

City Hall Notes

From the desk of

Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing

May 6, 2010

- 1. Meeting with Sales Tax Analyst.** City staff met with our sales tax analyst from MuniServices in April to review the City's 4th quarter 2009 sales tax receipts and future projections. Sales tax receipts for the 4th quarter were down -9% from last year which was a relief given that 3rd quarter receipts were down more than -26% from the prior year. Overall, sales tax has fallen by nearly 18% over the past year which amounts to an approximately \$300k loss of general fund revenues. MuniServices forecasts that sales tax will continue to decline in 2010-11, but the rate of decline will be much less than was experienced over the past year.
- 2. Public Works Project Update.** As is usually the case in the spring, the Public Works Department has a lot of projects ramping up and underway. The Bainbridge Park Restrooms are nearing completion. The incessant rain delayed work on the exterior, but we expect it to be completed this month. We'll plan a ribbon-cutting ceremony in early June. The Safe Routes to School Project at the Fort Bragg Middle School is moving along. The contractor has finished the concrete work at Laurel and Pine Streets and, once school is dismissed for the summer, the paving work will be completed. We're waiting for Mendocino County to complete their Pudding Creek Road overlay project later this month, and then the City will begin its project to overlay the westerly portion of the road using ARRA/economic stimulus funds. The ARRA project for sidewalk infill on Pine and Laurel Streets is out to bid and the Skate Plaza project will be put out to bid very soon.
- 3. Farmers' Market Back on Franklin Street.** The Farmers Market opened its season this week on the 400 block of North Franklin Street in front of City Hall. We welcome the Market back into the heart of downtown! In order to accommodate the growing number of vendors, the City has offered to vacate the City Hall parking lot on Wednesday afternoons to allow for expansion of the market later in the season. The parking lot will be signed each week to remind employees and Councilmembers to move their vehicles.
- 4. Board of Equalization Decision on GP Reassessment.** The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, acting as the Board of Equalization, reached a final decision on Georgia-Pacific's appeal of the 2005 reassessment of the Mill Site property in Fort Bragg. When Koch purchased Georgia-Pacific in 2005, the County reassessed the property increasing the assessed value of the land to nearly \$75 million. Georgia-Pacific appealed the reassessment, asserting that the properties value was less than \$10 million. The two parties settled the appeal in late April, agreeing to establish the assessed value at \$36 million. This has important implications for the City and its redevelopment agency as well as all of the other entities that receive a cut of the property tax. For the last several years, Georgia-Pacific has paid nearly twice as much property tax as required based on the newly assessed value. They will receive a credit on their tax bill for the next few years until the overpayment balances out. As a point of reference, in 2009, over \$827k of property tax was paid for the Mill Site property.
- 5. Census 2010.** Please help get the word out about how important it is for everyone in our community to complete the Census 2010 forms. The Census establishes important baseline information about population that will be used for the next decade. It affects federal funding availability for grants and it affects electoral redistricting. It's important to

get an accurate count. The City will be including a reminder on the monthly utility bills for the next several months.

6. **Food Waste in Your Yard Waste Bins.** The City of Fort Bragg is the first community in Mendocino County to accept food scraps in the yard waste carts. By participating in the food scrap recycling program, food scraps and food soiled paper can be sent to a composting facility. Then, instead of taking up space in a landfill, the food scraps can become rich compost.
7. **Fireworks Update.** Mayor Doug Hammerstrom and Councilmember Jere Melo met with Chamber of Commerce representatives and others last week and a decision was made to proceed with the annual Independence Day fireworks display. The planning and logistics are underway and a fund-raising drive will be undertaken to raise money for the fireworks display. Donations are tax-deductible and can be submitted to the Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce – Fireworks Fund.