City Hall News

From the desk of
Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing
July 30, 2009

1. **Implications of State Budget for Fort Bragg.** The State budget deal that was crafted last week will result in the State "borrowing" approximately $106,000 of Fort Bragg's property tax revenues in 2009-10 and taking approximately $400,000 of revenues from the Fort Bragg Redevelopment Agency in 2009-10 and another $100,000 in 2010-11. The California Redevelopment Association, together with the League of California Cities and others, has promised to file a lawsuit against the State regarding the unconstitutionality of the proposed seizure of redevelopment funds. Hopefully the courts will uphold the Sacramento Superior Court decision in *California Redevelopment Association v. Genest* that found that the State violated the constitution when it tried to seize redevelopment funds to offset its 2008-09 Budget deficit. The City Council increased the City's general fund reserves this year in anticipation of the State taking some local revenues and we should be able to weather the $106,000 hit on property tax revenues. The proposed seizure of redevelopment funds, if found to be legal, will pose a very big challenge to the Redevelopment Agency.

2. **First Quarter 2009 Sales Tax Receipts.** The City has received the sales tax analysis for the first quarter of 2009. Based on net cash receipts, City sales tax revenues declined 14.7% in first quarter 2009 relative to first quarter 2008, which is slightly below the Mendocino County average decline of 17.8%. With three quarters of revenue collected for FY 2008-09, the City's sales tax revenues were down 4.3% for the fiscal year. The City's FY 2009-10 Budget projected a FY 2008-09 year-end decline of 6.9% and a 5.08% decline in FY 2009-10. Hopefully, the decline in business activity will not surpass these already grim projections.

3. **Quick Response to Critical Malfunction at Water Treatment Plant.** Last Thursday morning, the programmable logic controller (PLC) failed at the City Water Treatment Plant. Without the automated controls, our treatment operators were faced with round-the-clock manual operation of the plant until the PLC could be diagnosed and repaired. The City's treatment staff members contacted their colleagues at the City of Willits and were able to obtain technical assistance and a loan of parts that enabled the plant to be up and running with a functional PLC by 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. We are extremely grateful to the Willits staff for their assistance. The replacement of the PLC, a $120,000 project which is funded in the City's FY 2009-10 Budget, has become a top priority project.

4. **EcoMotion Event Planning Underway for October 10th.** Community Development Director Marie Jones and I met with Nicole Kench last week regarding her proposal to hold the EcoMotion Mendocino event on Saturday, October 10th. The October date is after the peak of the "tourist season" and responds to concerns raised by staff and the City Council upon consideration of the original mid-August date. The event has been scaled back from the original proposal, but still involves closure of Laurel and Redwood Streets (from Main to McPherson) and Franklin Street from Pine to Alder. The Technical Advisory Committee will perform additional trouble-shooting at a meeting this week.

5. **2009-10 Bicycle Transportation Account Grant Awaits Governor's Signature.** Now that the State budget negotiations are complete, we're hoping the Governor will sign this year's Bicycle Transportation Account grant awards. The City of Fort Bragg is slated to receive

funds for thermoplastic bike lane striping on Oak Street from Harrison to Dana and on North Franklin Street from Fir to Manzanita, and for the purchase of a bunch of bike racks.

6. **Update on the Coast Animal Shelter.** At this time, the County's FY 2009-10 budget for the Coast Animal Shelter maintains bare-bones services at a "safe staffing" level. The Animal Control Division was required to reduce its costs by 20% from last year and all of that reduction was absorbed by the Inland Animal Shelter in Ukiah. County Health & Human Services Director Carmel Angelo and Public Health Director Stacey Cryer held a meeting of inland and coastal animal advocates a couple of weeks ago to brainstorm about how to provide the highest level of services given the budget difficulties. A number of subcommittees were formed to follow up on some of the concepts discussed at the meeting, including a subcommittee to examine how volunteers can be used more effectively. If the County needs to do another round of General Fund budget reductions, one of the options on the table is consolidation of all services at the Inland Animal Shelter.

7. **Unlicensed Contractors Given Written Warning.** The City of Fort Bragg is undertaking an educational campaign to assist local contractors who abide by the requirements of the Contractors State License Board. There are a number of individuals and businesses providing services in our community without the required State contractor's license. This is not only illegal, it puts the person who hires them at risk, and it undermines the viability of law-abiding State licensed contractors in our community. City staff has sent notices to individuals and business that are illegally advertising services advising them to immediately remove their business cards or advertisements from any and all locations in the City and to refrain from advertising services unless and until full compliance with legal requirements is achieved.

8. **Luis Rodriguez Event.** On Friday, July 31st at 6:30 p.m. at Cotton Auditorium, the City of Fort Bragg together with a number of other community partners is hosting a presentation by acclaimed author Luis J. Rodriguez entitled "Building Community in Troubled Times." Mr. Rodriguez is the author of a book entitled "Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A."