

## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

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JUNE 23, 2015

The *City Manager's Report* from City of Benicia City Manager Brad Kilger 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](#). For additional information on any items in this report, please see [Contact List](#) at the end of this report.

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**CITY REPAIRS LEAKY HYDRANT, IMPLEMENTS NEW POLICIES:** A leaky fire hydrant located on private property on Industrial Way was repaired by the City's Public Works Department Tuesday, but not before drawing public ire for lack of a timely response. In general, the City has been very proactive in promoting water conservation efforts, both within the City itself, as well as the community, as was recently illustrated when Benicia significantly exceeded the state-mandated targets for water conservation in April and May.

"Rather than make excuses for why it took so long to get this particular issue fixed, City staff reviewed our internal gaps in communication and procedures and immediately tightened up our policy to ensure that it does not happen again," said City Manager Brad Kilger. "Our residents and customers deserve timely, consistent response times, especially given drought conditions, and we will ensure moving forward that they receive it."

Reports of leaks, pipe damage and any other needs for repair should be reported to the City's Water Conservation Hotline at 707.746.4380, option #2 (or call 746.4296 during non-business hours), or via email to [water@ci.benicia.ca.us](mailto:water@ci.benicia.ca.us). All calls will be returned within one business day, with repairs evaluated and prioritized in a maximum of 48 hours. The intention is to speed the process on both fronts, in terms of early identification of leaks and subsequent repairs. If leaks occur on private property or disputed property, the owners will be given 48 hours to fix the problem or the City, as in this case, will intervene and initiate repairs, and then seek reimbursement from the property owner.

"We appreciate and count on the vigilance of our residents and I want to thank them for bringing this matter to our attention. Their continued efforts are critical to helping us meet our State water conservation targets," added Kilger. "We really are all in this together." –  
*City Manager*

**HOLIDAY CLOSURE:** Benicia City Offices, the Benicia Community Center and the Benicia Public Library will be closed **Friday, July 3** and **Saturday, July 4** in observance of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday.



Requests for emergency water and sewer service may be made at the Benicia Police Department, 200 East L Street or 707.745.3411. – *City Manager's Office*

**PUBLIC OUTREACH:** Members of the Benicia Fire Department took advantage of a recent Farmers Market in order to conduct community engagement and public education. In addition to general information about the Fire Department, staff also reminded residents that fireworks, with the exception of those for licensed public displays, are illegal in Benicia. With the upcoming Fourth of July holiday and extreme drought conditions, this was a great opportunity to remind the community of the regulations and the hazards associated with the use of illegal fireworks.

Also highlighted during the evening was promotion of an opportunity for community members to participate in upcoming CPR training sessions. The Fire Department is preparing to deliver a series of Community CPR training sessions. These classes focus on the delivery of Hands-Only CPR and do not provide a certification. These classes are great for individuals who are interested in learning the skill in order to assist someone that might experience a sudden cardiac arrest. If you are interested in participating in one of these sessions, please contact the Benicia Fire Department at 707.746.4275.



In addition to providing valuable information, Fire personnel had fun handing out lots of red fire helmets to kids at the Market. – *Fire Department*

**SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:** As part of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan, city staff are soliciting your answers to the question, “What needs to happen to make Benicia a more resilient city in the face of climate change?”

You’re invited to answer that question at this link: <http://peakdemocracy.com/2730>

This question is featured on Open City Hall, where you can express your opinion for decision-makers and read what other residents are saying. – *Community Development*

**WATER CONSERVATION TIPS FOR POOL OWNERS:** Many people assume pools waste water, but that's just not true. Because pools often replace traditional lawns, which are very water intensive, every pool actually saves thousands of gallons of water per year. Did you know that pools and surrounding decks use less than half the water than an irrigated lawn? Yet even with those water savings, there are steps pool owners can take this summer to save even more water. Here are a few tips to keep your pool a water saver this summer:

- Install a pool cover to reduce water evaporation by as much as 90%.
- Shut off waterfalls, fountains, and other water features to reduce water loss and evaporation.
- Check the pool for leaks. Contact your pool service professional for guidance.
- Minimize splashing or lower the pool's water level to reduce "splashout".
- Plug the overflow line when the pool is in use.
- Replace sand and DE filters with cartridge filters that do not require backwashing.
- Keep your pool clean to reduce frequency of backwashing.
- If your pool is heated, reduce the water temperature to reduce evaporation.



*-Public Works*

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS COME TO BENICIA:** The Special Olympics World Summer Games are in Los Angeles this year. With 7,000 athletes and 3,000 coaches representing 177 countries, along with 30,000 volunteers and an anticipated 500,000 spectators, the 2015 Special Olympics World Games - being staged in Los Angeles July 25 - August 2, 2015 - will be the largest sports-and-humanitarian event anywhere in the world in 2015, and the single biggest event in Los Angeles since the 1984 Olympic Games.



Special Olympics  
**WORLD  
GAMES**  
LOS ANGELES 2015

During the World Summer Games Special Olympics Torch Run from New York to L.A., a team of Special Olympics athlete and Law Enforcement officers from around the world will run the Final Leg throughout California, culminating with the Torch lighting at Opening Ceremony for World Games. Benicia has been selected as one of the legs of that Torch Run which will occur on the afternoon (more definite times coming soon) of **Tuesday, July 14** from West 9<sup>th</sup> Street to City Park at First Street and Military West. In the City Park Gazebo, there will be a ceremony where the Mayor and Chief of Police will speak, along with Special Olympics representatives and athletes followed by an exchange of gifts.

Please stop by to welcome the runners and show your support for Special Olympics. – *Police Department*

## **DISASTER TRAINING:** City of Benicia officials put their disaster system to a test on June



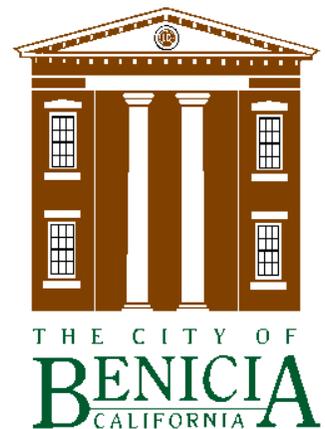
19 and 20. Approximately 20 City of Benicia employees from multiple departments participated in the two-day disaster exercise. Here, City employees are pictured stationed in the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), working through a situation meant to prepare staff to manage an actual disaster.

The City's EOC is the central point of coordination and decision making during large scale emergencies or disasters. Through these types of exercises, City staff becomes more efficient in managing such events.

During a disaster or emergency, follow the City of Benicia on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Nextdoor](#) for official emergency information. – *Fire Department*

**CITIZENS' GOVERNMENT ACADEMY:** The City of Benicia is inviting residents to participate in its second Citizens' Government Academy. The goal of the nine session Academy is to provide residents with the information, resources and tools to become more knowledgeable community members, to provide an increased understanding of the organizational structure and operations of the various city departments that impact the quality of life in Benicia, and to develop an ongoing positive relationship with City officials/staff, ultimately creating a stronger community.

Each session will focus on a specific element of city government, providing information on various departments, offering department tours, and encouraging participant interaction with city staff. Most sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 PM beginning September 16 and ending with a graduation ceremony at a City Council meeting. The session on Budget and Finance will be held on Thursday, October 1, and a Saturday session will be held to tour the City's Public Works facilities: this session will involve walking through each facility and participants are advised to wear comfortable clothes and shoes.



Registration is free and available to all residents of the City of Benicia over 16 years of age. Class size is limited and registration must be made by **September 10**. Material for each session will be available on the City's website in advance. A Registration form may be found at City Hall, at the Library, or on the Library's website ([www.benicialibrary.org](http://www.benicialibrary.org)).

For more information, please contact Library Director Diane Smikahl at 707.746.4343 or email [dsmikahl@ci.benicia.ca.us](mailto:dsmikahl@ci.benicia.ca.us). – *Library*

## PERSONNEL NEWS:

**Welcome New Public Works Department Employees:** Leo Reyes, Jr. is one of our new Field, Utilities and Streets Apprentice in the Public Works Department. A resident of Antioch, Leo comes to us from Contra Costa County Public Works. He is married with five children, and one granddaughter. Leo enjoys spending time with his family, fishing and restoring old cars. He's an avid Oakland Raiders, San Jose Sharks and Oakland A's fan.



Adrian Reyes is also a new Field, Utilities and Streets Apprentice in the Public Works Department. He attended Ygnacio Valley High School and while attending, played for the soccer team. He also attended Diablo Valley College and obtained an AA degree in Psychology. Adrian is fluent in Spanish. He and his girlfriend, Jackie, reside in Concord.



During his free time he enjoys playing and watching sports and having barbeques with family and friends. Adrian is an avid fan of the San Francisco Giants, 49er's, and Golden State Warriors.

Adrian says, "I am very excited to be working for the City of Benicia and look forward to getting to know everyone."  
– *Public Works*

**New at FRC:** The Benicia Police Department would like to introduce their newest addition to the Family Resource Center, Corby Selzer.

Corby has experience in both Contra Costa County and Solano County Public Health WIC (women, infant, and children) programs as a Lactation Peer Counselor and is a La Leche League leader.

Corby is married to her high school sweetheart, Andy Morris (of the Benicia Wastewater Treatment Plant). They have three children, ages 11, 6 and 3.



She enjoys adventuring with her family, playing piano, and skating with her flat track Roller Derby league as Madeya Ink. – *Police Department*

Please welcome Leo, Adrian, and Corby to the City of Benicia family. – *City Manager*

**Retirement:** After 25 years of service to the City of Benicia, 17 of those with the Benicia Police Department, Officer Sam Peterson has retired. A ceremony was held at the Police Department on Friday, June 19 to recognize Sam's many achievements. Chief Upson presented Sam with a City flag and recognized him as the first recipient of the Good Conduct Medal for exemplary conduct, efficiency and fidelity in service to the Benicia Police Department for 15 or more years. City Council Member Alan Schwartzman recognized Sam with a Proclamation, and Benicia Police Officers Association recognized Sam's 17 years of service as a Police Officer.

Many of Sam's friends, family, and colleagues were in attendance to recognize his contribution to the safety of Benicians, and to wish him well in his retirement. – *Police Department*



**City of Benicia Job Opportunities:** The Human Resources Department is accepting applications for the following positions:

- [Maintenance Mechanic](#), full-time, closing **July 3**
- [Paramedic Firefighter](#), full-time, currently testing
- [Police Officer - Lateral \(Currently Working\)](#), full-time, open continuously
- [Police Officer - Academy / Non-Lateral](#), full-time, open continuously
- [Public Safety Dispatcher](#) – Lateral/Non-Lateral, full-time, open until filled

To apply, the application and supplemental forms can be filed online at: <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/benicia/default.cfm>. City of Benicia employment applications may also be obtained from and must be returned to the Human Resources Department at 250 East L Street, Benicia.



These job opportunities are open to any current City of Benicia employees (full or part time) as well as the general public. If you know of someone who may be interested in applying, please let them know. - *Human Resources*

**SAVING DROUGHT STRESSED TREES:** Theron Jones, City of Benicia Parks Maintenance Supervisor and ISA Certified Arborist recommends the following article by Cathy Ronk, Master Gardener in the Hanford Sentinel that was shared with Benicia residents on [Nextdoor.com](http://Nextdoor.com):

### **Saving Drought Stressed Trees**

Drought stress ... we're all feeling it: dirty cars, fallow fields, hurried showers, brown lawns and now our landscape trees are suffering, too. Without trees, our ecosystem changes, creating a hotter Valley with less oxygen, wildlife, privacy and beauty. Because trees are also a valuable investment of money and time, priority should be given to trees when water supplies are limited.

“Mature landscape trees are worth saving. Recognizing early signs of drought stress is important because irreversible damage can occur that no amount of watering will correct,” says Janet Hartin, a horticulture adviser with UC Cooperative Extension. Most residential landscape trees are surrounded by lawns. When residents eliminate or reduce water for lawns, trees don't easily adapt because they never developed extensive, deep roots due to constant shallow irrigation.

Check trees regularly for common symptoms of drought including:

- Wilting or drooping leaves that do not return to normal by evening, curled or yellow leaves that may fold or drop,
- foliage that becomes grayish and loses its green luster, or is already brown,
- new leaves that are smaller or stem sections that are closer together than normal.

Drought-stressed trees are more susceptible to damage from diseases and insects, especially during extended years of drought, as we're experiencing.

### **Strategic Tips:**

1. Prevent soil compaction around trees. Compaction restricts water movement and decreases oxygen needed for tree growth.
2. Remove competition from other plants by eliminating turfgrass and weeds under trees. Plants compete for water, nutrients, light and space.
3. Apply organic mulch in a circle around the tree, 2 to 6 inches thick (depending on the material) and at least 3-feet out. Spread mulch like a donut, not like a volcano, by leaving an 8-inch circle clear around the trunk to discourage rot. Avoid using rocks as mulch since they absorb heat and stress roots.
4. Avoid pruning, fertilization and any other maintenance that encourages tree growth, which results in an increased need for water. Prune only to remove dead and diseased wood, dangerous branches and suckers from the base of the tree.
5. Water trees slowly and deeply to a depth of 2 to 3 feet. To check how deep the water is penetrating, push a metal rod, thick wooden dowel, soil probe, or straightened coat hanger into the soil a day or two after watering. It will easily move through moist soil, but become difficult to push as the soil becomes drier, deeper down. Young trees need more frequent irrigation than mature trees. “You need to monitor the situation and stay in tune with your trees,” recommends arborist Roger Poulson.

### **How to Water a Tree:**

The tree roots of a mature tree are found in the top 3 feet of soil and extend outside of the tree's canopy. This outside area of the tree roots is the most active water absorption area.

Therefore, drought-stressed trees should be watered slowly, deeply and widely. Encircling a tree with a soaker hose is an inexpensive option. Space each circle ring 1 foot apart when wrapping the rings around the tree, starting about 2 feet from the trunk.

### **Tree Ring Irrigation Contraption:**

A more precise method of water delivery is a unique watering system called the Tree Ring Irrigation Contraption (TRIC). It was recently developed by the California Center for Urban Horticulture (CCUH) at UC Davis, UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) and Ewing Irrigation. TRIC uses previous data collected from Netafim drip tube tables and from the Irrigation Association Landscape Irrigation Auditor manual. Homeowners can put the kit together for about \$100 for one large tree.

When you include the TRIC Calculator, you take the guess work out of how long to irrigate. Dr. Loren Oki, UC ANR Horticulture Specialist created a “plug-in” calculator that helps determine the run-time for the device.

Learn more about the Tree Irrigation Contraption and Calculator by visiting the CCUH website: <http://www.ccuu.ucdavis.edu/public/drought/tree-ring-irrigation-contraption-tric-1/tree-ring-irrigation-contraption-tric>. A slide show presentation helps outline the entire process.

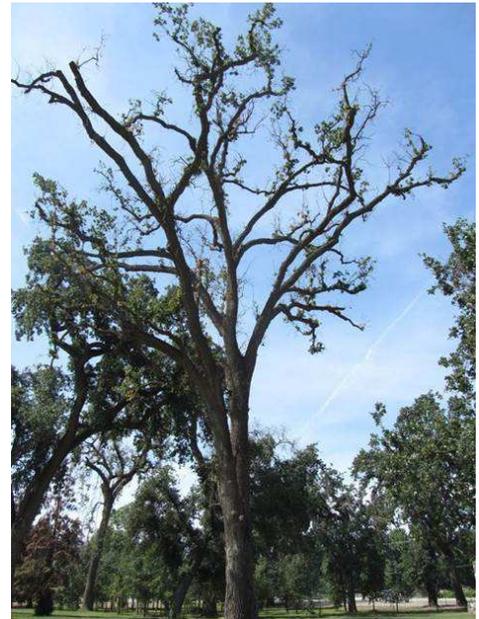
### **Oak Trees:**

Even some of our valued oak trees are exhibiting effects from the drought. William Tietje, Natural Resource Specialist with UCANR suggests these three options: deep water, mulch, or do nothing.

“If the soil under your oak 12 to 18 inches down is dry and crumbly, then the oak is out of water. A deep watering will invigorate the drought-stressed tree,” says Tietje. Water with a low flow that percolates into the soil. Do this once or twice during the summer.

The best mulch is the oak’s natural leaf litter, but other plant-base mulches can be used. Cover the area under the tree canopy at least out to the drip line and keep mulch away from the trunk.

It may be best to do nothing if your tree appears healthy, with dense and green leaves in most of the canopy. Blue oak and valley oak are deciduous (drop their leaves in winter). Both can respond to drought by undergoing leaf browning and leaf fall as early as July. This is a natural, water conservation response. The tree is likely not dead and should be fine. – *Parks & Community Services*



**FLAG DISPOSAL CEREMONY:** On June 14 (Flag Day), Benicia Firefighters were invited to attend the ceremonial process for disposing of unserviceable U.S. flags. The event was held at the Benicia Veterans Memorial Hall. The purpose of this event was to properly dispose of flags that are worn beyond respectful service, in accordance with proper flag etiquette as defined in the [U.S. Code](#).



If you have a flag that should be disposed of, please contact the Benicia Veterans Memorial Hall at [beniciavetshall@outlook.com](mailto:beniciavetshall@outlook.com) for their next flag disposal date. – *Fire Department*



**BADGE PINNING CEREMONY:** Benicia Fire Department invites you to join them in celebrating the badge pinnings of Josh Chadwick as Division Chief, Jason Fein as Captain, Mike Brown as Captain, William Steiner as Engineer, James Ensley as Engineer, and Ricardo Netro as Engineer.

The ceremony will be on **Wednesday, July 1** at 9:00 AM at Fire Station 11, 150 Military West. Light refreshments will be served. – *Fire Department*

**YOUTH ACTION COALITION UPDATE:** Benicia Police Department's Youth Action Coalition recently provided root beer floats for graduates of Liberty and Benicia High Schools following their graduation rehearsals. Special commemorative cups



were given to each graduate with a very special message "Congratulations Class of 2015 Be Safe-Don't Drink and Drive". Several members of the Youth Action Coalition, including Police Chief Erik Upson and Council Member Christina

Strawbridge were on hand to make over 450 floats for the students. – *Police Department*

**BENICIA GETS A BREAK ON WATER CONSERVATION TARGET:** Benicia's water conservation target has been reduced from 28 to 20 percent, according to new requirements released by the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board). However, Benicia residents are encouraged to keep saving water during dry summer months.

The Water Board is refining its implementation of an Executive Order by Gov. Jerry Brown to reduce statewide water use overall by 25 percent. Benicia's conservation target was adjusted after the City submitted revised gallon per person calculations that more accurately reflected water production in 2014 and complied with the Water Board's reporting requirements.



Benicia already is way ahead of state-mandated targets. Residents conserved 36 percent in April and nearly 43 percent in May, compared to the same months in 2013 (the Water Board's comparison year for measuring statewide progress).

"Benicians deserve to be congratulated for their hard work," said City Manager Brad Kilger. "Not only are residents exceeding state-mandated target, our conservation rate in April was among the highest in the state."

As summer temperatures heat up, it will be important to keep on saving water during the long dry months ahead, said Benicia Water Quality Technician David Wenslawski. "It will be tempting to ramp up sprinklers with higher temperatures. But, limiting outdoor water use is where we will continue to achieve the greatest water savings."

The City of Benicia's spring/summer watering regulations limit landscape irrigation to three days per week and between 8:00 PM and 7:00 AM. (Limiting landscape watering is one of the most effective and easiest ways to achieve significant water savings.)

Wenslawski offered the following tips for using less water outdoors - where most household water use occurs:

- Dial back your sprinklers by two minutes for instant water savings.
- Replace lawn with low-water using plants and drip irrigation (rebates available!).
- Adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray and runoff (this saves water and also stops fertilizers and pesticides from washing into the storm drain, which leads directly to the Carquinez Straight and Pacific Ocean).
- Adjust your sprinkler timer monthly and according to the weather.

More information about rebates plus water wise tips are available at [BeniciaSavesWater.org](http://BeniciaSavesWater.org) or by contacting the Water Conservation Team at 707.746.4380 or [water@ci.benicia.ca.us](mailto:water@ci.benicia.ca.us). – *Public Works*

**FIRE DEPARTMENT SAFETY VIDEOS:** Benicia Fire Department has release short video Public Service Announcements to remind citizens of the need to be safe during this [fireworks season](#) and during [summer pool use](#). Check them out! – *Fire Department*



## LIBRARY UPDATE:

### Library Statistics for May

- Total Visitors: 18,946
- Record day of Visitors: May 6 with 929 visitors
- Internet Sessions: 3327
- Wireless Internet Sessions: 1834
- Benicia Public Library Facebook views: 1103
- Teen Zone Benicia Facebook views: 309

### Upcoming Events...

- Lawyers in the Library will be held on **Thursday, July 2** at 6:00 PM (sign-ups begin at 5:30 PM)
- The Carquinez Village Project and the Benicia Public Library present the 2015 Senior Speaker Series through December 2015 on the Third Thursday of each month, 10:30 - 11:15 AM in the Dona Benicia Room
- Dragon, Viper, Cobra free Improv Show on **Saturday, July 11** at 6:00PM
- Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Law and Now Can Ask on **Thursday, July 16** at 10:30 AM. The Carquinez Village Project and the Benicia Public Library present Steve Gizzi, Esq., Managing Partner, Gizzi & Reep, LLP.

**Summer Reading Program:** Come join the fun. Come join the Summer Reading Program. Find out more at the [Library](#). Here are some fun, free events that are part of the program:

#### For ages 3-8:

- **6/16** - Bubble Lady
- **6/23** - Christie's Creative Cupboard (crafts)
- **6/30** - Carnival of Chaos: juggling
- **7/7** - Amy Liz's music
- **7/14** - Joe Leon
- **7/21** - Magic Dan

#### For ages 8-14:

- **6/24** - East Bay Vivarium: learn about reptiles
- **7/8** - Mad Science
- **7/22** - Star Wars

**New to the Browse shelf:** Launchpads! These are devices that hold about ten pre-loaded game apps. The Library has these three available:

- You Auto Know (for ages 3-5)
- Travel Time (for ages 5-7)
- Problem Solver (for ages 8-10)

- *Library*



**BIKE THE BRIDGES:** Benicia Police Department participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Olympics Law Enforcement Bike the Bridges event on June 14. This event is sponsored by several Bay Area law enforcement agencies including Benicia Police Department, to raise funds for Special Olympics.

This year, over 600 cyclists participated. Benicia Police Volunteer Coordinator Patti Baron and Police Department Volunteers set up a refreshment stop at Lake Herman Park for the cyclists on the Century ride. – *Police Department*



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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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**[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**