



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

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MARCH 3, 2014

For additional information on any of the items in this report, please see Contact List at the end of this report.

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**T**HERE'S NO DOUBT, WE'RE IN A DROUGHT! Use Water Wisely – Water Conservation is more important than ever.

Due to the drought, the City will receive substantially less than its normal allotment of water from the State of California. The California Department of Water Resources has declared that no contract water for 2014 will be allocated unless the snow pack and state reservoirs increase during winter storms. The City is relying on using our stored State Water Project supplies from previous years, called “carry-over”, during the early part of this year. We have some reserve in Lake Berryessa, and expect to treat greater quantities of this water supply during the summer months.



Water conservation is the most important activity that Benicia citizens and companies can practice for the next few years. The City Council requests your help in achieving the goal of reducing water consumption by 20% citywide.

Below are some ways you can conserve water outdoors:

- Water your outdoor landscaping half as much.
- Manage your irrigation timer every 2-4 weeks. Adjust the watering schedule to reflect changes in the weather.
- Check your irrigation for leaks, broken sprinkler heads, and adjust sprinklers if needed to only water the landscape (and not the driveway or sidewalk.)
- Water early in the morning when winds are calm and temperatures are cool, which reduces evaporation.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants to reduce evaporation and keep soil cool.

Check out [SolanoSavesWater.org](http://SolanoSavesWater.org) for more helpful tips and water rebate information then visit [SustainableBenicia.org](http://SustainableBenicia.org) for rebate information and [BeniciaSavesEnergy.org](http://BeniciaSavesEnergy.org) to sign up for a free residential water assessment. – *Public Works*

**LAKE HERMAN UPDATE:** You may have noticed that Lake Herman is very full this

month. With the late February storms, we expect the lake to reach full capacity. The winter strategy during this drought is to allow the lake to fill with runoff from the Pacific storms to store as much “free” water as Mother Nature will provide. The lake will be drawn down gradually to meet water demand.



The walking trail is submerged at this time and by the end of the last storms, the lake should be full to the top of the spillway. This will essentially block all access from the Community Park to the dam, so we advise that no one should cross the spillway during this period as a safety precaution. – *Public Works*



**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS ON SUNDAY:** As you set your clocks forward on Sunday, **March 9**, Benicia Fire Department wants to remind you to change your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector batteries when you change your clock for Daylight Savings. For additional information, visit the [U.S. Fire Administration's website](#). – *Fire Department*

**COVERED CALIFORNIA DEADLINES:** The Benicia Public Library invites you to come in to the Library to talk to a certified agent to get your questions answered about the Affordable Health Care Act (Covered California) on any of the following dates:

**March 6, 13, 20, 24 or 26, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

To avoid an IRS penalty you must enroll by February 15 and open enrollment ends **March 31**. More information is available at [CoveredCA.com](#). – *Library*



**COVERED CALIFORNIA**

**BENICIA LIVING UP TO ITS BILLING BY THE BAY:** The Sunday, February 23 edition of the Sacramento Bee had a feature article in their travel section, *California Traveler*, on spending a day in Benicia. The article took up 230 column inches of nearly three full pages of the section and included 20 color photos and three maps.

This is great exposure for our little town and a real boost to our tourism effort as Sacramento Bee readers are part of our target demographic for day-trippers. [Click here](#) to read the online version. – *Economic Development*

CALIFORNIA  
**TRAVELER**

TRAVELER, TOO #13  
PUZZLES #12, #15  
ADVICE #15  
ESCAPES #13

Sunday, February 23, 2014 | The Sacramento Bee | [sacbee.com/travel](http://sacbee.com/travel) H1



Go for a stroll on a clear day along Benicia's waterfront near the end of First Street and you will have views of the Carquinez Strait and, in the distance, Carquinez Bridge. Shops abound in the area. too.

# Way to work it, Benicia

Former state capital's a quiet, dog-embracing burg by the bay with great views

By SAAR McMASS  
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**B**ENICIA – Heading south on Interstate 680, just past the Benicia city limit sign, you'll see a giant billboard, all blue sky and golden sunsets, touting this very city as promising "a great day by the bay!" Don't look to the right, where the industrial blight of an oil refinery spears brackish plumes of a sickly shade. Don't look to the left toward the Suisun Bay, where the mothball fleet, essentially a naval junkyard, rusts nearby on the Delta waters.

No, just keep looking – and moving – forward, off the freeway and onto its tree-shrouded streets. Benicia gets better the closer you travel to its downtown waterfront, where boutiques and antiques shops beckon, where artists live and work in the shadow cast by hometown hero Robert Arneson, where history is steeped like so many loose-leaf bags at the popular Camellia Tea Room, where outrigger canoeists can shove off for San Pablo Bay, and where First Street at times resembles a puppy promenade.

As the billboard so vividly illustrates, Benicia is putting on the hard sell to attract tourists whose only association with the town is the \$5 they plunk down for the bridge toll. It has hired a marketing firm, which has branded this town along the Carquinez Straits the "best kept little secret in the San Francisco Bay Area." Locals are hoping that, with proper promotion, Benicia could rival houseboat-happy Sausalito or even toy Tiburon as a waterfront weekend destination.

"It's a very quiet little place," said Nancy Steaeker, feeding bread scraps to the shorebirds at the foot of First Street one recent lunch time. "It's right in the middle of everything, but you're not really in anything, you know."

That, really, is one of Benicia's main selling points – namely, its slow pace, homey feel, lack of pretension and centralized location, easily within an hour's drive – to the masses of stressed-out city dwellers in San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento. And it's doubtful, even with an influx of tourists, that the local vibe will change much, since Benicia has weathered boom-and-bust cycles before and retained its laid-back charm.

The biggest boom, of course, was that glorious 13-month period 160 years ago when Benicia served as California's state capital, until Sacramento lured lawmakers away with promises of a bigger building and more housing, a tempting proposition since many legislators had been sleeping in saloons on First Street. Benicia also lays claim to having the first Army post in



Benicia Bookshop beckons on the bay community's First Street. Supriyah, a border collie and cattle dog mix, right, holds court at Fiber-Franks yarn shop, also on Benicia's First Street.

**ONLINE**  
To view a gallery of Marry Cravitt's photos from Benicia, go to [sacbee.com/multimedia](http://sacbee.com/multimedia)



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**BALL FIELD PREP AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING:** The Parks and Community Services Department held training for local sports organizations on ball field preparation and maintenance. Attendees received a Field Prep & Maintenance Manual newly developed by Recreation Coordinator Eliot Palmer, watched instructional videos and participated in hands on training lead by Eliot and Parks Supervisor Theron Jones and Recreation Supervisor Jill Wynn. The training was a success and the Department hopes to make this an annual training. – *Parks & Community Services*



**WESTERN GATEWAY INTERMODAL PROJECT:** Construction of the Western Gateway Intermodal Project is on budget and nearing completion. This project, which is located on Military West between West K and Southampton Road, replaced an existing bus stop with an intermodal facility to encourage transit ridership and beautified the western entrance to the City. Improvements include new parking stalls, sidewalks, and bike lanes

and lockers for multi-modal access; bus shelters and pedestrian lighting for protection from the elements and safety; and median islands and extensive landscaping to calm traffic and beautify the area.



The new intermodal facility is on SolTrans Bus Route 78, which runs from the Vallejo Ferry Station to the Pleasant Hill/Walnut



Creek BART stations. The construction contract was awarded to the low bidder, Redgewick Construction from Oakland, and is fully funded with a \$1.1M grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. – *Public Works*

**RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE FIRE UPDATE:** On Wednesday, February 26, crews responded to a reported structure fire on Carlisle Way. Upon arrival, personnel observed heavy smoke coming from the two-story structure with flames coming from a window on the first floor. Early reports were that all occupants were out of the residence; however, five dogs were still inside. Crews located all five dogs, but unfortunately, only one survived.



Crews were able to contain the fire to the area of origin on the first floor. There was, however, significant smoke and heat damage throughout the remainder of the residence.

An investigation revealed that the cause of the fire was accidental. It was also determined that the residence lacked smoke detectors. During the operation, support was received from Vallejo Fire, Medic Ambulance, and Benicia Police. – *Fire Department*

**YOUTH COMMISSION UPDATE:** Benicia Youth Commissioners accomplished two heart-felt community service goals in the past two months. In January, Commissioners collected towels, blankets, and toys for animals at the Humane Society of the North Bay. They also dedicated part of two meetings to craft over 80 thoughtful Valentines and delivered them to senior residents at Casa de Vilarrasa on Valentine's Day. – *Parks & Community Services*



**UPDATE ON RECENT STORMS:** During the February 7-9 storm event the Public Works Maintenance Division delivered adequate planning measures that minimized damage and effects from the weather when compared to reports from other surrounding towns. Unbelievably, only three calls were received the entire weekend by City standby personnel.



Early preparations included coordination with the Benicia Fire Chief, and his commitment to additional resources in the way of manpower, if requested.

Public Works staff prepared two sandbag stations for the public located at the Corporation Yard near the recycling area, and at the East E Street parking lot.

Maintenance personnel continued throughout the week clearing debris such as dead leaves from known critical drain inlets throughout the city, staging signs in other key areas such as B Street, East Second Street, Industrial Way, and sections of Lake Herman Road. Crews used heavy equipment to breach beaver dams in the industrial area that were causing business storm drain inlets to be surcharged before the threat of heavy rains began. In addition to the emergent work, maintenance crews addressed voluminous potholes, and responded to several citizens' concerns and requests. – *Public Works*

**POET LAUREATE SELECTION COMMITTEE:** The Benicia Public Library is looking for nominations of Benicia residents who would like to serve on the Benicia Library's Poet Laureate Selection Committee.

In the fall of 2006, the Benicia City Council established the office of Benicia Poet Laureate. The Benicia Library is responsible for administering the Poet Laureate position, and has been charged with establishing a committee to select all future laureates. One committee member will be chosen from each of the following areas and organizations:

1. Benicia Library Board of Trustees
2. Friends of the Benicia Library
3. Benicia arts community
4. Benicia educator
5. Member-at-large from the community

The Poet Laureate must be a Benicia resident, and all committee members must also live in Benicia.

Each interested individual who would like to serve on the committee should fill out [an application](#) and return it to Toni Yosick, Board Secretary, at the Benicia Public Library, 150 East L Street, Benicia, CA 94510. Please address any questions to the Board of Library Trustees President, Mary Eichbauer, at 707.747.1946. Applications should be submitted by **March 7.** -  
*Library*



**BENICIA FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER:** On March 1, members of the Benicia Fire Department gathered at the Fire Museum to honor various volunteer members for their service to the community. The evening commenced with a corned beef dinner, followed by an awards presentation. Volunteer members were presented with certificates of appreciation recognizing their hours of volunteer service. The following individuals received special recognition:

- Yann Jouvenot- Phoenix Volunteer of the Year
- Andrew Garibaldi- LSU Member of the Year
- Dustin Anderson- Reserve Firefighter of the Year



Captain Greg Petersen, one of the Department's paid staff, was also recognized for being selected as Firefighter of the year. Thanks go to all of you for your service to our community. – *Fire Department*

**WATER TREATMENT PLANT TOURS:** Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Leo Larkin has been busy providing Water Treatment Plant (WTP) tours this month.

The California Department of Public Health toured the WTP on February 24 so that the new San Francisco Bay District Engineer could observe how the Benicia Water Treatment Plant operates. Leo provided a 4-hour tour for our public health regulators that included field trips to Lake Herman, our Cordelia Pump Station at Terminal Reservoir, and the State's Cordelia Forebay.

On February 25, a very attentive and engaged group of students from Liberty High School toured the WTP. Kelly Bocher, LHS counsellor, arranged this tour so that her 18 students have exposure to the many career opportunities in water treatment.



Benicia High School's ECH<sub>2</sub>O Green Academy toured the WTP on February 26, learning more about the City's water supply and treatment schemes. Leo and the group braved the rainy weather to take a quick walking tour of the WTP, returning to the Operations Building for a lively question and answer session on water, photovoltaic power, water quality issues, and the water supply. – *Public Works*

**FIRE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT AVAILABLE:** The Benicia Fire Department monthly report for February is now available. It contains information about Emergency Operations, Training, and Prevention. [Click here](#) to read more. – *Fire Department*



**UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS:** Many City of Benicia



employees are members of local service clubs and participate in local fundraisers such as the Rotary Club of Benicia's Casino Night on **March 14** at the Clock Tower and the Benicia's Got Talent fundraiser by Soroptimist International of Benicia at Benicia High School on **March 15**. If you'd like to attend, more information is available on the [VisitBenicia.org Events Calendar](http://VisitBenicia.org). – *Economic Development*

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#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The City Manager's Report from City of Benicia City Manager Brad Kilger is published twice monthly. For additional information on any of the items in this report, please contact one of the following departments:

**[City Manager/Human Resources/Economic Development/I.T.:](#) 707.746.4200**

**[City Attorney:](#) 707.746.4216**

**[Community Development:](#) 707.746.4280**

**[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**