



Supervisor Keith Carson

District 5 News and Updates

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IN THIS ISSUE

- ⇒ Record Assessment Appeals
- ⇒ Green Business
- ⇒ Meals on Wheels
- ⇒ Upcoming Community Events

ONE WHEEL OFF THE ROAD

Staff and volunteers for “Meals on Wheels” gathered behind the North Berkeley Senior Center recently, waiting their turn to pick up dozens of hot meals kept warm in padded “pizza” boxes to be delivered to 180 homebound seniors in Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville.

Established more than 35 years ago, Meals on Wheels offers a hot lunch for seniors unable to prepare one on their own. A typical meal includes baked salmon with dill sauce, steamed mixed

DECLINING PROPERTY VALUES HURT COUNTY PROGRAMS

A record number of people in Alameda County are seeking to have their property reassessed. In fact the number has more than tripled in the last five years soaring from nearly 3,000 appeals in 2004 to over 11,500 today.

Alameda County has more than 490,000 taxable properties, including real estate and business properties, with an

estimated net value of \$200.3 billion. The City of Oakland remains the highest assessed jurisdiction with a total assessed value of \$43.8 billion before exemptions are applied.

The brutal truth is that when property values decrease so do the revenues the county and other branches of government

Continued on page 2

vegetables, a whole wheat roll and fresh fruit – a tasty and nutritious lunch prepared by Project Open Hand, the program’s caterer.

Yet Meals on Wheels does more than simply drop off a hot lunch to seniors who might, in many cases, be forced to eat out of a can or go without altogether. “For many of our clients our visit is the

only social contact they have with the outside world,” said Dina Treaseler Quan, the Director of the Tri-City program. “That is the thing I really love most about this job – the people we serve, seeing them, talking to them, making sure they are okay *and* that they get a hot meal. And that is what is at risk here...”

Continued on page 2

GREEN BUSINESSES IN ALAMEDA COUNTY SET RECORD

As the economy sputters some have suggested efforts to reduce global warming should be put on the back burner. Yet the greening of businesses in Alameda County is still moving forward at breakneck speed. “Companies are discovering that conserving resources and protecting the planet also makes good business sense,” said Pam Evans, the director of Alameda County’s Green Business Program.



Alameda County recently certified their 410th green business, more than any other in California. Along with the nine other participating counties in the Bay Area, the program has reached across the state and now operates in Los Angeles and other areas

where it is desperately needed.

The Green Business Program has its roots in Alameda County. In 1996 the model was adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). Standards were set and people like Ms. Evans began certifying companies of all stripes – as long as they were green.

Many people -- especially in the East Bay -- prefer patronizing companies that are environmentally responsible. And it’s easy to find out which ones are. Simply go to www.greenbiz.ca.gov, click on *Green Business Listings*, and choose the type of product or service you need.

If you would like information about certifying *your* business in Alameda County, contact Pam Evans at 510 567-6770, or visit www.greenbiz.ca.gov.



Assessment Appeals... continued from page

rely on to pay for essential services. Property taxes generate revenue to support the federal and state mandated services, its public schools, cities, redevelopment areas and special districts.

Property taxes are collected by the County which delivers that revenue to the State. For every dollar of property tax collected in Alameda County, 42 cents is earmarked for schools, 18 cents for cities, 12 cents for redevelopment districts, and 13 cents for other special districts. The remaining 15 cents – in theory, at least – is returned to the County.

Strict limits on the County’s ability to raise revenue compel it to rely on property taxes to pay for safety net services. The Social Services Agency and Public Protection Departments have already taken a big hit in funding due to the decline in County revenues. As the

unemployment rate climbs above 10% locally and families lose their homes and medical insurance more people are seeking County services.

Yet the funding sources for critical programs are challenged by the reassessment of property values and the State budget.

A minority of legislators in Sacramento – working with the Governor – have blocked reasonable solutions to the budget crisis and are threatening to withhold county funding to fill the \$24 billion shortfall. Local government and county residents are forced to hold their breath in anticipation of a budget that might withhold even more county funding.

Over the past 17 years the State of California has redirected \$3.7 billion in County revenues to cover the State’s

budget deficits. State legislators and the Governor are even flirting with the idea to suspend Proposition 1A, passed in 2004 to protect locally delivered services by prohibiting the State from robbing property and sales taxes from local government.

Now the State has issued IOUs which, combined with other delays increases the State deficit by \$25 million per day. So much for any notion of fiscal responsibility. The County continues to push the State to solve its own structural budget issues without using local government funds.

At a time when services provided by the County are most needed, the Governor and his colleagues in the legislature must find a responsible way to fill the State budget gap, one that doesn’t place the burden on the most vulnerable people in our community.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS



Senior Driver’s Safety Seminar

Thursday, August 27, 2009
9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

West Oakland Senior Center
1724 Adeline St
Oakland, CA 94607
RSVP to 510-238-7016



Tuesday, August 4th

www.Oaklandnet.com



2nd Annual Bike 4 Life
HEALIN FROM KILLIN, BIKE RIDE FOR PEACE
Saturday July 25, 2009
LAKE MERRITT TO DEFREMERY PARK
Led by SCRAPER BIKES

Ride Starts: 2pm Lake Merritt - Lakeside Park
Park Party: 3pm Defremery Park
WWW.BIKE4LIFE.COM



LAKE FEST OAKLAND

Lakeshore Avenue
August 1 & 2, 2009
10AM to 6PM

Meals on Wheels... continued from page 1

As wave after wave of budget cuts surge across the state pounding social services and shaking up the foundation of the social safety net, Meals on Wheels is also being hammered.

As budgets are slashed due to staggering losses in tax revenue and a projected raid on local resources by the state of California, major cuts to Meals on

Wheels are inevitable. Staff drivers have already been cut from four to one person.

In addition to money provided by the Federal Government, the County and City, Meals on Wheels asks recipients to contribute what they can. The suggested daily contribution is \$4. “But many people can’t afford to pay anything at all,” Ms. Quan said.

Help keep Meals on Wheels rolling by contributing to a non-profit dedicated to doing just that -- The **Alameda County Meals on Wheels Foundation**. To make a tax-deductible contribution, or to volunteer, call 510 577-3581, or visit them online at: www.feedingseniors.org.