



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- The unemployment rate in Shasta County was 7.7% in October, 2014. The peak for unemployment in October was 14.7% in 2010. Driving job gains in 2014 was government, as the public sector added 500 jobs from a year ago.
- Through November 2014, there have been 109 single family dwelling unit permits drawn in the City of Redding, 5 more than the same period last year. There have also been 11 new commercial building permits through November 2014. 3 more than the same period last year. The most recent of these was Moore's Flout Mill to be built at 6150 Shasta View Drive, off of Airport Road.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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Previewing 2015

Shasta VOICES has been tracking and monitoring many issues that affect economic opportunity in our community since we began our work in 2007. We have grown to 1,076 supporters in the last seven and a half years. We have accomplished much thus far, and will continue to pursue issues of economic importance in the Shasta County area in 2015. Here is a partial update of probable issues:

- **New Public Safety Sales Tax Measure**— Measure F, which would have raised the sales tax in the City of Redding by 1/4 cent did not pass in the November 2014 General Election process. There are several active community groups who are considering bringing forward an initiative in 2015 for a countywide 1/2 cent sales tax ballot measure. Public safety will continue to be the number one issue of concern to area citizens. We will provide pertinent and timely information throughout 2015.
- **New City Councils**—The cities of Redding and Anderson have new City Council members after the November 2014 General Election. We look forward to following and reporting on how their decisions affect our local economy in 2015.
- **City of Redding Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan Update**—In August, 2013, Council voted to have an update of the now **eleven year old** Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan before any parks fee adjustments are considered. The existing Plan does not reflect current market trends, growth projections, and realities. Certain standards adopted then clearly need to be analyzed now to see how they fit into the new economy. Although Council asked for a 2014 update, that did not happen—perhaps it will in 2015.
- **Moody Flats Quarry**—The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Moody Flats Quarry, which will be located in western Shasta County on land owned by 3M, about 1 mile west of I-5 and north of the City of Shasta Lake, has been in process for almost two years. It is likely to be ready for consideration in 2015. The EIR has identified multiple “significant and unavoidable” impacts that are sure to be a source of great controversy.
- **Economic and Job Creation Progress**— Many potential businesses consider locating or expanding in our community, only to be turned away by what they viewed as exorbitant regulations and fees imposed by local government agencies. Shasta VOICES has been proactively seeking to lower these costs ever since we began our organization in 2007, and has been successful working in partnership with the City of Redding to do just that. We will continue our efforts to assist such businesses in 2015.
- **Other Issues We are Monitoring for 2015:**
 - ~ Shasta County General Plan Update (we are a participant in the process)
 - ~ REU Cost of Service Study and Rate Structure Recommendations (we are a participant in the process)
 - ~ Development Impact Fee Changes
 - ~ New Costco Facility at Oasis Road
 - ~ Rising Public Pension Costs and Effect on local Government Budgets
 - ~ Turtle Bay Land Sale and Proposed Sheraton Hotel

Non-Agenda Public Comments and REU Commission Will Stay in Place

At the December 16th Redding City Council meeting, long discussions occurred for two controversial issues that were clearly important to the general public.

The first issue was whether or not to move forward with City Ordinance No. 2518, related to the *order of business* for regular meetings of the Redding City Council, specifically “Non-Agenda Public Comment,” which was offered for first reading on December 2nd. For the past six months, these public comments have been scheduled to be heard *after* the regularly scheduled agenda items. Prior to that, 30 minutes had been allotted after the meeting had been called to order and any special presentations had been made, which is at the *beginning* of the meeting before any other scheduled agenda items could be heard.

Going back in history, the non-agenda public comments were heard *after* the agendized matters up until 2006, when they were moved to the beginning of the meeting. This didn’t work well as the comments became lengthy and pushed the regular agenda back many hours into the night. So, this comment period was finally given a 30 minute time limit (3 minutes per speaker) at the beginning of the meeting, and any remaining comments were trailed to the end of the regularly scheduled agenda. It should have worked well, but unfortunately, inappropriate behavior and threatening comments made by speakers at the podium became the norm. This was offensive to all who were exposed to it, and because of such abuse, the public comment section of the agenda was moved to the end of the regularly scheduled meeting agenda. Though perhaps inconvenient for some, it is no more inconvenient than for those members of the general public who want to speak to issues that are actually *on* the scheduled agenda, and have to wait (sometimes for hours) for their item to come up for public discussion.

Fast forward to December 16th—disregarding Councilman Gary Cadd’s plea to follow the appropriate rules of decorum, many of those speaking against moving the public comment period permanently to the end of the scheduled agenda items again, amazingly, displayed repeated inappropriate behavior at the podium. It was no surprise that the majority of City Council members (4-1, Cadd dissenting) voted to *adopt* Ordinance No 2518 to have the public comment period at the *end* of the regularly scheduled agenda.

The second issue was whether or not to eliminate the recently formed Redding Electric Utility (REU) Commission. Council member Missy McArthur was questioning the usefulness and cost of the Commission, which was formed in January 2013. It was clear (and all agreed) at the time of formation that the Commission would have a cost of about \$50,000 or more annually, but the general public supported it because they were seeking more oversight and transparency of REU.

There seems to be no question that REU is highly complex, and therefore, has taken those citizens appointed to the REU Commission 18 months to be brought up to speed and learn about the utility. They are now in a better position to do what they were appointed to do. When the Commission was formed at the urging of the general public, it gave the public the forum they were seeking, but unfortunately, there have been few in attendance at the scheduled meetings.

However, the Council members, particularly the newly seated members, determined that they needed more information and more time to study the expectations of the Commission before taking any action on this issue. Therefore, the Council voted unanimously to take no action, *continue* with the REU Commission, and perhaps bring the item back for discussion again at a Council meeting in the future.

Sullivan Elected Mayor for 2015

At its December 2, 2014 Council Meeting, Redding City Council members voted to have Vice-Mayor Francie Sullivan serve as Mayor for 2015. Council member Missy McArthur will serve as Vice-Mayor, and Brent Weaver will serve as the Mayor Pro-Tem.

Although the Council leadership normally is based on vote totals, with the highest vote-getter first in line for Mayor, the second highest vote-getter second in line and so on, this did not occur after the 2012 election. Then Council members Gary Cadd, Patrick Jones, and Rick Bosetti voted for Patrick Jones as Vice-Mayor, assuring that Francie Sulli-

van would not serve as Mayor unless she again sought re-election in 2014 and won. Well, she did run and win, and now she will become the City’s Mayor. Patrick Jones did not win re-election.

The irony now becomes that, because of the results of the 2014 election and the vote of Council to seat Missy McArthur and Brent Weaver as the next two in line for Mayor, Gary Cadd now will not serve as Mayor unless he seeks re-election and wins in 2016.

Yes, you must have thick skin if you want to be a Politician.

Countywide Sales Tax Initiative? **Check the Rules (and the Reasons) First**

During the November 2014 General Election, the City of Redding's *Measure F*, which asked "Shall the City of Redding adopt a *one-quarter cent* transactions and use tax to sunset in six years, for the special purpose of reducing crime and public nuisances associated with effects of AB 109 and other criminal activity by hiring additional police officers and other personnel within the Redding Police Department; funding offender work programs; and funding incarceration outside of the County, all to address problems associated with release of criminals due to lack of local jail space" needed a 2/3 majority vote to win approval. It received about 56% of the vote, but needed 67% and therefore, ***was not approved***.

Now, there is talk about a yet to be established business group stepping up to try and put another "countywide" sales tax measure on a special election ballot in 2015. But, the rules are clear about such measures.

The California Constitution Article 13C outlines the definitions and voter approval processes for local tax levies. Section 2 explains that "...the election required by this subdivision shall be consolidated with a ***regularly scheduled general election*** for members of the governing body of the local government, except in cases of emergency declared by a unanimous vote of the governing body." It's not likely that either Shasta County or the City of Redding can declare a sense of fiscal emergency any time soon.

There has been more "talk" about an initiative process for a special ballot, but so far, no named group has stepped up to say they are willing to gather the needed signatures or are willing to pay the cost of a special election, which could be in excess of \$250,000.

So, perhaps it's time to examine some facts about sales taxes, as well as the reasons behind the continual lack of general fund dollars to pay for public safety and other concerns.

1. ***Shasta County*** could create a 1/2 cent countywide sales tax measure with a majority vote of the Supervisors for the next general election in 2016. Whether a special tax (2/3 voter approval required) or a general tax (majority voter approval required), if passed by voters, the County would receive ***100% of revenues*** from such a tax. ***None of it*** would be given to the cities of Anderson, Redding, or Shasta Lake. Anderson has already implemented an additional 1/2 cent sales tax, and they keep 100% of the revenues it generates. It's likely that they would be opposed to paying another 1/2 cent on top of it. It's also likely that Redding would be opposed, as they would be paying the majority of a countywide tax while receiving nothing in return. If history is any indication, the cities and the County are unlikely to come to terms on a *tax-sharing agreement* before the general election so that it could be included as part of the ballot measure.
2. It's commonly understood that the lack of funds at the County level to arrest and keep criminals behind bars is largely driven by decisions at the State level, such as AB109 and more recently Prop 47. The County has been charged with the responsibility of housing and managing those criminals sent back to their jurisdiction from the State, but has not been given the same level of funding that the State was given to do the job. Will the local taxpayers want to make up the difference by paying an additional local sales tax?
3. ***The City of Redding*** could create a 1/2 cent sales tax measure with a majority vote of City Council for the next general election in 2016. If passed by voters, they would receive ***100% of revenues*** from such a tax. If such a measure followed the Measure F outline (special tax, 2/3 voter approval required), there would be time to create a formal agreement between the City and the County that is well constructed and meets the needs of both jurisdictions. Alternately, the 1/2 cent sales tax measure could be for a general tax (majority voter approval required), and the City would receive 100% of the revenues for their general fund. An "advisory measure" could be included stating the intended use of the funds, which would not be binding on the existing or future City Council members. Do the Redding voters have enough trust in their Councilors and City staff to vote yes on a general fund tax?
4. It's no secret that ***public pension costs*** have risen and continue to rise at an alarming pace. The City of Redding laments the fact that they do not have enough officers on duty to do a proper job, but their budget has certainly not shrunk—the pension costs have eaten away at their ability to add additional staff. Also, Redding Police Chief Paoletti continually reports that his department is down 12 officers due to ***industrial injuries***. Statistics back to 2009 show that this not a new phenomenon: the total number of cases with days away from work in 2009 was 14 (605 days off work, 779 days light duty), in 2010 was 16 (901 days off work, 483 days light duty), in 2011 was 10 (447 days off work, 174 days light duty), in 2012 was 10 (320 days off work, 417 days light duty), and in 2013 was 13 (316 days off work, 451 days light duty). In addition to these staffing issues, there are currently ***4 vacant budgeted police officer positions***. Apparently the City only solicits skilled, experienced, lateral applicants for these positions, putting themselves in a potentially non-competitive position. Perhaps a new strategy is in order rather than asking voters to backfill the budget now being used to pay for pension cost increases.

Whoever decides to step up with a plan to put a sales tax initiative back on the ballot in 2015 owes it to themselves to do their homework on the rules and reasons for such a tax before jumping in with both feet. Public safety is important, but simply throwing money at the problem without a well-thought out plan with all the recipients may not solve anything.

Updated News and Notes

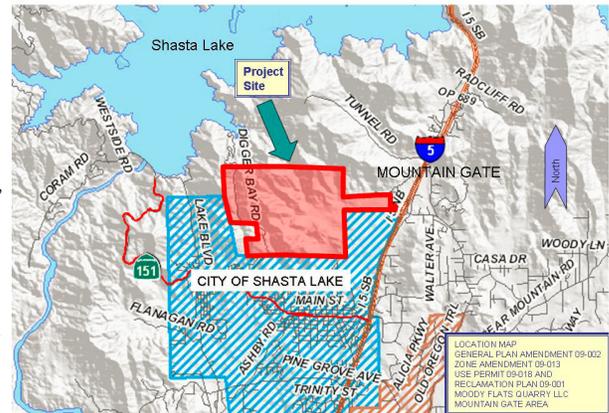
Shasta VOICES is continuing to monitor and follow many issues of interest to our supporters and the community. As part of our efforts to keep you updated and informed, here is a brief update of some of these issues.

Safe City Project—A special meeting of Redding City Council was held on December 15th for the purpose of receiving a presentation from April LaFrance, the leader of the Safe City Project, who focused on a proposed reserve police force, sobering center, cleanup of illegal homeless camps by reserve officers, and an enhanced code enforcement program. This project group had adopted a new slogan called “move the boulder,” which is an analogy for moving crime out of the way. LaFrance asked the Council for \$250,000 from the general fund in seed money to assist in starting a privately run sobering center to address public intoxication, overcrowding at the jail, reduce the processing time for the Redding Police Department, and minimize the expense of transporting, monitoring and managing intoxication. City Council voted 5-0 to take **no action** on LaFrance’s requests, partially because there is a strategic plan already in motion at both the City and with Shasta County to address the feasibility of anti-crime measures. LaFrance also addressed the Shasta County Supervisors at their December 16th meeting, who also took **no action** on her recommendations of re-opening the old jail annex and creating another inmate work camp on land to be donated by Sierra Pacific Industries, among other suggestions. Both the City of Redding and Shasta County are developing a potential strategic plan for the local criminal justice system, which will take into consideration the Safe City Project recommendations, feasibility and how those expensive plans might be financed, and it may be next spring before those plans are ready for public discussion.

Moody Flats Quarry—This Project site is located in the Shasta Lake/Mountain Gate area of Shasta County, about one mile west of the Interstate Highway 5/Old Oregon Trail interchange, immediately north of the City of Shasta Lake, and about nine miles north of the City of Redding.

The Shasta County Department of Resource Management, as lead agency, has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Report for this Project. The Draft EIR was available for review and comment starting on October 17, 2014, and originally through December 18, 2014. However, members of the public and other interested agencies and individuals are invited to provide written comments which will **now be accepted through 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2015.**

Your written comments should be provided to the Shasta County Department of Resource Management, Planning Division, 1855 Placer Street, Suite 103, Redding, California, 96001, Attention: Bill Walker, AICP, Senior Planner. (E-mail bwalker@co.shasta.ca.us)



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Mary B. Machado, Executive Director