



The VOICE

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Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **23** single family home permits drawn in the City of Redding in June, bringing the total number of single family permits through June 2015 to **108**. That is 50 more than for the same period last year (**an 86% increase**), and 56 more than for the same period in 2013.
- The unemployment rate in Shasta County for June, 2015 was **7.4%**, down from 7.5% in May. The current labor force in Shasta County totals 75,000, with 5,500 people unemployed who are actively looking for work.
- The median sales price for California home sales reached a 7 year high to **\$417,000** for new and existing houses in June 2015, up 6.9% from \$390,000 during the same time last year. It was the highest median price posted since October 2007.

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30 % Water Use Reduction Not Low Enough Redding Steps up Enforcement

The State of California officially began enforcing water use reductions on June 1, 2015. Water customers in the City of Redding were required to reduce their water usage by **36%**. Unfortunately, for the month of June 2015, they were only able to reduce their usage by **30%**. That has prompted the City of Redding to step up their enforcement efforts, as they are subject to penalties of up to \$10,000 per day for not reaching the state-set target of 36%.

Effective July 15, 2015, the City of Redding has hired North State Security, a local private security firm, to help enforce local water saving measures. Representatives from this firm will be inspecting neighborhoods for obvious violations, such as watering on off days and hours, as well as runoff and poorly aimed sprinklers. The \$30,000 contract will put them out on the streets of Redding from 5:00 am—9:00 am at 17 different neighborhood locations each week for the next few months.

Inspections will be done, and those breaking the watering rules will first receive a door hanger about the violations. Another violation will lead to an official letter. A third violation will lead to a \$50 penalty. The City’s water department will perform the actual follow-up and implement penalties. As a reminder, here are the watering rules for Redding residents:

- **Even-numbered addresses:** may water Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday.
- **Odd-numbered addresses:** may water Wednesday, Friday, Sunday.
- Nobody may water on Mondays.
- Watering allowed from 9:00 pm—7:00 am only.
- No runoff allowed—must use shut-off nozzle if washing cars— and applying water to sidewalks and driveways is prohibited.
- No watering outdoors when raining or within 48 hours after measureable rainfall.
- No potable water can be used in a fountain/water feature unless it is re-circulating.

Blueprint for Public Safety: Update

The City of Redding and the County of Shasta retained Matrix Consulting Group to prepare a Blueprint for Public Safety in late April. The contract is for an amount not to exceed \$155,000. The County of Shasta is contributing \$50,000 towards this amount. Matrix started its work in earnest the first of May.

According to City Manager Kurt Starman, the team has been working diligently on the project since that time. Key work items to date include in-depth interviews with City of Redding and County of Shasta personnel, site visits, agency profiles, data collection, data analysis, and employee surveys. Matrix is currently working on a “Best Practices” assessment and a preliminary list of key issues. The project is on track, and the Blueprint for Public Safety report should be finished by the end of August, as planned.

Another City of Redding Land Exchange Information is Available, But No Discussion Yet

The July 21st Redding City Council meeting agenda included an interesting item on the consent agenda, item 4.3(a). The consent agenda “contains items considered routine and/or which have been individually scrutinized by City Council Members and are required no further consideration.” The only problem with that is most people won’t know anything about it because of the lack of public discussion. And in this particular case, item 4.3(a) was “pulled” from the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. Apparently Cal Fire is still going through an “internal review process” and asked that the item be set aside for a while longer. But it is still an item of great interest, and here are the details.

Item 4.3(a) presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-Fire) for a potential land exchange for 3.88 acres of property located at 875 Cypress Avenue, Redding and 23.21 acres of property located at 6100 Airport Road, Redding; and authorized the City Manager, or his designee, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent changes in order to reach an agreement.

Apparently, Cal-Fire has outgrown the multiple office buildings and warehouse structures at 875 Cypress Avenue and is interested in relocating. The structures are in “various states of disrepair and/or deterioration.” Cal-Fire also operates the Redding Forest Fire Station at 6103 Airport Road. The City owns the 23.21 acres of vacant land directly across from this fire station, and Cal-Fire has expressed an interest in a land exchange with the City to facilitate the relocation of their unit headquarters.

In order to properly investigate such an exchange, the terms of the MOU include:

- Allowing Cal-Fire access to City property at 6100 Airport Road to evaluate the site.
- Cal-Fire will have both properties appraised for fair market value.
- Recognition that any agreement will require retention of certain portions of each property to allow certain existing facilities or infrastructure to remain, including City of Redding water well on the City property, and a communication tower and vault facility on the Cal-Fire facility.
- Understanding that if the property appraisal determines that the fair market value of the Cal-Fire property is less than that of the City property, the City may allow Cal-Fire to acquire a portion of the City property that is equal to the fair market value of the Cal-Fire property, or allow Cal-Fire to purchase the remaining acreage.
- Agreeing to negotiate a lease-back with Cal-Fire to allow continued occupancy of the Cypress Avenue location while construction of new facilities is being completed at the Airport Road location.

The final agreement for a land exchange would be subject to approval by both the City Council and the State Department of General Services and the State Public Works Board.

There is no fiscal impact to approval of the MOU, however, the City-owned property at 6100 Airport Road is subject to the terms of a Federal Aviation Administration Land Release Agreement, which requires that any proceeds from the property be expended for Redding Municipal Airport. Therefore, current debt associated with the Airport Fund would be offset by an amount equal to the appraised value of the property at 6100 Airport Road. The revenue generated by a lease-back with Cal-Fire would benefit the City’s General Fund.

The City sees such an exchange as beneficial to all parties. The City would take ownership of the property adjacent to City Hall allowing for the “potential of future expansion.” The Airport would benefit from a reduction of debt in the Airport Funds. Cal-Fire would be able to consolidate operations to Airport Road and expansion of facilities in this location will bring economic benefits in the form of construction and support of nearby businesses.

Although on the surface it sounds like a win-win situation for the community on a number of levels, many will think there is yet another secret deal being made because there was no public discussion about it in the early stages. Having this item on the consent agenda, as noted above, does eliminate public discussion, but there is a staff report available that contains all the information related to the item for consent approval by Council, including a copy of the actual MOU that was initially scheduled for approval by Council before the item was pulled from the agenda.

By the time all of the items listed above would be completed, and the potential final agreement for such a land exchange comes before City Council for approval, the public will once again think something “fishy” is going on behind closed doors. That not being the case, we (Shasta VOICES) are taking this opportunity to bring this information completely out in the open now, right from the very beginning.

Is Crime in Shasta County Really Decreasing? Statistics Say It Is

There has been much discussion over the past couple of years in Redding and the Shasta County area about the perception of rising crime, a rising homeless population, an increase in the number of panhandlers on the streets, and an increase in the number of offenders locating to Shasta County due to the State's AB 109 early release program and Prop 47, which reduced some low level crimes to misdemeanors.

Groups and projects such as the Redding Crime Watch, Safe City Project, and Blueprint for Public Safety have been in the forefront of addressing these concerns. The work that they have all done so far seems to be effective, if the recently released crime statistics in the cities of Redding and Anderson are any indication.

Statistics actually show that crime overall has been **declining** statewide, albeit not necessarily in some individual areas of the state. But locally, it also appears that crime is declining. This is good news!

According to the **Redding** police department, from January 2015 through June 2015:

- Violent crime in Redding **dropped** by 13 percent from January 2015 through June 2015.
- Property crime **fell** by 1.8 percent.
- Burglaries were **down** 13.75 percent.
- Larceny was up 3.46 percent.
- Vehicle theft was **down** .43 percent.

These numbers contradict the predicted rise in crime locally after the passage of both AB 109 and Prop 47.

Redding Police Chief Paoletti has said it is possible that people are not reporting property crime, but he has no way of knowing for sure. This could affect the accuracy of the statistics.

The most recent **Anderson** statistics also show a decline in crime. In 2014 there were:

- 201 cases of violent crime compared to 235 in 2013, a **decrease** of 14.47 percent.
- 617 property crime cases involving burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft, compared to 720 cases in 2013, a **decrease** of 14.31 percent.
- For all people arrested in 2014 for all crimes, there were 1,498 compared to 1,391 in 2013. That is an increase of 7.69 percent, with 107 more people arrested during 2014.
- 1,208 cases were submitted to the Shasta County District Attorney's Office for review compared to 1,111 in 2013.
- 67 cases were submitted to the Shasta County Juvenile Probation Department for review compared to 76 in 2013.

In the meantime, work continues by those groups who are not persuaded that crime is falling in Redding and the Shasta County area, regardless of what the statistics say.

At the end of August, or perhaps in early September, the long awaited results of the Blueprint for Public Safety study will be revealed. It is likely that the public safety government agencies involved from Shasta County and the City of Redding will make the case for additional funding to increase staffing levels and other resources that would increase the level of public safety services.

It is unclear, however, exactly where additional funds would come from. Although the Greater Redding Chamber of Commerce has suggested that the Redding City Council put a ballot measure together for a general sales tax increase, there is no guarantee that it would pass, or that if it were to pass, it would all be spent on public safety services for both Redding and Shasta County. And, at this point, the Council has not been convinced to put such a measure on the ballot, at least for the November 2015 election. We will all have to stay tuned to learn the results of the Blueprint for Public Safety before any recommendations are considered.

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.

- ***New Shasta County Courthouse***—With the passage of Senate Bill 1407 in October 2008, funding was identified for 41 trial court projects statewide in California. A new courthouse to be built in Shasta County received an initial allocation of \$211 million to construct a facility. In November 2009, the preferred site was selected, which is about 2 acres and includes a block bound by Court, Yuba, Oregon and Butte streets in downtown Redding. The proposed 169,296 square foot facility, with a price tag now pegged at only \$155.8 million, calls for 14 courtrooms with space for expansion to replace the existing courthouse on Court Street. It was initially scheduled for completion by the end of 2014. Now, the construction is not scheduled to begin until mid-2017. But, an Arizona-based construction company, Sundt Construction, has been selected by The Judicial Council of California to build the new courthouse. The six-story, state-of-the-art facility is slated to open in May 2020. Melissa Fowler-Bradley, Shasta County's Court Executive Officer, has said the schematic images of the courthouse should be finalized in the fall, and that the actual dollars available for the project will be known when the state sets its 2016-2017 budget.
- ***Shasta County General Plan Update (or lack of)*** - In August, 2013 (*yes, two years ago*), a stakeholder committee of local citizens and business people formed to participate in the process of updating parts of Shasta County's General Plan met for the ***one and only introductory meeting*** held thus far for such a purpose. According to Bill Walker, Senior Planner for Shasta County, consultants are still working on technical background studies including: Demographics and Local Economy, Land Use, Public Safety, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. These are the four studies specified in a contract with AECOM, the consultants hired for the update. These studies were promised to be sent to the Committee "soon" for review over one year ago...that hasn't happened. Nor has any other meeting been held, or even been scheduled to discuss these studies, or anything else for that matter. In fact, there hasn't been any communication whatsoever to this committee. After two entire years, one would think some sort of update or notice would have been sent to the committee. And after two years, how many of the original committee members would even be available if there were any further meetings scheduled? The contract with AECOM expires December 31, 2015. It appears that the County never really intended to include any stakeholders and local citizens in the process at all. This has further damaged the credibility of the County's Resource Management department not only among its own citizens, but among those who might have considered bringing their businesses and new jobs to Shasta County. It's difficult enough for government agencies to earn the trust of those they govern...it doesn't help to show such disregard for supposed "stakeholders."



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