



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 August bringing the total number of single family permits through August 2015 to **131**. That is **51** more than for the same period last year (**a 64% increase**), and **60** more than for the same period in 2013.
- 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!
- Shasta County's unemployment rate in August was 7.2%, down from a revised 7.7% in July and 9% in August 2014. The last time Shasta County's rate was lower in August was in 2007, when it was 6.9%. The County added 1,700 jobs last month, including 1,500 in government as the area's schools were back in session. California's unemployment was 6.1% in

First Draft of Public Safety Blueprint Leaked to Local Press

The first draft of the joint Redding-Shasta County Strategic Plan (Blueprint) for Public Safety, before Council members had even received a copy for review, was somehow **leaked** to the Record Searchlight, who exposed its contents on Monday, September 14th. Apparently, nobody knows who did this, or why, but nonetheless, it happened. Front page news, complete with charts and graphs and initial findings...premature at best.

So, the general public now knows what direction the hired consultant for this project is suggesting as potential solutions Whether or not those suggestions will be included in the final document remains to be seen.

City Manager Kurt Starman, at the City Council meeting on September 15th, indicated that feedback on the first draft by the three working groups assigned to the project (Redding police, fire, and Shasta County Sheriff representing the jail, mental health, and related issues) has not yet been incorporated into the plan by the consultant. He further stated that there will be a second draft which should be completed by September 25th. Further feedback will be given after that, and there will more than likely be a third draft completed before any document will go before City Council and the general public for additional feedback. Unlike the first draft, the follow-up drafts will be clearly marked confidential to (hopefully) avoid another leak, at the suggestion of Councilman Brent Weaver.

What does all this mean? It means that it will probably be the **end of October** before the finished product is unveiled, most likely in the form of a workshop so that proper input and participation can occur.

In the meantime, the community will digest some "findings" outlined in the leaked story:

Recommendations for Redding Police Department—maintain current patrol unit staffing levels and pay; change to 12-hour shifts; hire more community service officers to take care of low level calls related to homeless issues, trespassing, illegal camps and loitering; create a digital reporting system for officers to speed up investigations.

Recommendations for Redding—open a homeless day center; build public toilets; create an inter-agency plan among public service agencies to find ways to reduce homelessness, focusing on housing first options and services for the mentally ill.

Recommendations for Shasta County—establish a vision with measurable goals for improving public safety; double the number of beds in a jail rehab facility from 64 to 128; Sheriff's office should work with other law enforcement and judicial agencies to create a criminal justice system master plan for issues pertaining to AB109, Prop 47 and mental illness; provide more training for deputies working in the jail.

Recommendations for Redding Fire—hire 12 **apprentice** firefighters to bring staffing levels up to industry standards of four-firefighter companies instead of the current three.

The leaked first draft now sets expectations for what the finished product should be, according to City Councilman Brent Weaver. The end product may be different...and we won't know that until the end of October, at the earliest. Stay tuned!

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Council Approves Civic Auditorium Lease Extension With Advance Redding (Bethel Church)

In 2011, the City of Redding was considering closing the Civic Auditorium during severe budget reductions. Request for proposals were issued, and after significant input from the community, the City entered into a lease agreement with Advance Redding (Bethel Church) that began in January 2012, for a period of 4.75 years, with a five-year option to renew. The Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry and Bethel Church is the standing tenant.

Advance Redding also contractually agreed to make the Auditorium available for 11 large community events, as well as market the Auditorium for other uses and schedule a minimum of 60 event days to parties not affiliated with Bethel Church. Not only did they meet this criteria, they far exceeded the number of outside event days to **well over 100** during each of the first 4 years of the agreement.

Additionally, Advance Redding has **invested over \$650,000** in facility improvements over the past 4 years, and pays all utilities and tenant insurance coverage.

This private partnership with Advance Redding has been a tremendous success. It has allowed the Auditorium to not only stay open, but host a greater number of events than in the years the City of Redding was managing it.

So, it was not a difficult decision for Redding City Council to approve a new lease extension on September 15th. Some requested changes to the new lease agreement include the following:

- The initial lease term was due to expire in September 2016. The new lease will extend the term until **September 2021**.
- The monthly lease rate will be reduced from what would have been \$30,000 beginning in 2016 to \$20,000 per month, beginning October 2015 with annual adjustments tied to the Consumer Price Index.
- The City's maintenance responsibilities have been clarified by listing specific features instead of systems.
- An updated inventory to take into account equipment and furnishing that have been replaced or broken will be done and attached to the lease.

Without this private partnership, the Civic Auditorium would likely be closed, as the same City budget restriction that existed in 2011 persist today. The extended lease arrangement is a win-win-win for our community.

City and County Programs Aim to Clean Up Redding

Redding City Council voted unanimously to expand the existing Adopt-A-Street Program to include an **Adopt-A-Block Program** in the Downtown area on September 15th.

The current Adopt-A-Street Program encourages individuals, families, businesses, and service organizations to get involved in community beautification. When a group adopts an area, it agrees to clean up the area a minimum of four times each year. The Solid Waste Utility loans the participants appropriate equipment—garbage bags, litter grabbers, safety vests, and safety signs. Currently, participants have adopted 27 miles of City streets.

The expanded Adopt-A-Block Program will also be administered by the Solid Waste Utility. The minimum time for a group to adopt an area will be one year, with cleaning to be done a minimum of twice a month. After the second cleaning, a sign will be posted in recognition of the group that has adopted that area. The Solid Waste Utility will provide participants with safety vests, garbage bags, litter grabbers, and will dispose of the trash collected. A container will be placed at a convenient location for participants to dispose of what is picked up. That container will then be serviced by Solid Waste staff for disposal.

The Shasta County Opportunity Center is currently perform-

ing clean up work within the former Downtown Redding Business Improvement District boundaries, excluding the Market Street Promenade area. They have indicated they would welcome the extra help.

The annual cost for this expanded program will be \$4,500 for the costs of the materials provided to the participants, the signs and disposal of the trash collected. Funding for this program will come from the Litter Abatement Fund, which has funds available to support the program.

In Shasta County, through its Housing Authority and Community Action Programs, as well as the Health and Human Services Agency, there are several programs focused on **addressing homelessness**. These include housing, food, and medical assistance as well as ancillary support services. There are additional resources available in Shasta County provided by various non-profit and religious organizations as well as other government entities such as Veteran's Affairs.

Funding for County programs and services that assist the homeless are provided by multiple federal, state and local funding sources, and total approximately **\$16.9 million** annually. Through the "Blueprint" process (page 1), perhaps these resources can be allocated more efficiently with a well thought out plan to properly address homelessness.

Study: New Options For North State Travel to Sacramento and the Bay Area

The Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) was recently awarded a grant for a consultant to study the possible expansion of our far north state intercity transportation options to airports and passenger rail facilities in Sacramento and the Bay area.

In April, 2015, the SRTA Board of Directors authorized staff to submit a 2015 Federal Transit Administration grant application for intercity public transit. SRTA received notification of the grant award in July for the study, which will be conducted by The University of the Pacific Center for Business and Policy Research, for a term ending June 30, 2016, not to exceed \$26,700.

In addition to improving mobility for the general public, reliable connections to state, national, and international markets help grow the local economy. The existing Regional Transportation Plan identifies expansion of interregional public transportation options as one of the most cost-effective means of reducing vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

The City of Redding and First Class Shuttle, who currently serves as ground transportation to the Sacramento Airport, were consulted during development of the grant application and are aware of the grant award. They are sure to be participants in the study as it gets underway.

Health Care Cost Increases Outpace Wage Growth

Not surprisingly, American workers, as well as business owners, are paying more than ever before for health insurance and health care.

Statistics show that the average deductible for an employer-provided health plan surged **9 percent** to more than \$1,000 in 2015. This far outpaced wage growth and overall inflation, and continued the trend of shifting health care costs to workers. Here in the North State, our rates and deductibles are even higher than the national average.

Over the past ten years, the average deductible that workers must pay for medical care before their insurance kicks in has more than tripled from \$303 in 2006 to \$1,077 today, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research & Educational Trust. That is seven times faster than wages have risen in the same period.

Raising deductibles and co-pays has traditionally been a way for employers to keep premiums in check. Businesses continued to pick up the bulk of the cost of health coverage for their workers, paying more than \$5,000 on average for a single plan, and \$12,500 for a family plan. Employers' rising health costs are often cited as a cause for stagnant wage growth, as businesses have put more money into health benefits that might otherwise have gone to worker's paychecks.

Unaffordable deductibles are also emerging as a major issue for health plans being sold on marketplaces cre-

ated by the Affordable Care Act. These marketplaces were designed to help people who don't have health plans through an employer. The average deductible on a silver plan through these marketplaces is more than \$2,500, and for a bronze plan is more than \$4,500. The premiums for these plans will rise another 5 percent in Shasta County in 2016.

The result of stagnant wages has been and continues to be a sluggish economy, and when coupled with little job growth, is a recipe for financial distress.

When people have little money to spend, they simply don't spend it. When they don't spend money, businesses who rely on those dollars cannot flourish. When business is not flourishing, fewer taxes are paid and government services are cut back. When government services are cut back, citizens expectations are not met. Those who rely on government services to live find themselves on the street (literally). We are certainly in the midst of this financial distress in Shasta County.

Our local leaders are studying ways to work together to create a more vibrant economy, as indicated by the Blueprint for Public Safety (as one tool).

A cooperative effort to improve the state of our local economy will go a long way towards attracting and keeping jobs, putting more people to work, and improving the overall business climate. Let's hope that cooperation will begin soon!

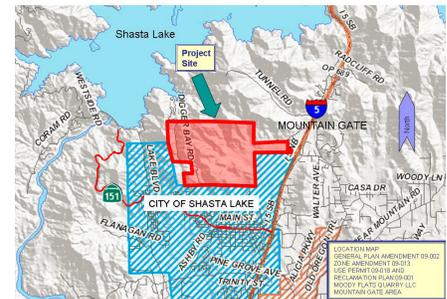
Updated News and Notes

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.

Crag View Water District, Shasta County Service Area (CSA 23) Has Draconian Water Restriction Ordinance Repealed—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, had just last month (on August 25th) enforced a strict water use ordinance for CSA 23 because of a **local water shortage emergency**. But less than a month later, at the September 22nd County Supervisors meeting, the ordinance was **repealed** to the relief of those water users, who have reduced their water use by 49%. On September 15th, a rate increase **was** adopted, so now there will be adequate resources available to purchase transferred water. Together with the reduction in water use, there is no longer a need to enforce the draconian ordinance which included the following: 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. 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.

Moody Flats Quarry Project Suspended—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 proposal is for a 345 acre quarry with a 75 acre processing area including an aggregate crushing, screening and washing plant, a Portland cement concrete plant, and asphalt concrete plant, a recycled construction materials processing plant, truck and railroad loading facilities and access roads. Total acreage owned by the 3M Company is almost 1,900 acres, and has what they are calling a “100 year operational life.” The property is located in unincorporated Shasta County. During the EIR process, there were 72 potential impacts to the environment identified. Nine of those are identified as “significant and unavoidable,” and relate to aesthetics, noise, air quality, and traffic. Perhaps the most damaging of those “unavoidable” impacts is that the existing hillsides to the West of I-5, currently a tree-filled attractive mountain view that can be seen for miles, will become highly visible “scars” that will remain open for as long as it is mined and operational (100 years).



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 through January 20, 2015. Hundreds of comments were received. As of this writing, the final EIR **has not been completed**.

A first amendment to the agreement with the Moody Flats Quarry project to fund the required Environmental Impact Report (EIR) extended the term of the agreement until certification of the EIR, or to June 30, 2015, whichever came first. As of now, 3M Corporation has **suspended** the project until further notice. They have **not** withdrawn the project or proposed an alternative plan for the property. It has been about 6 years since the original application was made for the project, and because so much time has passed, there is now new management at 3M.

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