



The VOICE

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Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- California's population grew by 438,000 in the year that ended June 30, 2007, and now stands at nearly 38 million. That growth was 1.17%, reflecting a steady erosion in the rate of California's growth. Immigration from other countries, plus a high birth rate, accounted for all the growth as state-to-state migration continued to be a negative for the State.
- The Redding Chamber of Commerce's **"BRIDGE BUCKS" Shop Redding** campaign for those businesses affected by the impending closures of intersections for the Cypress Avenue bridge construction project is getting under way. Though the City has postponed the schedule for these closures, a meeting with those affected businesses will take place around the first week of March to begin implementing a marketing plan to assist them. Call Wally St. Clair at 225-4433 x106 for more information.
- Home sales in Shasta County in 2007 reached a 10 year low of 2,108 homes.

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LITHIA MOTORS "REDEVELOPMENT DEAL" QUESTIONED Next Public Meeting to be February 19, 2008

As reported in our July, 2007 issue of "The VOICE", negotiations are under way between the City of Redding and Lithia Motors, Inc. to buy the East Cypress Avenue location of Lithia Chevrolet and Toyota of Redding, 9.12 acres in total, for \$7.934 million. Now, it appears that the City intends to purchase this prime real estate with **redevelopment dollars** and hold it, until some unknown time in the future, when it will be offered for public bid.

There is considerable **"risk"** involved for the City, and the taxpayer. At the special meeting held on January 28th to discuss the potential purchase, Councilman Ken Murray said the City wants to own the property so they can control what is developed there in the future. The \$7.9 million price tag is based on the buildings, and use, as they exist today. The City would have deed restrictions preventing any auto dealerships on this property in the future. They also do not want vacant buildings (which were built in 1975) sitting at this prime corner and continuing to deteriorate. That means the existing buildings would have to come down. The cost of this demolition is nowhere to be found in the public documents, nor is the environmental cleanup figure available. (Some of us recall the City's purchase of the old Southern Pacific Railway yard, the current location of the RABA bus station. The property was purchased by the City for approximately \$1 million, and the environmental clean-up costs added over another \$1 million, which was not budgeted).

The City is basing their purchase price on an appraisal done in 2006. This appraisal is for the property as it exists today, with the dealership buildings in place. What the City is really purchasing is 9.12 acres of bare land that needs to be redeveloped into something else. That would make the price of the land \$869,956 per acre, approximately \$20 per square foot. Commercial real estate professionals say that this is almost twice what the property would be worth on the open market.

Why does the City continue to risk taxpayer dollars in the real estate development business? There are a lot of unanswered questions regarding the City's role in the purchase and future disposition of the existing Lithia Motors property. The sense of urgency that caused them to consider this deal in 2005, the possible exit of local car dealerships to the then proposed Auto Mall at Knighton Road and I-5, no longer exists. The use of redevelopment dollars for such a prime commercial property seems suspect.

The next City Council meeting regarding this transaction is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 19, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 777 Cypress Avenue**. This is an opportunity for the public to ask questions, make suggestions, and express their concerns to the Council members and City staff. We encourage anyone who has concerns about this deal to attend and speak up!

The sense of urgency that caused the City to consider this deal in 2005 ...no longer exists.

Speaking Up Nets Successful Resolution

John Anthony, owner of a local “Mom & Pop” sandwich shop called **Bobba Lou’s** located at 1872 Buena Ventura Blvd., contacted Mary Machado at Shasta VOICES about a problem he was having late in 2007. Specifically, he had received a citation from the City of Redding for having a “person in a public right of way” to direct passers-by to his restaurant, and was paying fines daily until a resolution could be reached. Knowing that this is a fairly common marketing practice in the Redding area, he questioned why he was being singled out. After doing a bit of research on the code violation cited, we studied options for appealing it. John had already tried unsuccessfully to speak with someone at the City beyond the department that issued the citation. He wanted to know if it was possible to speak with other management personnel at the City that could help him.

Mary suggested that he attend the next City Council meeting and express his concerns during the “Oral Communications” public comment period set aside on each agenda for non-agendized matters within the City’s jurisdiction. This would give him an opportunity to address both the Council and management staff in attendance. So he did just that. Never having been to a Council meeting before, he had procedural questions, so Mary met with him prior to the start of the meeting, helped him fill out the proper “speaker request card”, and explained what would occur and when so that he could be prepared when it was his turn to speak.

John Anthony did speak, and the City staff in attendance did listen to his concern. He was put in touch with the proper sources, and about 4 weeks later, the City dropped all the charges, and credited the daily fines he had paid back to him. Congratulations, John! And thank you to the City staff for affecting a successful resolution for all involved.

New Redding Police Facility Becomes Top Priority

At the January 15th Redding City Council meeting, we learned that a new Redding Police Facility is the top priority for 2008. There is no question that a new facility is needed. The question is how to pay for it.

The City Council wasn’t offering many answers to questions about the price tag of \$35 million attached to the “project.” Therefore, Shasta VOICES went to the people who did the “Space Needs Assessment”, Nichols, Melburg, & Rosetto, to learn what we could about the cost and funding of this “project.”

We learned that the “Space Needs Assessment” was done in December, 2005. The “project” also includes a support building of 10,207 square feet, and an indoor firing range of 7,340 square feet.

A functional diagram was done for each department, and a horizon was chosen for future needs, in this case, the year 2030. Every square foot is precisely accounted for based on what they need to do their job, not a wish list. Today, the police department has a total staff of 586. By 2030, that number could increase to 1034. Today, the existing main police depart-

ment building is 33,000 square feet. A space needs analysis shows the need today is for 51,169 square feet. By 2030, the main building would need to be 67,236 square feet.

The “budget” was established by an expert cost estimator, who is required to adhere to the “Essential Services Building Act” of 1986. This means the main police building must be capable of providing essential services to the public after a disaster, and be designed and constructed to minimize fire hazards, resist the forces generated by earthquakes, gravity, and winds.

The “budget” was established by using a figure of \$265 per square foot for construction of the main building, and \$150 per square foot for the two support buildings. Public buildings must pay prevailing wage. Add in site development, a metal canopy parking cover, design costs, \$8 million of “contingencies” for predicting the construction cost into the future (which may not be needed, depending on how the economy fares, but they represent a safety factor for the City Council), and it adds up to the \$35 million figure that has been accepted as the amount needed for the project.

It should be noted that these figures were calculated in December of 2005. Costs may or may not be the same today.

The question of “do we need it” has been answered. Yes, we need it. Does it need to be 67,000 square feet? According to the analysis, yes it does. Does the community support it? Yes, they do, but want the City to use existing resources for funding.

City staff members have presented many funding options for consideration. There are some lump sum resources, such as redevelopment contributions and proceeds from selling the existing facility. There are options for paying the annual debt service that include using the REU Unit 6 in-lieu fee, reduction of Turtle Bay contribution, General Fund reduction of some percentage, selling the Stratte property and eliminating the General Fund obligation that is attached to it, and delaying hiring of future city personnel. These are all good options for consideration, and we hope the City staff and Council will explore these, and other internal resources, further. As the **top priority**, that is the most prudent way to get it done.

Governor Schwarzenegger Visits Redding

On January 16th, Governor Schwarzenegger appeared at the Shasta County Library to for a State budget discussion with local business people and citizens of Redding. He unveiled his plan to try and balance the State budget. He said, "We don't have a revenue problem, we have a spending problem. You can only spend what you have." He wants to put an end to what he called the "roller coaster ride" so people in education or other supported systems can count on the dollars they are supposed to receive. He spoke of creating a more disciplined approach to spending in State government.



The Governor's plan is to reduce spending by \$5 billion across the board. He welcomes creative ideas to offset the necessary cuts that will be made, such as higher park user fees to keep parks open. He supports propositions on the ballot for expanding existing gaming compacts with Indian tribes, which would increase State revenues by tens of millions of dollars, enough revenue to help offset the cuts.

His visit garnered much enthusiasm in the community, as he answered many questions about his plans for providing health care, stimulating the economy, and education.

Shasta Mosquito/Vector Control District Explains Computer Glitch

Bill Hazeleur, Manager of the Shasta Mosquito/Vector Control District, reports that some landowners have received bills from SCI Consulting Group in Fairfield, CA on behalf of the District for a mosquito assessment charge as low as \$2.08. Landowners in the District voted to pay mosquito assessments on their property. The charge for a single family residence on one acre or less is under \$20 per year. Land that does not have improvements is charged a lower amount. These assessments are generally collected on the property tax bill. Properties that are exempt from property tax (such as churches and government) are required by the assessment law to receive the benefit charge. The District hired an assessment engineer from Fairfield (SCI) to hand-bill landowners who have properties that do not receive property tax bills. This year, Shasta County's computer program apparently rejected properties that in the past were included on their property tax bills. This resulted in landowners getting a mosquito assessment charge on their property tax bill for their residence, and then receiving a bill from SCI for an assessment amount as low as \$2.08. SCI did not catch these low amounts until billings had been mailed. In the future, \$2.08 hand billings should not occur. Mr. Hazeleur apologizes for the inconvenience of the small assessment billings. If you have questions, please call the district at (530) 365-3768.

OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT

By Mary B. Machado

I would like to extend my personal gratitude, as well as that of the entire Shasta VOICES organization, to each and every person that has called, emailed, written letters, joined our group, and otherwise expressed their support over the "incident" that occurred at the Redding City Council meeting on January 15, 2008. If you are reading this and have no idea what occurred, you can access the red-ding.com website and view the video clip entitled "Dickerson-Machado exchange."

The outpouring of support for our organization from people in the North State has been overwhelming. We appreciate the offers of so many to become involved as we go forward. We will certainly take you up on those offers!

You may find it interesting to know that Shasta VOICES supporters now number 525 (as of this writing). We

are people who live and work in this community, focused on earning a living and raising families in a less than ideal economy. We are owners and employees of restaurants and sandwich shops, banks, real estate offices and realtors, insurance offices, dental professionals, engineers, accountants, enrolled agents, hotels, telecommunications services, roofers, various building contractors and suppliers, multitudes of retailers large and small, developers large and small, excavators, welders, manufacturers, business consultants, and even a few retirees.

Shasta VOICES welcomes those who share our mission of working towards an affordable, sustainable future. Despite the attempt of some to discredit our efforts, we remain **undeterred** in our quest to provide benefi-

cial, valuable and timely information on a pro-active basis for those interested in learning how decisions being made locally will affect economic opportunity for those who live and work in this area. If we don't hold our decision-makers accountable, who will?



We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at some very important upcoming public hearings, including the proposed "Fix 5" traffic impact fees and the cross-agency

Shasta County/City of Redding facilities impact fees. The scheduling details are not yet available, but when they are, we will make sure they are well publicized.

Thank you for your support!

UPDATE**Proposed “Fix 5”
Traffic Impact Fees**

As of this writing, there are still no public hearings scheduled to discuss the proposed “Fix 5” traffic impact fees. The fixfive.org website says only that the meetings will be scheduled sometime in the February-March timeframe. Given the “14 day advance notice of public hearings” requirement, and with only February 19th remaining as a regularly scheduled February City Council meeting in Redding, Anderson and Shasta Lake, it appears that the *earliest* public hearings could be scheduled is March 4th.

The Shasta VOICES Impact Fee Challenge coalition has been busy preparing for these eventual hearings. Attorney Walt McNeill will present his findings at the hearings. A “fee expert” organization has been identified to also present their findings at the hearings. Shasta VOICES Executive Director Mary Machado has been busy giving presentations that speak to the “other side” of the “Fix 5” Partnership’s plans in both Shasta and Tehama Counties for the past couple of months. Public awareness is growing, and we believe the hearings will be well attended, spirited debates.

In the meantime, we urge everyone to learn about these unprecedented fees. You can go to www.fixfive.org for copies of documentation explaining how and why the “Fix 5” Partnership is proposing such a plan. Feel free to contact Shasta VOICES for additional information, to answer questions, or to contribute to our “Impact Fees Challenge Account”.

Remember, *only* your elected officials in Shasta and Tehama Counties will have a vote on whether or not these unprecedented fees will be imposed on the local community. They need to hear from you!

UPDATE**Shasta County/City of Redding
Proposed Facilities Impact Fees**

On November 6, 2007, public “Workshop #1” was held with the Shasta County Supervisors to discuss proposed cross-agency Shasta County/City of Redding Facilities Impact Fees. The Shasta VOICES Impact Fee Challenge coalition, together with their attorney Walt McNeill, spoke in opposition of these unprecedented fees, not only from the perspective of the questionable legality of such fees, but also the harm they would do to the community.

The Board of Supervisors determined that these proposed fees needed more study, and called for a second workshop to be held sometime in January, 2008.

As of this writing, there has not been a date scheduled for public “Workshop #2”. County CAO Larry Lees believes it will be scheduled sometime in the next six weeks, which would bring us to March, 2008.

To summarize our position, these proposed cross-agency fees would add another \$4161 to the price of a single family home in the City of Redding, and up to \$9188 to the price of a single family home in unincorporated Shasta County, and much more for commercial buildings. There are currently no impact fees being charged in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County, and there may be some merit to implementing an impact fee structure. The *cross-agency* fees, however, are beyond the legal authority of the County, and violate the Mitigation Fee Act. The methodology is fundamentally flawed.

When “Workshop #2” is scheduled, we will make sure you know about it! We encourage you to attend and let your Supervisors know how you feel about this important decision.

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

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