

City Manager's



Weekly Update Friday, May 23, 2008

Wind damage: Thursday's high winds resulted in serious damage to about two dozen trees on city streets and in parks. The Parks Division reports 13 trees in seven parks either fell, are about to fall or suffered major limb damage that will require their removal. Public Works reports 10 Modesto ash trees need removing. City and contract crews worked throughout the day Thursday to make the emergency tree removals. Fortunately, no one was injured, although one car was damaged from a falling limb near the library.

Blakely vandalism: City staff met Friday with a couple residents who live near Blakely Park, along with representatives from the Boys & Girls Club and the Community Partnership for Families, about vandalism problems at the park. The pour-in-place playground surface at Blakely, which cost \$60,000 to install two years ago, has been damaged beyond repair by vandals. The playground apparatus has been fenced off the last six weeks. The Parks Division plans to remove the rubbery surface and replace with a bark-like material, but staff is concerned that the playground equipment itself will be a target of vandals. The Parks Division considered moving the playground equipment to another park, but will see if neighboring residents and groups, along with police, can reduce problems before taking that step. Vandalism has been a growing problem, according to residents and the Boys & Girls Club. The B&G Club installed security cameras a month and a half ago, publicized the fact, and saw a dramatic reduction in problems. The police corporal at the meeting said he would recommend to his sergeant and lieutenant that officers initiate a zero-tolerance program for alcohol, loitering, littering and trespassing at Blakely Park.

CDBG administration: On Thursday, the City received a notice that it has until June 13 to notify San Joaquin County or the Federal Housing and Urban Development agency if it will receive its CDBG funding through the County or directly. As a city with a population greater than 50,000, Lodi is eligible to receive direct funding.

New DMV home: Real estate brokers have been calling the city recently to find property available for the Department of Motor Vehicles, which is looking to move from its East Pine Street location.

Internet sales: The City is using a new means of disposing of surplus equipment, going to www.publicsurplus.com. The web-based auction site allows the City to reach more potential buyers. There is no cost to list merchandise, and the seven percent commission fee is equal to or less than what the city pays auction companies now.

Power purchase: Consistent with city policy to reduce exposure to short-term price fluctuations, the Electric Utility purchased 25 megawatts of power for the November-February period, closing the Utility's open position in 2008-09 to 13 percent. The price for peak power was \$102 to \$108.75 per megawatt, and \$82.75 to \$84.25 during off-peak times. Prices typically decline in May, but the EU fears a poor hydro year will keep prices high this coming fiscal year.

Kirst Hall: Saturday rentals are full for the 2008-09 fiscal year. More renters are choosing Sundays for wedding receptions.