



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **12** single family home permits drawn in the City of Redding in July, bringing the total number of single family permits through July 2015 to **119**. That is 47 more than for the same period last year (**a 65% increase**), and 54 more than for the same period in 2013.
- The 28th annual **2015 State of the City Luncheon** has been scheduled for **Tuesday, September 29, 2015 at 11:30 a.m.** at the Redding Civic Auditorium. Deadline for ticket registration is September 22nd. Tickers are \$45 per individual or \$325 for a table of 8. You can register/obtain tickets at the Redding Chamber of Commerce.
- The Shasta Builders Exchange will have an **open house on October 8, 2015 from 11:30 am—1:30 pm** at their new location in the Frozen Gourmet building at 5800 Airport Road. Enjoy some ice cream as you visit the new location!

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Local Agriculture-Manufacturing Firm First to Build at Stillwater Business Park

On August 18, 2015, a purchase and sale agreement in the amount of \$840,000 with **Lassen Canyon Nursery, Inc.** was approved by Redding City Council for Lot 7, totaling 16.75 acres in Stillwater Business Park.

This is an historic event for Redding! This is the first property sold at Stillwater Business Park, after many years of controversy over creation of the Park. And, Lassen Canyon Nursery is a **locally started and owned business** that has operated in the Redding area for more than 50 years. What could be more positive than this for the North State right now?

This agricultural business is the largest seller of publicly available strawberry varieties in California and perhaps worldwide. In the fall of 2014, they sold over 215 million strawberry plants to commercial fruit growers in California and the southeast, and sold almost as many plants during the second harvest in Central California. It grows primarily in the United States in several California locations, but also has operations in Central Mexico and Beijing, China.

Recently, the Nursery has started propagating raspberry and blackberry plants, and has been selected to produce strawberry, raspberry and blackberry stock plants for a number of public and private programs, including the University of California, the State of Oregon and the US Department of Agriculture.

The company has outgrown its current headquarters on Salmon Creek Road in Shasta County. Immediate goals include expanding the raspberry and blackberry division to support around 20 new employees and construction of a new corporate headquarters. They also plan to build a 30,000 square foot cooler and shipping and receiving office. Within two years, the company expects to **double** its size and increase its cooler capacity for storage.

City officials have said that the \$840,000 paid for the lot was the full asking price that matched the appraised value of the land. Therefore, construction will not be subject to prevailing wage issues, because there was no financial incentive provided by the City.

The company would be eligible for a reduced Economic Development Attraction Rate from Redding Electric Utility, and would qualify for job credits, which would be subject to additional negotiation and be brought back to City Council for approval at a later date.

Plans are for Lassen Canyon Nursery, after a deposit of \$25,000 in earnest money with the City of Redding, to pay the remainder of the purchase price at the close of escrow on, or before, November 30, 2015. Construction of its new facilities would begin in the spring of 2016.

There is a provision in the sales agreement that would enable, but not require, the City to purchase the property back at the original purchase price if Lassen Canyon Nursery does not construct facilities there within five years.

Local Nursery owners Liz Elwood-Ponce and her brother Kenneth Elwood spoke briefly at the August 15th Council meeting, expressing their excitement to continue growing and expanding their business, and “taking Redding with us” on their successful journey.

Federal Highway Bridge Program Grant Funds Six Local Bridge Replacements in Redding

On August 5, 2015, the Redding City Council approved the acceptance of **\$11,2210,707** in federal funding from the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) for the rehabilitation (one bridge) and replacement (five bridges) of various bridges throughout the City of Redding. Additionally, a total of \$1,165,749 in City Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) local matching funds will supplement the budget, which represents an 11.47 percent match on all but one of the bridge sites.

Back on September 7, 2010, the City Council authorized staff to submit several applications for federal funding for the rehabilitation or replacement of local bridge structures. Caltrans accepted the City's applications and programmed funding for each bridge in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), a necessary step in the process to obtain such grant funding. On March 6, 2012, Council accepted the HBP funding plan to allow staff to begin preliminary engineering on these various bridges, and staff continues today with the design phase of the bridges, and will then move into right-of-way acquisition and construction.

Here are the bridges along with the allotted amount of approved and budgeted funding:

- Sacramento Drive at Olney Creek—\$2,213,000 (HBP funding)
- Old Alturas Road at Churn Creek—\$2,453,569 (HBP funding) and \$317,886 (TIF funding)
- Eastside Road at Canyon Hollow Creek—\$1,355,394 (HBP funding) and \$175,606 (TIF funding)
- Girvan Road at Olney Creek—\$2,239,809 (HBP funding) and \$290,191 (TIF funding)
- Westside Road at Canyon Hollow Creek—\$1,270,406 (HBP funding) and \$164,595 (TIF funding)
- Canyon Road at ACID—\$1,678,529 (HBP funding) and \$217,471 (TIF funding)

Accepting these HBP funds and approving the budgets for these bridges will allow replacement of these old bridges that have been designated as either “structurally deficient” or “functionally obsolete,” per Caltrans Bridge Inspection Reports. This is very good news for the citizens of Redding!

Questions Surround Dirt Bike Pump Park Plans

On March 11, 2015, Andrew Pellkofer, Regional Coordinator for “Ride Riding,” a bicycle advocacy group, made a presentation to the City of Redding Community Services Advisory Group (CSAC) to construct a dirt bike pump park in a City park. On April 8, 2015, CSAC selected the 10.5 acre undeveloped park site at 950 Lake Boulevard for such an endeavor. They felt that the pump track is consistent with planning standards for large neighborhood parks. CSAC, however, does not have the ultimate authority for final approval of such a park.

A pump track is a loop of dirt berms and mounds that is ridden without pedaling. Mountain biking is a popular sport, and pump tracks are a sound entry point for novices as well as a convenient practice area for more experienced riders. The proposed track is being referred to as “Panorama Pump Park.”

Unfortunately, the Panorama/Lake Boulevard neighborhood homeowners were not consulted or surveyed about such a park before the news broke about its possible construction. They have legitimate concerns that should be addressed, and they want that opportunity before any construction moves forward, hoping this is not already a done deal.

Fortunately, there is a Zoning Code in place that requires approval of a Site Development Permit by the Board of Administrative Review (BAR) to establish a park facility in this “RM” Zoning District. Plans for this project have not been completed, so an application for the required permit has yet to be made. When the plans and application are officially received, **a public BAR hearing** will be scheduled to determine if such a pump park will be approved. Those concerned neighborhood homeowners will be notified in advance of that hearing, public notices about the hearing will be posted, and anyone who wants to speak will have that desired opportunity to express their concerns to the BAR before any plans move forward.



Public Pension Costs Continue to Rise

According to the California Policy Center, California cities that participate in defined benefit pension plans (CalPERS) are expected to make a total of \$5.1 billion in contributions during fiscal year 2015, accounting for nearly 7% (about 6% for the City of Redding) of their total revenue with a number of cities spending more than 12% of total revenues on pension contributions. As of June 30, 2013, the average funded ratio for these plans was 75%.

“In general, pension costs do not represent a near-term threat to municipal solvency, but the burden of financing pension benefits is crowding out other spending priorities or adding pressure for tax increases.”

Here is the *most recently available* data for employee pension costs in the City of Redding and County of Shasta:

City of Redding

Miscellaneous Employees	
Number of Employees	856
Annual Covered Payroll (6-30-13)	\$ 39,113,509
Costs to Provide Current Contracted Retirement Benefits:	
Employer Contribution Rate CalPERS (20.060%)	\$ 7,846,170
Employee Contribution Rate CalPERS (7.0%) *	\$ 2,737,946
TOTAL CALPERS COST	\$ 10,584,116
PARS Additional Benefit Cost Employer Contribution (16.73%)	\$ 6,543,369
TOTAL COST	\$ 17,127,485

Public Safety	
Number of Employees	188
Annual Covered Payroll (6-30-13)	\$ 16,311,395
Costs to Provide Current Contracted Retirement Benefits:	
Employer Contribution Rate CalPERS (44.395%)	\$ 7,241,444
Employee Contribution Rate CalPERS (9.0%) *	\$ 1,468,026
TOTAL COST	\$ 8,709,470

**Note: Some of employee contribution rate may be paid by employee.*

Total Annual Covered Annual Payroll All Employees:
\$ 55,424,904

Total Annual City of Redding (estimated) Pension Costs: \$ 23,836,955

County of Shasta

Miscellaneous Employees	
Number of Employees	1,523
Annual Covered Payroll (6-30-12)	\$ 73,377,851
Costs to Provide Current Contracted Retirement Benefits:	
Employer Contribution Rate CalPERS (13.23%)	\$ 9,776,131
Employee Contribution Rate CalPERS (7.0%) *	\$ 5,136,450
TOTAL CALPERS COST	\$ 14,912,581
Social Security Additional Benefit Cost Employer Contribution	\$ 4,580,427
TOTAL COST	\$ 19,493,008

Public Safety	
Number of Employees	241
Annual Covered Payroll (6-30-13)	\$ 13,044,242
Costs to Provide Current Contracted Retirement Benefits:	
Employer Contribution Rate CalPERS (33.577%)	\$ 4,379,865
Employee Contribution Rate CalPERS (9.0%) *	\$ 1,173,982
TOTAL COST	\$ 5,553,847

**Note: Some of employee contribution rate may be paid by employee.*

Total Annual Covered Payroll All Employees: \$ 86,422,093

Total Annual County of Shasta (estimated) Pension Costs: \$ 20,046,855

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.

Palm Communities Low-income Housing Project— A 76 unit multi-family low income housing project approved by Redding City Council on April 16, 2013, in an effort to obtain federal tax credits, reduced the number of proposed units from 76 to **55** in January, 2015 in hopes that the change would make its funding application more competitive. On their third attempt at receiving federal funding, ***that effort proved to be successful***, and the project will now be able to move forward.

The \$16 million dollar project will lease property (ground lease) located at 2480 Ellis Street (formerly referred to as 10 Acre Woods), which is owned by the City of Redding as Successor Housing Agency, for \$1 per year for a period of 60 years. The agreement is with PC Redding Apartments LP, an Irvine based developer of affordable housing. The development, called ***The Woodlands PC (Palm Communities) Redding Apartments***, will be a gated community and will consist of one, two and three bedroom units that are garden-style walk-up units, with about 8 units in each building. Amenities will include a pool, turf play area, community room, and on-site management. PC Redding Apartments LP, in partnership with North Valley Catholic Social Services, will provide a host of living skill/training opportunities for tenants of 15 units reserved for special-needs households. Construction could start in November 2015. The City of Redding has committed \$1.75 million in federal HOME Investment Partnership Program funding, and Shasta County has committed \$2.6 million to the project.

House of Hope Project at Shastina Ranch—Palomar Builders has entered into a partnership with Make-A-Wish of Northeastern California and Northern Nevada. Their goal is to raise **\$100,000** for Make-A-Wish to grant wishes for children in the North State with life threatening medical conditions. They plan to do this through the construction and sale of the “House of Hope” in the new Shastina Ranch Subdivision. The opening of the new Shastina Ranch Subdivision, a 400-lot community, will be holding a **groundbreaking ceremony** for the “House of Hope” on **September 9, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.** This will coincide with the grand opening of the Shastina Ranch Subdivision, at Airport Road and Shasta View Drive, across the street from the Redding Electric Utility facility. The “House of Hope” is located on Lemurian Drive directly across from the model home. A portion of the sales proceeds from this home will be donated to Make-A-Wish Northeastern California and Northern Nevada. Palomar Builders is soliciting help from suppliers and subcontractors in the form of donations of goods and services, as well as anyone else wishing to donate and be a part of this project to meet the \$100,000 goal. For more information on how you can be involved, contact: Jeb Allen, Palomar Builders, (530) 222-8585 or Melanie Hunter, (530) 921-3600.

Crag View Water District, Shasta County Service Area (CSA 23) Has Drastic Water Cut, Stiff Penalties—The County of Shasta, after the 67 water user customers in CSA 23 water district (covering the Sacramento River Canyon area near the Siskiyou County Line) rejected a \$30 per month increase in water rates to insure adequate summer water supplies, is now enforcing a strict water use ordinance for CSA 23 because of a **local water shortage emergency**: Outdoor water use is **prohibited entirely**; indoor conservation measures include **proof** of installation or use of shower heads that deliver 1.5 gallons per minute; **proof** of installation or use of all toilets that deliver less than 1.3 gallons per flush; and **repair** of any leaks within 24 hours following actual or constructive notice of such leak. The ordinance for all this was approved and made effective by the County Supervisors on August 25, 2015. Each violation may be prosecuted as a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 30 days, or by a fine not exceeding \$1,000, or both. Any person violating the ordinance may also be subject to a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. The CSA 23 water customers have expressed that they are fed up with the way the County handles their water, and are considering dissolving ties with the County. This separation could take as long as one year...in the meantime, they will be subject to the draconian water cuts none of us wants to experience.

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