



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

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MAY 5, 2014

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**WHAT IS A WATER-WISE LANDSCAPE?:** A water-wise landscape is one that allows for a beautiful healthy landscape with water-wise plants, minimal supplemental irrigation and little to no adverse runoff. Here are the six basic principles of a water-wise landscape:

- **Appropriate plant selection:** Select trees, shrubs, and groundcovers based on their adaptability to your region's soil and climate. California has an abundance of beautiful native plants which generally have lower water demands.
- **The right plants for the right soil:** Knowing your soil and selecting the right kind of plants for your area is an important part of a water-wise landscape.
- **Limit your grass:** Grass can be a huge source of outdoor water waste. Consider cutting back or eliminating the amount of turf you have at your house.
- **Efficient irrigation:** Most people water their landscape more than it needs. The greatest waste of outdoor water is applying too much, too often.
- **Mulch is good:** Use mulch wherever possible. Mulch conserves water by significantly reducing moisture evaporation from the soil. Mulch also reduces weed populations, prevents soil compaction and keeps soil temperatures more moderate.
- **Appropriate maintenance:** One of the best benefits of a water-wise landscape is that it requires less maintenance. A well designed landscape can decrease maintenance by as much as 50% through reduced mowing, once-a-year mulching; elimination of non-California-friendly plants; and more efficient watering techniques.



Solano County Water Agency offers rebates to Benicia residents to convert lawn into a water-wise landscape. The program offers a rebate of \$1.00 per square foot of lawn removed up to a \$1,000 maximum rebate. For more information go to [SolanoSavesWater.org](http://SolanoSavesWater.org) or call them directly at 455-1113. – *Public Works*

**BIKE TO WORK DAY: Thursday, May 8** is Bike to Work Day and May is Bike to Work



Month. Over 300 Energizer Stations will be located along local bike commute routes in all nine Bay Area counties to provide free beverages, snacks, and good cheer to bicyclists. Use [this links](#) for maps of Energizer Stations to plan your Bike to Work Day commute. Energizer Stations will be open during morning commute hours and some will even re-open during the evening commute.

According to the 2007 American Community Survey, 43,000 Bay Area residents use a bicycle as their primary means of getting to work every day.

On Bike to Work Day, hundreds of thousands of people are expected to bike to work in the Bay Area, with many being first time bike commuters.

More than one million Bay Area residents live within five miles of their workplace, an ideal distance for bicycling. The work commute only represents 23% of all trips, so consider how you also may be able to bike to shop, to school, for errands, and for social events. In a world concerned with climate change, pollution, congestion and wasted time, the question should really be: Why not bike to work?

Check out [YouCanBikeThere.com](#) for more Bike to Work Month events. – *Human Resources*

**SECOND SATURDAYS ART WALK:** If you are lucky enough to get to celebrate with both your Mother-in-Law and Mom, bring your favorite one to Benicia on **Saturday, May 10!** The day starts off with the Benicia Historical Society's annual [Vintage Home & Garden Tour](#) of six historic residences and gardens in Benicia. Look for local artists painting on the grounds. Tickets are available at [BrownPaperTickets.com](#).

Continue your day with lunch or dinner at one of our great restaurant while you take advantage of the opportunity to stroll and experience art in downtown Benicia with the Second Saturdays Art Walk, 3:00-7:00 PM on the second Saturday of each month, April-October. Participating venues feature local artwork; fine art, visual, musical, performance, literary, culinary, fashion, and decorative art. Look for the blue Benicia Art Walk banners and pick up the Art Walk brochure listing participating business on the color-coded map. Brochures are available at Benicia Public Library, Benicia Chamber of Commerce, Benicia Main Street, Benicia State Capitol, and online at [VisitBenicia.ORG/arts/visual-arts](#).



Don't forget to pick up your last minute Mother's Day gifts along the way. Many stores feature free gift wrapping. – *Economic Development*

**OPEN HOUSE REMINDER:** Mark Your Calendars! The annual Benicia Community Center Open House is **Friday, May 16**, 2:30-4:30 PM at 370 East L Street. The open house is a great way to kick off summer. Stop by and meet staff and instructors, see class demonstrations and more!! Call 7707.746.4285 for more information. – *Parks & Community Services*



**CITY HALL AT THE FARMERS MARKET:** The City of Benicia is represented at a new 10'x10' booth at each Benicia Farmers Market through October 30. Combining efforts of the Open Government Commission (which has had a mini-booth answering frequently asked questions at every market for many years) with the monthly tourism/Art Walk efforts and additional staffing provided by staff and commissioners from the Human Services Board, Library, Fire Department, Parks & Community Service Department, Community Development

Department, and Public Works.

The booth is a one-stop shop for City of Benicia information and questions. In addition, to focusing on each volunteer's department or board/commission subject of interest, the focus of booth volunteers is to get the word out about water conservation and our drought situation. Stop by to pick up frequently asked question on water conservation and nifty give-aways like shower heads, magnets, bags, etc. Look for the booth in front of the Treasury Commons in the 300 block of First Street. – *City Manager's Office*

**BOOK SALE:** Friend of the Library Booksale is **Saturday, May 10** from 10:00 AM–4:00 PM in the basement of the Benicia Public Library, 150 East L Street. Books sales occur every second Saturday of the month or anytime in the book sale area of the Library. This sale features a \$5 Bag Sale. Only \$5 for a bag of books!

Become a member of [Friends of the Library](#) and attend the pre-sale on Thursday, May 8, 6:00-8:00 PM. Membership is available at the door. – *Library*



**POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT:** Chief Andrew Bidou is pleased to announce that the 2013 Benicia Police Department Annual Report is now available. It can be accessed on the Police Department's website's Annual and Monthly Reports section at [www.ci.benicia.ca.us](http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us).

The Annual Report was funded with grant monies and was primarily put together by Management Analyst Jeff Tschudi. Lt. Frank Hartig notes that is one of the best reports done to date. [Click here](#) to see the report. – *Police Department*

**H**OUSING ELEMENT UPDATE 2015-2023: During this year, the Community Development Department will work with the community to amend the City's General Plan by revising the 2007-2014 Housing Element. The updated 2015-2023 Housing Element will establish policies to meet Benicia's housing needs through the end of 2022.

On **Thursday, May 15** at 6:30 PM (Public Library, Dona Benicia Room) City Staff will host a Public Workshop on the Draft Benicia Housing Element to explain the purpose of the Element and its components, and to receive comments on the Draft prior to submittal to the State Department of Housing and Community Development for their initial review, and ultimate consideration at formal public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

## CITY OF BENICIA

H O U S I N G   E L E M E N T   2 0 1 5   -   2 0 2 3

Public Review Draft  
April 2014

The Housing Element is part of the General Plan, which is the master plan for the community. All cities and counties in California are required to have a Housing Element that identifies and analyzes existing and projected housing needs, and identifies sites for housing. The Housing Element must establish goals, policies, quantified objectives and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. Through the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the State of California mandates the number of new housing units that local jurisdictions must plan for in their Housing Element. The City of Benicia is required to plan for 327 new housing units in its Housing Element for the period 2014 through 2023. While the City is required to plan for new housing, it is not required to actually build the additional units. The City is also obligated to plan for and provide policies and programs for special needs groups including the homeless.

The Public Review Draft Housing Element has been released and is available on the City's website for review. For more information, [click here](#) or go to [www.ci.benicia.ca.us](http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us) and click on the Community Development Department's homepage, navigate to the Planning Division, and locate the Housing Element Adoption link. – *Community Development*

**PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHERS RECOGNIZED:** At the Benicia City Council meeting of April 15, the Benicia Police Department Public Safety Dispatchers were honored with a Proclamation to recognize National Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week. This year's National Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week was April 13-19. Mayor Patterson thanked all the Dispatchers for their dedication to the citizens of the City of Benicia. PD Dispatchers in attendance and accepting the Proclamation were Christina Ensley and Ondria Perino.



Mayor Patterson provided several statistics from 2013 noting that our Public Safety Dispatchers processed 25,066 telephone calls of which 5,346 were 9-1-1 emergency calls and 19,720 were non-emergency telephone calls. They dispatched 13,129 police calls for service and 2,244 fire calls for service and they dispatched 5,599 police self-initiated calls for service for a total of 20,972 calls for service. Good job Benicia PD and Fire Dispatch! – *Police Department*

**PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHER'S LUNCHEON:** On April 17, the Benicia Police Department Public Safety Dispatchers attended the Napa Solano Dispatch Association's annual awards luncheon which was hosted by Fairfield Police Department in the City of Fairfield. The purpose of the luncheon is to recognize Public Safety Dispatchers in Solano and Napa County during the week of National Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week, April 13-19.



The luncheon was attended by members of the police departments in Vallejo, Fairfield, Vacaville, Suisun City, Dixon, and Solano County Sheriff's Department, Medic Ambulance, Napa PD, Napa County Sheriff's Office, and Calistoga Police Department. Both Benicia Fire Chief Jim Lydon and Division Chief KC Smith attended to support our dispatchers.

Many of the agencies presented their "Dispatcher of the Year" award and other awards at the

luncheon. Public Safety Dispatcher Ondria Perino was presented with a medal by Chief Andrew Bidou for being selected as the Dispatcher of the Year. Ondria was selected for this award based on her outstanding performance throughout the past year. During one of her shifts, she was working solo as both a police and fire dispatcher when a 911 call came in regarding a residential fire. In addition to having to dispatch fire units, she had to also dispatch ambulance and station coverage from Vallejo Fire Department. She had to continue to monitor the police radio and handle any emergency traffic that might come up. She worked this fire as a solo dispatcher for several hours. Tragically, one of the residents perished in the fire and Ondria had to notify the County Coroner and department Chaplain.



During another shift, she was once again working as a solo dispatcher at approximately 5:30 AM when a police officer became involved in a vehicle pursuit from Benicia to Contra Costa County. Ondria had to not only dispatch the pursuit, but had also had to call allied agencies and notify them that the pursuit was heading their way.

During the pursuit, speeds exceeded 100 mph and Ondria continued to remain calm and was able to provide needed feedback to the pursuing officers and keep the allied agencies updated on the status of the pursuit. The pursuit ended with the suspect crashing in Martinez, and luckily nobody was injured during this event. In addition to these two events, Ondria can always be counted on to cover shifts due to vacation or illness by other dispatchers. Congratulations go to Ondria! –  
*Police Department*



**EMPLOYEE NEWS:** On Sunday, April 6, the Benicia Education Foundation held its Run for Education, benefitting the Benicia Education Foundation, a volunteer-run, community-based, non-profit organization that helps fund library and technology programs in the Benicia Unified School District.

Both the City of Benicia and the Benicia Public Service Employees' Association (BPSEA) were Gold Sponsors of the 7th annual Run. Additionally, BPSEA provided bottled water for the participants. BPSEA volunteers arrived at 6:30 Sunday morning to set up their booth, and then handed out water to many thirsty walkers and runners. This is the third consecutive year BPSEA has been a sponsor, and the first year it provided water.

BPSEA is a non-profit labor organization that represents the City of Benicia Miscellaneous group of employees. Funds to purchase the bottled water and to be a sponsor of this great event are from BPSEA funds.

Pam Namba, Treasurer and Roy Garibaldi, Vice President of BPSEA, and City Manager Brad Kilger are shown in these photos. – *City Manager's Office*



**LIFEGUARD TRAINING CLASS:** Fifteen students participated in a Lifeguarding course at the James Lemos Swim Center over Spring Break. All 15 students completed the class successfully and earned American Red Cross certifications in Lifeguarding / First Aid / CPR / AED and Emergency Oxygen Administration. It is hoped that several of the students will be hired as Lifeguards to work at the pool this summer.



The class was instructed by Lifeguard Instructors Eliot Palmer, Jill Wynn and Kyle Rombach. – *Parks & Community Services*





**BENICIA CITIZENS' GOVERNMENT ACADEMY GRADUATION:** At the Benicia City Council meeting of May 6, 14 Benicia residents were presented with their certificates of graduation from the inaugural Benicia Citizens' Government Academy. Classes were held on Wednesday evenings in March and April. Class topics included:

- An overview of City government
- Open Government and the Brown Act
- The Library and how it contributes to the success of the community
- Public Works: information and tours of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Corp Yard and the Water Treatment Plant
- The Police Department, with demonstrations by the K9 team, patrol operations, the Dispatch center, and more
- Parks and Community Services – Parks Make Life Better!
- Internal services, including Finance, Budget, Human Resources, and I.T.
- The Fire Department, including a tour of the Fire Station, a demonstration of the jaws of life and resuscitation techniques
- Community Development and Economic Development, with a participatory activity on city planning and development

The City provided this class with the intent of helping residents gain an understanding of the operation of city government and to help develop an awareness and appreciation of the various challenges and decisions presented every day. The City is looking forward to continuing to provide this program in the future. For information or to sign up to receive information on the next Academy, please email Library Director Diane Smikahl at [dsmikahl@ci.benicia.ca.us](mailto:dsmikahl@ci.benicia.ca.us). – *Library*

**TINY TOTS UPDATE:** Spring is in full effect for our programs at the Benicia Community Center. Tiny Tots preschool celebrated last week before going on Spring Break and participated in an egg hunt here at the Community Center. Teachers invited preschool parents to spend a day with the class and lead the children through the egg hunt. Groups of children along with their siblings hunted for plastic eggs full of treasures in our building while others enjoyed spring themed activities in the classroom. Our preschool program has one month of school left and is very busy preparing for their Graduation celebration at the end of the month! – *Parks & Community Services*



**CITY STAFF PARTICIPATES IN CHARITY FASHION SHOW:** New York Fashion Week in

Benicia was the theme of the luncheon and fashion show presented by Christina S Fashion Destination (owned by Council Member Christina Strawbridge) and Be Chic Boutique. The event was held at the Clocktower on Wednesday, April 23 and provided a great way to celebrate Administrative Professional's Day.

Those in attendance were treated some fashions modeled by City of Benicia staff. The show kicked off with (clockwise from top left) Council Member Alan Schwartman, City Manager Brad Kilger, City Attorney Heather McLaughlin, and Police Lieutenant Frank Hartig busting a move down the runway!



Fashions were modeled by McLaughlin along with (clockwise from top left) Assistant City Manager Anne Cardwell, Contract Finance Director Brenda Olwin, Principal Planner Amy Million, Deputy City Clerk Kate Gibbs and other local talent. Photos courtesy of IT Analyst Dave Bosse.

Richard Hallmarq of Project Runway Season 11 was on hand to talk about his collection, which was featured in the show.



City Staff provided additional support of the event by buying tickets to fill three tables and celebrate our Administrative Professionals. Proceeds from the event benefit the Benicia Community Action Council and the Senior Meals Program. - *City Manager's Office*



## **UPDATE ON VACANCY IN BIP:** News on the real estate front comes to us from Colliers



International, commercial real estate brokers covering Solano, Napa, and parts of Contra Costa counties. Collier's recently released market report notes the vacancy rate for industrial and office markets flattened in the first quarter of 2014 with a fractional increase from 7.3 percent to 7.4 percent in Solano and Napa counties. This represents a significant change from 2013, when the vacancy rate declined by 3.8 percentage points for the year, the largest decline in several years.

Sales activity also decreased in the first quarter as there was only one sale (in Dixon) of more than 50,000 square feet.

In the first quarter of 2014, the office leasing market in Solano and Napa counties remained quiet, and the vacancy rate increased marginally from 20.4 percent to 20.9 percent. Sales activity declined in the first quarter as there was only one sale of an office building (in Fairfield) in Solano and Napa counties.

Benicia's run of six consecutive quarters of vacancy declines finally came to an end in the first quarter of 2014 as the vacancy rate inched upwards from 9.2 percent to 9.8 percent. In a relatively quiet quarter, the largest lease was Furmanite America's lease of 23,440 sq/ft of light industrial space at 3000 Bayshore Road.

Sales activity included Summit Drywall & Painting, Ltd. Purchase of 8,386 sq/ft of light industrial condominiums at 4866 and 4882 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. – *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./City Clerk:](#)

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[Finance Department:](#) 707.746.4225

[Fire Department:](#) 707.746.4275

[Library:](#) 707.746.4343

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