

City Manager's



Weekly Update Friday, April 17, 2009

Unemployment: Numbers released by the State on Friday show unemployment in Lodi at 12.5 percent in March. San Joaquin County unemployment reached 16.4 percent. This is especially bad because local unemployment rates had not broken through the lows of the 1993-1994 recession until now. The unemployment rate in Lodi has more than doubled since March 2007 (6.0 percent). Employment typically begins to pick up in March, but the unemployment rate increased from 12.0 in February to 12.5. There are 50,800 unemployed workers in San Joaquin County.

Finance move: The move to the new office is underway. The telephone and data lines are being switched over today, and the contractors are scheduled to complete the move over the weekend. We are still expecting to open to the public at 10 a.m. Monday. The move also will allow the City to accept the terra cotta Chinese warrior/civil servant the Chamber of Commerce received for the City from officials in China.

Wal-Mart appeals: We now have four appeals on the Planning Commission's 3-3 vote on the Lodi Shopping Center project, two by proponents Browman and Wal-Mart, and two by opponents Lodi First and PAQ (Food 4 Less/Rancho San Miguel). The opponents' appeals are based on the lack of an affirmative denial of the project.

Railroad repairs: Union Pacific will begin a series of road closures on April 27. Seven city streets will be temporarily closed to allow UPRR to remove unused rails and re-level remaining tracks.

Hutchins Street Square pool: A preconstruction meeting on the project to replace the swimming pool's circulation and filtering equipment was held Tuesday. The HSS Foundation raised the money needed for the work, which will result in the pool's closure from May 11 through May 23.

Retirements: Five employees have confirmed their intention to retire in coming months, taking advantage of the two years additional service credit. This will result in approximate savings of \$600,000 in the coming fiscal year. Employees considering the retirement offer have through August to accept.

Cannabis club: We received a fourth inquiry this week regarding a possible medical marijuana location in Lodi.

Grape Bowl: We had a productive meeting with Lodi Unified staff regarding the need for ADA access for the upcoming Tokay High graduation. Lodi Unified staff indicated they are responsible for meeting the student's demands for accessibility, and have only asked that we mow the grass short beforehand and do not water the turf before graduation.

Stimulus program update – Work continues around the general category of the stimulus program. One area that was previously mentioned by Mayor Hansen that was a “win” for Lodi this week in the use of \$5 million by SJ Council of Governments. This was “extra” transportation money that had not been previously earmarked. Originally, these funds were proposed to be spent on the I-205 Auxiliary Lane project. However, an alternative proposal was developed to spread the money to several high priority projects throughout the County. The Lodi Avenue project was identified as one of those projects. If this proposal survives the entire process, Lodi will pick up another \$900,000 to add to the \$2.8 million for the project that will begin this summer.

Another wild Stimulus Program is the Department of Justice Law Enforcement JAG grant. The JAG grant will provide \$2,809,763 in one-time money for criminal justice programs in the County. The funds were assigned to the City and County based upon a formula. However, because the formula produced such a wide disparity in the allocation of funds to the jurisdictions, the rules required that all the cities and the county agree on the distribution of the funds and, if anyone disagreed, no one would receive funding, and this agreement needed to be achieved within a very short time frame. After only one meeting, an agreement was reached and the process is moving forward.

The League recommends: The League of California Cities is endorsing Propositions 1A through 1E on the grounds that if they don't pass, the State will again come after local money to balance its budget.

Power outage: Chewing through a wire proved fatal for a rat, and caused an outage this week that affected 57 customers in the area within Hutchins Street, Crescent Avenue, Windsor Drive and Vine Street.