

Having trouble viewing this email?[Click here](#)



City Manager's Report

City of Benicia
February 10, 2015

In This Issue

Holiday Closure

PD Monthly Report

Trivia Bee XXIV

Free Tax Prep Help

Faucet Water Use

What is MCE Benicia?

Vote for Summer Movies

New Route to Vallejo

SAVE Program

Welcome to the latest edition of the *City Manager's Report* from City of Benicia City Manager Brad Kilger. The *City Manager's Report* is published twice monthly highlighting the activities of the departments of our full-service city. Previous editions are available on the City of Benicia [City Manager's page](#).

Please click the Join our Mailing List button in the left to subscribe to the City Manager's Report and receive important messages from the City of Benicia and click these links to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Brad

Spotlight on Water Quality Lab

Irrigation Efficiency

Women's Resources

Turf Renovation

FRC at Pre-School Fair

Free Concert

Water Rescue Grant

Quick Links

City of Benicia

Economic Development

Visit Benicia

Benicia Library

Benicia Saves Water

Sustainable Benicia

Faucet Water Use - Best Ways to Save

The most effective and inexpensive way to reduce your faucet use is by installing a low-flow faucet aerator on your household faucets. Some aerators can restrict flow to 1.0 gallons per minute. Also be sure to check your faucets for and repair any leaks.



Another way to conserve is by not running the faucet unnecessarily. Be sure to turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth and doing dishes. You can re-use faucet water by keeping a plastic basin in your sink for use on your landscape.

Here are some other good ways to save on faucet water use. When used properly, dishwashers can be more efficient than hand washing.

- Only run the dishwasher when it is completely full.
- Use the water level settings for the most efficient run.
- If you don't have a dishwasher, here are some easy ways to conserve while washing dishes:
 - Fill your sink with water for rinsing.
 - Don't run the water without plugging the sink.
 - Turn faucets off when not in use.

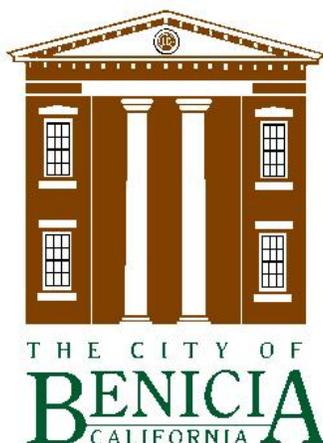
For information on water conservation and rebates please go to www.solanosaveswater.org. If you are interested in a free faucet aerator, call 707.746.4380. - *Public Works*

Join Our Mailing List!

Forward to a Friend



Email your questions or comments to edev@ci.benicia.ca.us or call 707.746.4202



MCE Benicia - New Alternative Electric Service Provider Coming

You've probably heard something about a new way to get electricity besides from PG&E? Here's info for you to think about and make a decision by **May 15**:

What is MCE?

MCE is a not-for-profit, community-based organization partnering with PG&E to provide electricity service. MCE offers choices for 50% to 100% renewable energy from solar, wind, bioenergy, geothermal and hydroelectricity at competitive rates. By choosing MCE, customers help support new in-state and local renewable energy generation. MCE has provided service to Marin County since 2010, and the City of Richmond since 2013.

What does MCE do? What are the differences?

All electric customers in Benicia will be enrolled with MCE in May 2015, **unless they choose to opt out** and remain with PG&E. MCE offers cleaner energy and currently has rates lower than PG&E. Aside from that, not much will change. PG&E will still handle electric delivery, maintain the power lines, read your meter, and send your monthly bill. MCE will source cleaner power, called electric generation. Your bill will include charges for both PG&E electric delivery and MCE electric generation. You will never be double-billed for your service because MCE's generation charge will replace PG&E's. MCE does not offer gas service.

How much does MCE cost?

MCE's rates replace a portion of PG&E's regular rates, and are not an added fee. As MCE's rates are currently lower than rates for PG&E service, MCE customers pay less on their monthly bills than they would with PG&E service. Based on current rates for

Holiday Closure



City Hall Offices, Benicia Public Library and Benicia Community Center will be closed **Thursday, February 12** in honor of Lincoln's Birthday and **Monday, February 16** in observance of President's Day.

Requests for emergency water and sewer service may be made at the Benicia Police Department, 200 East L Street or 707.745.3412. - *City Manager's Office*

Police Department Monthly Report



The Benicia Police Department monthly report for December is now available. It contains a monthly wrap-up of Community Services, Professional Development, Statistics, and Interesting Case Summaries. [Click here](#) to read more. - *Police Department*

Alice in Libraryland - Trivia Bee XXIV

PG&E and proposed MCE rates (which will take effect in April), selecting MCE service will save the typical residential customer in our service area about \$1.44 per month, based on a \$81.58 monthly PG&E electricity bill. The typical commercial customer can expect to save about \$10.83 per month with MCE, based on a \$248.63 monthly PG&E bill. Discount programs like CARE, FERA, and Medical Baseline are unaffected by enrollment; these customers receive the same discount with MCE as they would with PG&E.

Why am I being enrolled?

The Benicia City Council voted to join MCE to give all electric customers in the City the opportunity to purchase greener, competitively-priced electricity as an alternative to PG&E. A Benicia City Council Member will become a member of the MCE Board of Directors and will provide input on policy and programs on behalf of Benicia residents and businesses. Historically, when someone needed electric service in Benicia, PG&E has provided that service by default. Beginning in May 2015, MCE will replace PG&E as the primary provider of electric generation, and PG&E will continue to provide electric delivery services.

When does this all take place and how will I be notified?

Benicia electric customers will be enrolled with MCE in May 2015, unless they choose to opt out and remain with PG&E. Benicia customers may request to opt out beginning on **February 19, 2015**. Prior to February 19, MCE cannot process opt out requests. Existing customers in Benicia will receive five mailers notifying them of the change of service, as well as instructions on how to opt out if they would prefer to continue receiving all electric services from PG&E, between February and June 2015. Customers who do not opt out prior to May (and in some cases the last week of April) will be enrolled in MCE service, but may request to opt out at any time, even after service starts.

The first two notices will be mailed in February and March 2015 respectively. The third will be mailed in April 2015. Enrollment with MCE is scheduled for May 2015 on customers' regularly scheduled meter-read dates. The last two notices will be mailed after customers' enrollment in May and June, during the first 60 days of service.

Public Contact Info:

To opt out of MCE or sign up for MCE's Deep Green 100% renewable energy, customers need their PG&E account information on hand, which is included on their bills.

Phone:
1.888.632.3674

Call center reps are available 24/7 between November 4, 2014, and August 1, 2015 to process opt out requests.

Regular hours for all other questions: Monday-Friday 7:00A.M. to 7:00P.M. Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Laotian available.

Web:
www.mceCleanEnergy.org

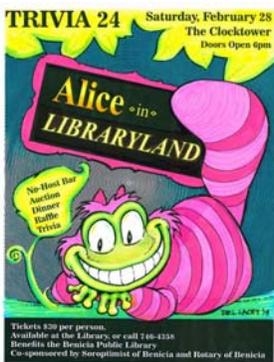
Available in Spanish and also has Google translate for all other languages.
www.mceCleanEnergy.org/optout
(For opt out requests)

Email:
info@mceCleanEnergy.org

This email address is read and maintained by our senior customer service staff.

Office:
781 Lincoln Ave, Suite 320, San Rafael, CA 94901
Customer service hours for customer walk-ins are Monday - Friday 9:00A.M. to 4:00P.M.

-*Community Development*



Find your way down the rabbit hole to join Alice and her friends in Libraryland at this year's Trivia Bee on **Saturday, February 28**. The Bee is the signature fundraising event of the [Benicia Public Library](http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us), where they host a trivia competition similar to that on the game show "Jeopardy". The difference is that instead of individual players competing, the Bee is a team competition. The competition consists of teams from local businesses and community groups, all vying for the honor of being Benicia's Top Toad(s). There are three spirited rounds of trivia questions in a variety of categories such as: entertainment and culture, sports, history and geography, literature, science and technology, and wild card.

This fundraising event helps provide services at the Library, including Adult Literacy Services (ALS), English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs and more. ALS has been in existence since 1987 and serves the community through specific free learner-centered services that include small groups, one-to-one tutoring, computer lab classes, workshops for learners and tutors, learner book clubs, and family programming. The services are individually geared to each learner. They reach-out to the adult learner because in doing so, they address a critical step in addressing the literacy needs of the entire family.

Vote for Summer Movies

Are you a fan of summer Movie Nights Under the Stars in Benicia's City Park? Here's your chance to help pick this summer's movies. Vote for your TOP THREE by **Wednesday, February 25** at the Benicia Community Center or email Megan at mbeemon@ci.benicia.ca.us. The top three will be shown in June, July & August. Look for more info in the summer edition of the Benicia Guide mailed to Benicia residents in early April. - *Parks & Community Services*

MOVIE NIGHTS UNDER THE STARS!!
 Every vote counts...help us pick our Summer movies by voting for your **TOP 3 CHOICES!!**

Email your three favorites to: mbeemon@ci.benicia.ca.us

Thank you for voting! See you at the Movies!

New Hourly Route to Vallejo

SolTrans is pleased to announce a one year pilot program to connect Benicia, Solano Community College's Vallejo Campus and the Gateway Shopping Plaza. The service will operate Monday - Friday until **December 31, 2015**, and will leave from Downtown Benicia every hour from 8:30AM until 6:30PM.



One year program to connect Benicia, Solano Community College's Vallejo Campus and Gateway Shopping Plaza.

Monday through Friday until December 31, 2015
 Leaving Downtown Benicia every hour from 8:30 AM until 6:30 PM

Monday through Friday until December 31, 2015
Leaving Downtown Benicia every hour from 8:30 AM until 6:30 PM



This service will provide a direct transit link between Benicia and Vallejo educational, shopping, and recreational destinations, including:

- Solano Community College
- Costco
- Century Theaters
- Home Depot
- Southampton Shopping Center
- Target Shopping Center and more!

Click here to view the [Route 20 Schedule](#). - *Economic Development*

This year's event takes place at the Clocktower on **Saturday, February 28** at 6:00 PM. The evening features a no-host bar (please do not bring alcohol to the event!), dinner, a small silent and live auction, and a raffle. Of course, the Trivia Bee is the main event. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased at the Library or Bookshop Benicia and **must be purchased in advance** of the event.

The Bee draws an enthusiastic sell-out audience of 300. Audience members dress to suit the theme and they are not shy about cheering on their favorite teams. So get out your favorite Alice in Wonderland costume and see if you can win a prize for best costume. For more information, call 707.746.4358. - *Library*

Free Tax Preparation Service



AARP Foundation Tax- Aide volunteers will again provide free tax help not only for those ages 60 or older and for those in financial need, but also free tax preparation assistance for people of different ages with moderate incomes. There is no income limit to use this free service. The tax assistance service will be available every Friday at the Benicia Public Library through **April 10, 2015**. Call the Library at 707.746.4343 to make an appointment.

At a face-to-face discussion,

SAVE Program



On Friday, January 23, the Benicia Fire Department responded to a reported residential fire on Baker Street. Upon arrival, crews located a fire in the kitchen and dining area that was quickly spreading to the attic. Benicia Fire personnel were supported at the scene by crews from Vallejo Fire. The fire was quickly brought under control; however, not before causing significant damage to the structure and its contents.

After the fire was extinguished, department personnel met with the property owners to assist them in the recovery process. In addition to locating critical items within the residence, they also wanted to ensure that the resident's needs for housing and additional support were addressed. In support of their needs, and in partnership with the California Fire Foundation, fire personnel were able to provide them with a \$100 gift card made available to our personnel through the California Fire Foundations Supplying Aid to Victims of Emergency (SAVE) program. The Benicia Fire Department has been involved with the program for several months; however, this was the first opportunity for them to provide one of these cards in support of our community. - *Fire Department*

Spotlight on the Water Quality Laboratory

Benicia's Water Quality Laboratory supports both the Water and Wastewater Divisions of Public Works, exercising constant vigilance to protect public health and the environment. To ensure that the City's drinking water is safe, the lab analyzes

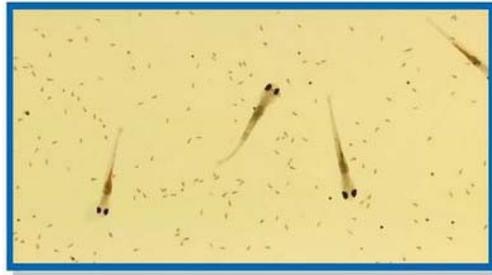
AARP Tax-Aide volunteers assist taxpayers in completing an Interview/Intake Sheet. Taxpayers will need to bring ID's, Social Security cards, W-2's, 1099's, prior year tax documents and other tax-related documents including Covered California correspondence. Both Federal and California tax returns will be e-filed after the taxpayer(s) has reviewed the returns and another counselor has "quality reviewed" them to ensure accuracy and a faster refund.

Tax-Aide is a program of the AARP Foundation offered in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the California Franchise Tax Board. The program provides free, nationwide tax counseling services with the mission to provide high quality income tax assistance and tax form preparation. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are trained in cooperation with the IRS to offer help with personal income tax returns and to electronically file their federal and state tax returns.

There will be tax preparation sites throughout Solano County including Vallejo, Fairfield, Suisun, Vacaville, Dixon, Rio Vista, as well as in Benicia. Appointments are encouraged at all sites.

For more information about this service, call the Benicia Public Library at 707.746.4343 or visit www.benicialibrary.org, or contact AARP's toll-free number, 1.888.AARPNOW (1.888.227.7669) or visit www.aarp.org/taxaide during this tax season to locate other Tax-Aide sites and their days and times of operation. -
Library

dozens of samples from water taps every month, testing for bacteria, residual chlorine disinfectant, and other parameters required by state regulations. Laboratory staff also collects and analyzes samples at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) throughout each month to show that the water discharged into the Carquinez Strait meets strict regulatory limits on pollutants.



2 week old fathead minnows used in bioassay test

One of the more interesting tests is the monthly flow-through bioassay test, which is performed to show that larval fish can survive in the Wastewater Treatment Plant's discharge for several days.

The Laboratory has recently developed and achieved proficiency in a new analytical method for testing recycled water for coliform bacteria. The new method uses a membrane filter technique, and only takes 24

hours to demonstrate the absence of coliforms in a sample, compared with the older method that could take up to 96 hours to obtain results!



Laboratory Analyst Nicole Van Aken demonstrates method for detecting coliform bacteria

The lab developed this method to support the Wastewater Treatment Plant's plans for recycled water production, which helps conserve water by using highly-treated wastewater instead of drinking water for various applications. Recycled water production is highly-regulated and requires daily testing for bacteria to demonstrate that the water is safe to use for irrigation, industrial, and other purposes. A faster

turnaround time for analytical results means that any problem with the disinfection process at the WWTP can be discovered and corrected more quickly. If the City uses recycled water to irrigate the landscaping at the WWTP or builds a project to send recycled water to the Valero Refinery, then the Lab will be ready to ensure the public's health and safety.

- *Public Works Department Water Quality Division*

Irrigation Efficiency

Thanks to a recent grant from the Community Sustainability Commission, Parks & Community Services staff is in the process of working with their vendor to add as many as eleven (11) new sites to our ET Irrigation Control System. This system is specifically designed to maximize irrigation efficiency by automatically adjusting irrigation based on actual weather conditions.



Use of this system has resulted in a significant reduction in water use since it was originally installed in 2004. The addition of eleven new sites is expected to achieve an even greater reduction in water use and improve overall system reliability. - *Parks & Community Services*



Resources for Women in Our Community

The Benicia Police Department's Family Resource Center (FRC) is partnering with Soroptomist International of Benicia to provide much needed personal supplies to the women and families who use the FRC's services. Because many of the FRC's clients

struggle with providing basic shelter and food, they may not have the ability to buy other necessities for personal hygiene. Existing resources and grants often do not provide for these things. To address this gap in coverage, the Benicia City Council is leasing a closet next to the FRC's city office to the Benicia Soroptimists. The Soroptimists are keeping the closet stocked with supplies they purchase or that are donated to them. The FRC staff then distributes supplies to their clients as needed.



If you would like to contribute to the effort you may drop off new supplies to the Soroptimists in the City Attorney's Office at City Hall. (Tax receipts are available on request.) Some of the items being stocked include: diapers; wipes; toiletries (toothpaste and brushes, feminine hygiene products, shampoo, soap, conditioner, toilet paper); hand wipes/hand sanitizer; and tissues.

Soroptimist International is an organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls locally and throughout the world. The partnership between Soroptimists and the FRC allows both to expand their services and better help local families in need. FRC staff is indebted to Benicia Soroptimists for helping them in caring for local families. [Click here](#) for more resources helpful to women in our community. - *City Attorney's Office*

Turf Renovation

The Parks & Community Services Department's Parks Division recently completed a turf renovation projects on fields #2 and #3 at Benicia Community Park. These fields are scheduled to re-open on **February 14** for soccer. In addition, crews have been working diligently to ensure that baseball and softball fields are ready for the upcoming season. Parks staff recently installed new sod on fields #2 and #4 at Benicia Community Park to



ensure the correct distances are maintained on each field. Infield preparation and detailing of the fields will continue over the next several weeks to ensure the fields are in top condition for baseball and softball opening day on **March 7**. -*Parks & Community Services*

FRC at the Pre-School Fair

Conni Holloway and Blanche Hilman (pictured) of the Family Resource Center (FRC) recently attended the Benicia Pre-School Fair as a means of outreach for the FRC. Sponsored by [Benicia Mom's Group](#), this event has grown each year.



At the Fair, FRC distributed material from First 5 Solano. First 5 Solano provides services and information to families with children from 0-5 years, and provides one of the grants FRC receives.

Conni and Blanche were also able to distribute information about FRC services to increase the community's awareness of what the FRC does to help families in Benicia (i.e.: parenting classes, limited financial assistance, holiday assistance, distributing resources donated to the FRC, and referring to local resources). It was also a great way to learn about other resources available and build a community network.

The Benicia Mom's Group has been a great resource for the FRC. They have donated backpacks and school supplies, baby clothes/diapers and equipment, and referred their members who need assistance to FRC and received referrals from FRC, creating a mutually beneficial collaboration. - *Police Department*

Free Concert

The Benicia Middle School Viking Symphonic Band will present a FREE concert on **Friday, February 27** at 7:00PM in the fireplace area of the Benicia Public Library.

The Symphonic Band, conducted by Mr. Glenn Walp, is made up of 64 seventh and eighth grade students. They will play a variety of music including traditional marches, and popular and concert pieces, with music from composers from Ticheli to Sousa.

The Viking Band, numbering 180 musicians, draws from a student population of 1,100. The music department also has an additional 60 students involved in Jazz Band, Drum Line and Color



Guard.

This concert is free and appropriate for all ages. For more information, call the [Benicia Public Library](http://www.BeniciaPublicLibrary.org) at 707.746-4343. - *Library*

Friday, February 27
7 pm
Fireplace Area
Benicia Public Library

Benicia Middle School
Viking Music

Benicia Public Library
150 East L Street, Benicia CA 94510
(707) 746-4343
www.BeniciaLibrary.org

Water Rescue Equipment Grants

In the early part of 2014, the Fire Department was contacted by a group of local residents who work for Fireman's Fund Insurance Company in Novato. They were interested in working with the Department in pursuit of a grant through their company's Heritage Program. When they asked what the Department's needs might be, staff discussed an ongoing effort to secure additional equipment to support the ability to perform rescue operations in the waterway bordering Benicia. These individuals worked for several months to prepare an application and the supporting documents in order to ensure the success of the request on the Fire Department's behalf. In addition, recognizing that there might be the need for funds beyond what might be available through the Heritage Program, they reached out to an independent agent to secure additional funds.



Thanks to the efforts of these community members, the Benicia Fire Department was awarded a grant in the amount of \$18,950. This amount included \$12,150 from the Heritage Program and an additional \$6,800 from EPIC Ins. On January 26, a large contingent from Fireman's' Fund and Edgewood Insurance Partners Center (EPIC) were on hand to celebrate the awarding of the grant and to present Mayor Patterson and Fire Chief Lydon with symbolic checks. The funds for this grant will enable the Fire Department to acquire a small inflatable rescue boat that will allow them greater access to individuals in distress in the waters along our shores. - *Fire Department*



Contact Info

Email your questions or comments to City Manager Brad Kilger at edev@ci.benicia.ca.us. For additional information on any of the items in this report, please contact one of the following departments:

[City Manager/Human Resources/I.T./City Clerk](#): 707.746.4200

[City Attorney](#): 707.746.4216

[Community Development](#): 707.746.4280

[Economic Development](#): 707.746.4202

[Finance Department](#): 707.746.4225

[Fire Department](#): 707.746.4275

[Library](#): 707.746.4343

[Parks & Community Services](#): 707.746.4285

[Police Department](#): 707.746.4265

[Public Works](#): 707.746.4240

[Forward this email](#)

 SafeUnsubscribe™

This email was sent to tdavena@ci.benicia.ca.us by edev@ci.benicia.ca.us | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [About our service provider.](#)



City of Benicia Office of Economic Development | 250 East L Street | Benicia | CA | 94510