

City Hall News

From the desk of
Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing
March 8, 2007

- 1. Employee of the Month— February 2007.** Linda Hilliard of the City's Finance Department has been selected as February's Employee of the Month. Linda was nominated by Finance Director Mark Johnson in acknowledgment of her exemplary service to the City, as particularly demonstrated by her dedication during the recent conversion to a new accounting system. Much of the responsibility for input, verification and balancing of data fell on Linda and she often worked late and on weekends. Even the January power outage did not keep her from processing the City's payroll and utility billing on time. Linda is the veteran player on our Finance team. She has almost 20 years of service with the City while the three other members of the Finance Department have barely four years combined. She is one of those quiet pros who make sure City government works but is seldom, if ever, in the spotlight. Thanks Linda, and congratulations for being selected as the Employee of the Month!
- 2. Police Department Responds to Gang Violence.** On February 26th, the Police Department handled a shooting incident at the Walnut Street Apartments. Four young adults were shot multiple times and transported to the local hospital with one transferred to another hospital. Our entire team worked together on this major crime with additional assistance provided by the Department of Justice from Eureka, the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, and the California Highway Patrol. The incident was gang-related and stemmed from past disputes between those involved. After a few hours, the police were able to identify and arrest two suspects for their involvement in the crime. The suspects were local juveniles with prior criminal records and gang affiliations. The Police Department is to be commended for their outstanding work in safeguarding our community.
- 3. Gang Coalition.** The Coalition for Gang Awareness & Prevention met last week to review two prospective programs for possible use at our schools to help local youth stay out of gangs. The "Gang Resistance is Paramount" (GRIP) program is presently being used with great success in the Ukiah schools. The GRIP program provides a school-based curriculum for 2nd and 5th graders, parent education and community meetings, and counseling of parents and youth. The Coalition had an extended discussion with Tony Ostos, Neighborhood Counseling Manager for the GRIP program for the City of Paramount. School District Superintendent Steve Lund provided information on another program that is targeted to middle-school and high-school students called "Safe School Ambassadors". This successful anti-bullying and violence-prevention program is being used in Santa Rosa schools and has resulted in dramatically reduced suspension rates. The program draws upon influential student from diverse groups across the campus and forms them into a team of Safe School Ambassadors who are committed to and trained in the skills of nonviolent communication. These students can help influence the tone and standards of campus culture from the inside-out. The Coalition supports the implementation of these programs in the schools next fall. A small group comprised of representatives from the School District, Safe Passage, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters will begin organizing implementation of the programs.
- 4. Wave Energy.** In late February, PG&E filed an application for a preliminary permit for a 40 MW wave power plant in Mendocino County with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The preliminary permit will give PG&E first right of refusal to file a license to build and operate a wave power plant for a period of three years while they are

preparing the required license documentation. The project, named “WaveConnect,” will begin with resource, environmental, and ocean studies and, if developed, would use wave energy conversion to transform the energy of ocean waves into clean, renewable electricity. PG&E’s application is intended to allow multiple wave energy conversion device manufacturers to demonstrate their devices on a common site, to help accelerate the development of wave energy technology. As part of the feasibility analysis, PG&E will solicit input from local communities and interested governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Phased development of the sites would proceed if technical results support feasibility, environmental studies show that significant impacts can be fully mitigated, and stakeholder considerations can be satisfactorily addressed. Representatives from PG&E have been invited to provide a presentation to the Council regarding the WaveConnect project in April.

5. **Georgia Pacific Mill Site Update.** Last week, City staff and Council members met with representatives from GP and their new development partner, Brooks Street. The meetings were purely introductory and intended to help City officials get acquainted with the Brooks Street folks who will be working with GP during the planning and entitlement phase of the Mill Site redevelopment project. Brooks Street is a Vallejo/Laguna Beach-based development company which specializes in planning and entitling land for development. Brooks Street principals have considerable experience in brownfield remediation/redevelopment projects, including the 220-acre Tourtelot property in Benicia (a former military property used for disposal and demolition of ordnance and chemicals) that has been cleaned up and converted to residential use. Brooks Street has been invited to introduce themselves to the community at the March 26th Council meeting.
6. **Clarification Regarding the Mussel Tissue Sampling.** A couple weeks back, I wrote a snippet about the results of the mussel tissue sampling performed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) on mussels collected from three locations off the coast of the Mill Site. The sampling found higher levels of PCBs and dioxins in the “control sample” mussels that were purchased at a grocery store than in the mussels collected off our coast. The snippet was embedded in a report on a meeting held at DTSC’s offices in Berkeley to discuss the ecological and human health risk assessments that will be conducted for the Mill Site remediation project. I would like to clarify that the mussel data was not discussed in the context of that interagency meeting, that the control sample mussels were purchased at a Berkeley market, and that the comments summarizing the results of the data were mine and do not represent an official DTSC position.
7. **Request for Grant Funds.** The City submitted requests for millions and millions of dollars of State and federal funds this week. Specifically, we requested \$8 million in a federal budget appropriation (through Congressman Mike Thompson’s office) to build additional raw water storage capacity to meet the City’s immediate and future water storage needs. We also submitted the following projects for inclusion in the Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan for the Noyo and Big Rivers: Fort Bragg Coastal Trail Integrated Project (including coastal trail; wetland treatment marsh, central park restoration project): \$6,866,140; Otis Johnson Park Restoration Project: \$277,053; Pudding Creek Force Main Relocation Project: \$1,500,000; Fort Bragg Noyo River Stormwater Collection Project: \$971,077; Fort Bragg Wastewater Treatment Plan Stormwater Containment Project: \$415,000. The Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan will be used to help allocate State and federal funds for projects that improve water quality and coastal access.

- 8. City Receives Award for Pomo Bluffs Park.** The City received a lovely plaque last week from CELSOC, the Consulting Engineers and Land Surveyors of California, announcing that we have won the 2007 Engineering Excellence Award for Pomo Bluffs Park. Congratulations are due to all of our Engineering, Public Works, and Community Development Department staff who were involved in the project, as well to Green Valley Engineers, RRM Design, and Akeff Construction. And, of course, many thanks are due to the State Coastal Conservancy who provided funds to acquire the parkland and develop the park facilities.