

STRATEGY PROPOSED FOR NEW POLICE STATION PROJECT

The City has been working for over a decade to expand or construct a new Police Station. The current station is not adequate to perform necessary functions. A modular unit has been installed to provide temporary space, but is not an appropriate long-term solution.



Approval of the local sales tax measure in 2006 will provide a portion of the funding needed for the project. However, additional funding is necessary to proceed due to recent reductions in the City's revenues. It is important to develop the project at this time to take

advantage of low construction costs. The City has reduced project costs through a creative agreement to acquire the property at West Branch Street and Rodeo Drive from the County, which will meet a number of needs for both agencies at no cost to the City's General Fund. The existing facility and property would be sold after the new facility is constructed to provide additional funding.

To generate the remaining revenue needed, the City has developed a plan to refinance the bonds approved in 2002 by the voters to expand the Fire Station. New 30-year financing would be issued to generate revenue for the Police Station, as well as pay off remaining debt on the Fire Station. The annual property tax rate would be set at the current rate for the Fire Station bonds so there would be no increase in the annual property tax rate.

The proposal would require a two-thirds approval vote of the public on the June 8, 2010 ballot. Before consideration of the option or project, the City Council would like input from the community. A survey will be distributed to all households, which everyone is asked to complete and return. Please feel free to contact the Police Department at 473-5120 if you have any questions regarding the project.

HOLIDAY CITY OFFICE CLOSURES

As part of the measures approved to address the impact of the economy on the City's budget, three employee non-paid furlough days were approved. To minimize the impact on City services, they are being coordinated with other holiday closures. As a result, City offices will be closed December 24th through January 3rd. Police and Fire operations will remain in full operation during this period.

AG IN BLOOM WINS TIDINESS AWARD

Arroyo Grande In Bloom placed first in the Tidiness category this year in the national "America In Bloom" competition among 25 total entries. The award was presented at a ceremony held in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The recognition was largely the result of the many clean-up and beautification projects held this year. Arroyo Grande In Bloom is a non-profit coalition of the City, community organizations, and individual volunteers dedicated to the beautification of Arroyo Grande.

REHAB EFFORTS CREATE MOBILE EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE

As another example of the City's efforts to address needs with limited resources, the Police Department recently obtained a Mobile Emergency Response Vehicle (MERV) by transforming a retired 1995 diesel-powered ambulance obtained from the Cambria Healthcare District. The ability to manage a major incident from a field operational center and the need for a backup communications system were identified as important unmet needs for the Police Department. As a member of the regional Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, the Police Department also needed a vehicle with specific capabilities to transport and manage resource needs resulting from a critical/tactical incident.

It was made possible through a partial donation of the vehicle and numerous vendor partnerships. Improvements include an engine modification, upgraded suspension, a reinforced roof platform, integrated radio and wireless communications systems, enhanced exterior lighting, new brush bumper and winch, and new paint scheme. The MERV serves a multi-function purpose as both a mobile command center and tactical response/transport vehicle. In recognition of this effort, the Police Department won the prestigious "Best of COPSWEST" award for specialty vehicle. COPSWEST is one of the largest law enforcement training and trade shows in the Western United States.



WINTER VACATION KIDS PROGRAMS

The City of Arroyo Grande is offering two supervised programs for children ages 5 to 13 this winter from December 21, 2009 to January 8, 2010.

Winter Vacation Playground will be held at Elm Street Community Center and *Winter Vacation Camp* will be held at Harloe Elementary School. Children will participate in a variety of activities, sports, crafts, field trips, contests, and much more! For more information on registration, hours, and rates, please contact the Recreation and Maintenance Services Department at 473-5474.

Planning Under Way for Centennial

The Arroyo Grande Centennial will take place in 2011, culminating on July 10th, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the City's incorporation.



A planning committee has been established to initiate fund raising and year-long celebration activities.

The official logo was recently approved and unveiled. Opportunities exist for volunteers to become involved in a variety of subcommittees and for individual and business sponsorships.

Please contact City Hall at 473-5400 to request a brochure on the event and

ONLINE UTILITY BILLING ACTIVATED

Online bill payment for water and sewer services is now available on the City's website, which can be accessed at www.arroyogrande.org. The link can be found on the bottom right corner under External Links titled "Online Utility Bill Payments". Once you sign up for online billing, you will have the option of viewing your last three billing statements, making your utility billing payments online and selecting to receive future statements via e-mail instead of regular mail.

Please contact Utility Billing staff at 473-5438 for questions or additional assistance.

CONSOLIDATION OF FIRE SERVICES TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE LEVEL

The City Council recently directed staff to prepare the final steps for consolidation of the City's fire services with the City of Grover Beach and the Oceano Community Services District (OCSO). The move will increase both efficiency and service levels by improving response times and the ability to maintain necessary staffing at each of the three stations.



July 1, 2010 has been established as the target date for creation of the new agency, which is initially proposed to be formed as a Joint Powers Authority. The formal agreement between the agencies, labor agreements and other measures are currently being developed for formal consideration.

The consolidation marks the culmination of an incremental process of establishing joint fire efforts with the City's neighboring jurisdictions, which began in 2004 when Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach entered into an agreement to operate under a shared fire chief. Since then, a joint training officer has been added, the jurisdictions began sharing fire apparatus, a joint reserve firefighter program was developed, and OCSO joined the cooperative agreement.

Costs of the new agency are proposed to be shared by each of the jurisdictions through a cost allocation formula, which is based on population, service calls, assessed value, number of stations and number of full-time paid staff. The Fire Chief will report to a Board of Directors, consisting of an elected official from each of the participating jurisdictions. An existing Fire Oversight Committee has been designated as the Interim Board of Directors to provide policy guidance during the final steps of consolidation.

The success of this effort can be attributed to the level of commitment from Fire Department personnel. The effort has received strong support and has required many individuals to set aside their personal interests for the benefit of emergency service delivery to the public. The community can be proud of the dedication of its public safety personnel.

SIDEWALK PROJECTS INCREASE SCHOOL SAFETY

The City has been making significant progress in implementing its Pedestrian Enhancement Plan. The first priority has been to improve sidewalks adjacent to schools and to complete missing segments in areas with existing sidewalks. Crown Hill sidewalks were recently installed to provide a pedestrian pathway to Paulding Middle School. As a result of the project and Caltrans relinquishment of Highway 227, the City was able to install crosswalks at Huasna Road to Crown Hill and create a safe route for cyclists to access the school. Improvements were also completed at Hillcrest Drive and Montego Street to help students access sidewalks on Montego Street connecting to Ocean View School. Sidewalk improvements on Elm Street and Tally Ho are planned for this Spring and missing segments near Arroyo Grande High School this Summer. Additional sidewalk connections to Ocean View School are scheduled for the following year. The projects are funded by a combination of grants and local sales tax funds.

CITY H1N1 VIRUS PLANS PREPARED

While all hopes are for a mild flu season, the City is preparing for the worst case scenario to have contingency plans in place for major potential impacts from the H1N1 virus. Public Safety staff are coordinating with countywide planning efforts and recently participated in a vaccination drill. Each City department is preparing plans on how to maintain critical operations if significant staffing numbers are unable to report to work. Sanitation supplies have been purchased and distributed, and employees have been educated on ways to both detect symptoms early and prevent the spread of the disease. The public is encouraged to take similar precautions.