



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **10 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in March 2021, for a total of **39** in 2021. There was **1** Carr Fire single family rebuild permit issued in March 2021, for a total of **7** in 2021. That is 24 fewer than for the same period in 2020. There were **no** permits issued for new commercial buildings in March 2021, for a total of **2** in 2021. That is 3 fewer than for the same period in 2020.
- New air service between Redding and Burbank is coming to Redding starting in May, 2021. **Avelo Airlines**, founded by former Allegiant President Andrew Levy, is promoting ultra-low-fare pricing. Introductory **one-way fares start at \$19** on all routes through June 19th. Direct flights from Redding to Burbank will provide service three times a week. Avelo features 189-seat Boeing 737-800 aircraft.
- The **Shasta County District Fair** will take place this year from June 23rd-26th. Advance ticket sales begin May 1st.
- The 73rd annual **Redding Rodeo** will be held this year on May 13th, 14th and 15th at the Rodeo Grounds, 715 Auditorium Drive.

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Redding Chamber Chosen To Promote North State Tourism

On April 6th, Redding City Council selected the **Redding Chamber of Commerce** as the recipient of a **5-year** "Consulting and Professional Services Contract for Professional Tourism, Marketing and Promotion Services," from the 18 candidates who submitted proposals.

Back in January 2020, City Council directed staff to convene relevant stakeholders to gather input in advance of preparing a Request for Proposal/Qualification (RFQ) to openly solicit bids for tourism marketing and promotion services. It took a while (with COVID and all), but on December 15, 2020, Council approved the RFQ document. Mayor Resner and Vice-Mayor Schreder, along with two members of the Community Services Advisory Commission and City staff were appointed as the selection committee to receive, review and rate the proposals.

The selection committee reviewed all 18 proposals independently and rated them using the rubric included in the RFQ, reducing the pool from 18 to 5. The local organization who held this contract for the past 10 years, the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, didn't advance in the selection process.

The 5 firms who made the cut were invited to present their proposals to the selection committee on March 19, 2021. Following the presentations, three firms were invited to make 20-minute presentations to the City Council at the April 6th Council meeting. Those firms were **Augustine Agency** (from Roseville), **Mayes Media** (from Redding), and the **Redding Chamber of Commerce**.

The goals for this professional contract include: 1) Drive visitation and increase travelers and visitor expenditures; 2) Establish the rebrand of Redding in the minds of current residents, potential visitors, and travelers; 3) Demonstrate how the rebrand will integrate with the City's existing advertising, social media, and website; 4) Establish consistency in photography and messaging that show the true experience of Redding and result in return visitors; 5) Recruit film and media production work to Shasta County.

All three finalists made outstanding presentations and answered tough questions posed by the City Councilors. But in the end, **City Council voted 4-1** (Resner dissenting) to award the contract to the Redding Chamber of Commerce, who is partnering with a firm called Development Counsellors International (DCI), who is headquartered in New York and is a world leader in place branding and marketing. Their "Elevating Redding" presentation showed this partnership as leveraging the Chamber's deep connections within our community with cutting edge marketing expertise that can dramatically elevate awareness of Redding and drive visitation to spur our economy.

The Chamber will become Redding's new destination marketing organization, anticipating two new hires. DCI will serve as a subcontractor to the Chamber. The City's general fund will support the Chamber through Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) with an annual contract value of **\$1 million**.

The 5-year contract, which would become effective on July 1, 2021, will now need to be written and brought back to City Council for final approval at a future Council meeting.

Crisis Intervention Response Team Approved

At the March 23rd Shasta County Supervisors meeting, a presentation was received regarding a new ***Crisis Intervention & Response Team (CIRT)*** pilot project, for enhanced mobile crisis services. The CIRT project addresses behavioral health issues for those having “co-occurring mental health and substance-abuse disorders,” and may come into contact with law enforcement during moments of crisis. This project addresses the need in our community to provide special training to de-escalate situations with those in crisis, provide intervention, free up law enforcement and jail space, and reduce reliance on the criminal justice system.

The Redding Police Department in collaboration with the Shasta County Sheriff’s Office, Hill Country Health and Wellness, and Shasta County Public Health, is creating the CIRT project to serve mental health consumers in Shasta County. The goal of these partnerships is to ensure the safety of all, to respond effectively, and to improve access to services and supports for those experiencing a mental health crisis. The team of three will include specially trained officers partnered with a mental health professional, to assist individuals in mental health crisis.

On ***April 6th***, Redding City Council ***approved*** the addition of one full-time CIRT police officer position, and the authorization of an agreement with the Shasta County Health and Human Services Department. Under this agreement, Shasta County will pay \$122,000 annually to the City of Redding for a three-year contract covering about 3/4 of a Redding Police Officer’s salary and benefits. The remaining cost for the officer, \$50,000 per year, will come from a grant received from the State Housing Authority. The Redding Police Department is providing a new unmarked police SUV for the team and office space at the downtown substation. A Redding business donated \$20,000 towards the purchase of the vehicle, and Caliber Office Furniture donated desks and chairs for the office space. Round Mountain based Hill Country Health and Wellness Center, who already operates a mobile mental health crisis service, will expand its hours to seven days a week from the current five days a week.

The CIRT team will be the primary responding unit for all emergency crisis intervention calls for service in the Shasta County basin, including Redding, Cottonwood, Happy Valley, Shasta Lake, Palo Cedro; Shingletown, Round Mountain, and Anderson will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The CIRT officers and clinician will also be responsible for providing ongoing training for crisis intervention to law enforcement agencies in Shasta County.

Costco Petitioning for Bechelli Bonnyview Specific Plan

Costco Wholesale Corporation purchased the property at the northeast corner of South Bonnyview Road and Bechelli Lane last October. 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. The project has already been approved by Redding City Council, but some opponents (Bonnyview Bechelli Coalition) are challenging that approval under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This has delayed the project.

On April 13, 2021, a Public Notice was published for a “Notice of Intent to Circulate a Petition” within the City of Redding for the purpose of proposing amendments to the City’s General Plan, General Plan Diagram, and Zoning Map, and enactment of the ***Bechelli Bonnyview Specific Plan***. This initiative is a comprehensive regulatory plan governing future land uses and development for the approximately 25 acres now owned by Costco, and increases residential density for an approximate 10 acre parcel immediately to the north of the Specific Plan area (both areas are currently undeveloped). Ken Miller, of North State Commercial Partners is listed as the proponent of the petition.

The Bechelli Bonnyview Specific Plan adopted by this initiative permits development of about 222,000 square feet of regional level retail commercial development, including a discount warehouse, an associated fueling facility, and other retail locations within the Specific Plan area. Approval of the initiative will result in the avoidance of certain procedural requirements of the General Plan to include those that require a market analysis relating to the need for retail and commercial land, an impacts analysis relating to city infrastructure, and a fiscal impacts analysis of city and other service providers.

The Specific Plan replicates what Redding City Council approved in May of 2020, which establishes land use, zoning, and development standards for the Specific Plan area. It includes design guidelines and requires certain infrastructure improvements including (but not limited to) widening Bechelli Lane and South Bonnyview Road, construction of roundabouts at the intersection of South Bonnyview Road and Bechelli Lane, the addition of lanes to the I-5 southbound and northbound off ramps, and financial contributions toward Churn Creek Road/Rancho Road/Victor Avenue intersection improvements. The initiative also lists environmental impact mitigation measures for the development and operation of the permitted uses in the Specific Plan area.

The initiative being proposed ***would not be subject to a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) challenge***. Redding City Council could adopt the initiative and make it law, or it could call an election and let the City of Redding voters decide. Either way, CEQA is not required, and the underlying litigation claiming defects in the CEQA process would likely become moot. It is possible, however, that opponents could still try and overturn the adoption of the Specific Plan through a referendum.

Costco is asking registered voters in Redding to endorse the initiative with a letter writing campaign as well as petition gatherers, who collected 1,400 signatures in support of Costco the very first day out. 5,600 valid signatures will bring the petition back to City Councilors to either make it law or call an election and let voters decide. The City will benefit greatly from developing this location, which will provide much needed local tax-generating uses and contribute to job growth in the City.

Fountain Wind Project Hearings To Begin Soon Following Release of Final EIR Document

ConnectGen is a renewable energy company focused on working with local communities to responsibly develop best-in-class wind, solar, and energy storage projects that will increase America's supply of low-cost, domestically produced clean energy. They are currently developing a wind farm in Northeastern Shasta County named the **Fountain Wind Project** near the existing Hatchet Ridge wind farm, located near Burney. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Fountain Wind Project was completed by Shasta County, and released for a public review period from August 3, 2020 through October 21, 2020. The **Final Environmental Impact Report** (FEIR) for the Fountain Wind Project will be released for review by the general public very soon. The DEIR generated 110 comments, which will be addressed in the FEIR, including answering questions.

The Shasta County Planning Commission will schedule a public hearing to consider recommendation of this project about 20 days after the release of the FEIR. In order to accommodate in-person public comments about the project, the meeting will likely be a hybrid model **if possible**, which will allow in-person attendance concurrently in Redding and with a satellite connection, possibly at the Round Mountain Elementary School, via a "go to meeting" connection operated by a County staff person.

Shasta VOICES has been closely monitoring the Fountain Wind Project for the past year or so, and we've done our due diligence and extensive research on the project. We learned through reference checking ConnectGen, the project applicant, that this an organization who lives up to their commitments, is very fair and responsive to the communities where their projects are located and/or being constructed, and are good corporate sponsors and citizens who have been very favorably received in their communities.

Additionally, landowners near the proposed project have expressed concerns about their home values if this project is approved. So, Shasta VOICES researched and provided a property value assessment entitled "**The Effect on Real Estate Values in Surrounding Residential Communities**" in northeastern Shasta County. There have been many large-scale studies done on property values and wind farms, but Shasta VOICES wanted to conduct our own local small-scale, easy-to-understand study because Shasta County does have an actual wind farm project, Hatchet Ridge, with ten years of history that provides us with **factual real estate sales data** in the Burney area (as well as Montgomery Creek and Round Mountain) relative to residential property values. The results of that data show that properties sold in that area since 2010 have **increased in value**, with the average increase being 46.13 percent.

California's Senate Bill 100 (SB 100) mandates all electric utilities in California acquire **60%** of their annual unmet energy needs from renewable resources by 2030. SB 100 states that by December 31, 2045, eligible renewable resources and zero-carbon resources must supply **100%** of electricity provided to customers. The California Energy Commission (CEC) developed procedures for compliance and enforcement of this mandate. Wind and solar energy meet the renewable resources and zero-carbon resources mandate. Shasta County needs to meet these mandates like every other area of California, and this project will assist in the process of obtaining compliance. The Fountain Wind Project has the potential to provide electricity for more than 86,000 homes, while using up to 72 wind turbine generators.

This Project will provide **many benefits to Shasta County**. Since 2019, ConnectGen has been committed to developing a Community Development Program up to **\$1 million (which has now grown closer to \$2 million)**. This program includes a direct investment in the communities of Round Mountain and Montgomery Creek, partnering with a local Shasta County internet service provider to enhance access to high-speed internet service in the Intermountain Region, and additional fuel reduction projects in the Montgomery Creek and Big Bend communities in partnership with the local Resource Conservation District. The Community Development Program has been developed based on direct feedback from members of the local community. Additional information will be available soon on the Fountain Wind Project website, fountainwind.com.

A report done by Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. (EPS), a land economics consulting firm, is available on the Fountain Wind Project website, fountainwind.com. It shows that the project is expected to generate substantial one-time and ongoing economic and financial benefits to Shasta County, including:

- Project **construction** will generate **450 job years** (in aggregate), including direct and multiplier (indirect and induced) effects, and about \$27 million in employee compensation, as well as about \$60 million in total economic output/sales in Shasta County.
- Project **operation** will provide **42 ongoing jobs**, about \$2.5 million in compensation, and just over \$6 million in economic output **each year** during its 35-year lifetime. Cumulative over the 35 years, project operations will provide 1,456 job years, \$90.4 million in employee compensation, and **\$210.3 million in economic output** in the County.
- The Project is estimated to generate **\$60 million in new property tax** over the life of the project, about \$1.7 million annually.
- The County could receive about **\$4 million** in one-time County sales and use tax revenues from the construction phase.

For all of the reasons stated above, Shasta VOICES is supporting the Fountain Wind Project. **Stay tuned** for additional information on the date of the release of the FEIR document, and date and location information on the upcoming public hearings!

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.

3 Supervisors Served With Intent to Be Recalled—At the Shasta County Board of Supervisors meeting on April 6th, Supervisors Leonard Moty, Joe Chimenti, and Mary Rickert were served official notices of “Intent to be Recalled,” each by a citizen residing in the respective districts that the Supervisor represents. The reasons given for the recall include a betrayal of public trust, a need for fundamental change, a disregard for the Constitution, and a course correction for Shasta County. Those serving the recall paperwork said they cannot wait until the next regular elections to “restore representative government,” complaining that these particular supervisors didn’t defend the community against the Governor’s overreach (particularly during the pandemic), have mismanaged County Health and Human Services programs and funds, and made decisions detrimental to businesses and the community.

To qualify to have a recall election, the recall proponents will need to collect signatures from a minimum of 20% of the registered voters in each of the three supervisor’s districts. So, 20% registered in District 1 (Chimenti) is 4,391 valid signatures, 20% registered in District 2 (Moty) is 4,308 signatures, and 20% registered in District 3 (Rickert) is 4,432. Cathy Darling Allen, County Clerk and Registrar of Voters, said after allowing required responses by those Supervisors targeted for recall, submitting a proposed recall petition, and running a public notice in the newspaper, recall backers will have 120 days to collect enough signatures to qualify the recall for an election. **However**, the recall proponents **did not include their signatures** on their notices of intentions published in the newspaper, the first step that must be taken before they can start collecting signatures. They now must start the recall process over again.

Residential Real Estate Sales “Crazy”—Real estate professionals in Shasta County are referring to the first quarter statistics of residential real estate sales as “crazy.” The average sales price of a sold home jumped from \$334,132 at the end of 2020 to **\$370,314** through the end of March 2021. Five years ago in 2016, the total average sales price of a sold home in Shasta County was \$271,023. So far in 2021, there have been 793 homes sold. At the end of March, the number of months of inventory of homes for sale was down to 0.9 (less than one month’s inventory). They attribute this current trend to continuing low interest rates, particularly for the entry level buyers, and relocation from other areas of California at every price level.

Board of Supervisors Vote Failed to Support Lawsuit Against Governor Newsom—There is a legal case pending called *Ghost Golf Inc. versus Governor Gavin Newsom* which challenges Governor Newsom’s power to implement the “Blueprint For a Safer Economy” during the Covid-19 pandemic in California. On April 20, 2021, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 (Moty and Rickert dissenting) to execute an agreement with Fisher Broyles LLC for up to \$2,000 to provide legal services in the form of drafting and filing an amicus brief, which makes a statement of interest for Shasta County in the case, supporting the Ghost Golf Inc. position. This item, however, required a 4/5th vote to pass, and therefore, failed.

Shasta Lake City Manager Announces Retirement—At the April 6, 2021 Shasta Lake City Council meeting, Shasta Lake City Manager John Duckett, Jr. announced that he will retire effective June 4, 2021. For the past few years, the City has proactively pursued succession planning for replacing key staff positions within the City. The current Assistant City Manager position is one such position that was established to afford training for the replacement of the City Manager when that time came. The Assistant City Manager is, in fact, interested in the City Manager position at this time. She is Jessaca Lugo, who has worked in the area of economic development, affordable housing, grants and special projects with the City of Shasta Lake since 2004, and has a BA in Business Administration. After discussion and Council consensus, Mayor Morgan and Council member Watkins were appointed to an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate with the Assistant City Manager. An item will come before Council at a later date for possible approval of appointment to City Manager.

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