manner so as to infringe upon the rights of others.” They also said that while Moty broke no laws, he took fuel with him during tours of the burn area, as “a clear indicator the intent of the tours on those days was to fuel the Supervisor’s personal generator.” Moty publicly apologized at the meeting, and accepted the censure.

**City of Anderson Adds TOT Tax**—On June 1st, the Anderson City Council approved the inclusion and collection of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) on campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks. The tax amounts to 10% of the amount charged by fixed trailers at a fixed location whenever rented for less than a 30-day period. Until now, the City of Anderson was not charging these type of businesses TOT tax. Both the City of Redding and the County of Shasta include campgrounds and RV parks within their TOT provisions. Anderson’s new TOT tax will become effective July 1, 2021.

**County Sheriff Resigns To Take Assistant CEO Position**—Shasta County CEO Matthew Pontes created a new position, an Assistant CEO, in early 2020 to address “gaps” in communication and to add someone to his staff to help with large initiatives such as a newly planned jail detention facility and the growing problem with illegal marijuana grows in the County. The job description and recruiting effort went through the normal application process. He said he was surprised that Sheriff Eric Magrini applied for the position along with many others. He rose to the top quickly with his bachelors degree in criminal justice, proper skills and experience in taking on projects (particularly public safety related projects), and is acutely aware of the problems we face in the County. Magrini was selected to fill the position. He will resign as Sheriff on June 29th, a position he was appointed to when the former elected Sheriff Tom Bosenko retired at the end of 2019, and begin his new job on July 1st. The current Under-Sheriff, Jason Barnhart will assume the duties of the Sheriff until the next regular election in November 2022...at least, that is the decision as of this writing.

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