



## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

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SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

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

**FALL SWIMMING AT JAMES LEMOS SWIM CENTER:** The James Lemos Swim Center will remain open through October 2011. This will accommodate the lap swimmers, Arsenal swim team, and classes. – *Parks & Community Services*



**DOG PARK TURF:** Renovation of the Dog Park turf is underway. In an effort to assure that the turf is fully established, staff may need to extend the closure by two weeks from our original opening date of September 29. Staff will continue to monitor progress, and if more time is needed, we will inform the dog park users. In an effort to accommodate dogs and dog owners during the renovation, staff has made some adjustments to the temporary fencing. The re-configuration of the fencing allows dogs a

larger area to use during the renovation. – *Parks & Community Services*

**UPDATE ON STATUS OF STATE PARKS CLOSURES:** City staff sent a letter to Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Parks, requesting to initiate negotiations for operating agreements for the State Recreation Area, Fisher-Hanlon House and Benicia State Capitol (contact The Parks and Community Services Department if you would like a copy). – *Parks & Community Services*

**REMOVAL OF CITY CEMETERY TREES:** A tree inventory was performed by West Coast Arborists, Inc. and identified several city trees for removal because of disease/dying or poorly structured. City arborists have been conducting evaluations on these trees and have completed written reports for thirteen of the trees that were located in the City Cemetery and confirmed their removal. Upon receiving bids, these trees will be scheduled for removal. – *Parks & Community Services*

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**COMMUNITY CENTER GRAND OPENING:** The Grand Opening for the Community Center is scheduled for Friday, September 30, 2011. The event will begin at 2:00 p.m. and conclude at 5:00 p.m. The afternoon will consist of class demonstrations, meet and greet with instructors, tours, refreshments, and games and activities for the kids. – *Parks & Community Services*

**REPAIRS AT SOUTHAMPTON PARK:** In April a vehicle rolled down the embankment at Southampton Park and caused significant damage to the retaining wall by the basketball court. Due to the extent of the damage that was caused by the vehicle, it is required that the wall is designed by a Civil Engineer and the repair go out to bid. Also, for safety reasons we had to remove the rim from the basketball standard, until the repair is completed. The drawings for the wall have been completed and we will be going out to bid in September. Upon awarding the bid, construction should be completed in November. – *Parks & Community Services*

**SOLAR PROJECT PROGRESS:** The project has begun! The scoreboard on the Quonset huts at City Hall has been moved to the Fire Museum lot for storage and eventual return to the City Hall. Demolition of the quonset huts and retaining wall is next for the City Hall site, and all 10 sites will soon be underway. We have fielded questions from citizens about the need to remove trees as part of the project, particularly along East 2nd Street above the corporation yard.



Our solar panels, made by Solar World in California, are state-of-the-art, but all photovoltaic panels require unimpeded solar access to work properly; even minimal shade from trees renders them ineffective during the shading period. The California Solar Initiative rebate of 19 cents per kilowatt-hour we obtained to allow the project to work financially is not available for any array with 5% annual shading. The trees being removed along East 2nd would produce shade during peak summer solar gain periods, such that we would likely lose the rebate for that site. The replacement landscaping will be Benicia-friendly, low-water-consuming and drought-tolerant. The solar canopies at the corporation yard, City Hall and the Community Center will reduce the heat-island effect in those parking lots, which reduces the demand for carbon absorption on existing and replacement trees surrounding the sites. For all of the trees being removed, we also are paying the maximum amount per tree (\$175 for permit plus \$300 into the tree fund) authorized by City ordinance. The money is coming from the \$13 million bond issue that will be repaid through energy cost savings. – *Public Works & Community Development*

**TRAFFIC MOTION SENSORS AT SOUTHAMPTON INTERSECTION:** Traffic sensing video equipment has been installed on the signal poles at the intersection of Southampton/Chelsea Hills as a cost savings measure. The sensors detect cars and are used in place of wire loops that are buried in the asphalt. In this case, the asphalt was in poor shape so replacement loops could not be installed without first making costly repairs. The motion sensors cannot make out license plates or be used for enforcement. The data is not recorded and is used by the signal computer to maximize the efficiency of traffic flow. The use of the traffic motion sensors was publicly noticed and discussed at the August Traffic Committee meeting. – *Public Works & Community Development*

**WATER'S END COPPER PIPE LEAKS:** Copper pipes leading from the City's water supply line to 19 homes have been replaced over the past few months in the Water's End neighborhood. The pipes appear to have been leaking due to corrosion caused by natural soil characteristics unique to the neighborhood.

The leaks are not related to any materials that may have existed in the area prior to the soil cleanup that preceded the development. The City is working with the developers to determine the extent of the problem and the best approach to restore the pipes. Repairs have been performed at no cost to homeowners and will continue to be if more repairs are needed. The quality of the City's water supply is not affected by the repairs. – *Public Works & Community Development*

**COASTAL CLEANUP DAY SATURDAY:** Coastal Cleanup began in Oregon 26 years ago. Benicia was one of the first cities to participate in this event beginning 25 years ago. This year Coastal Cleanup Day was last Saturday, September 17th.

Volunteers met at one of our ten sites anytime between 9-11 am. Sites included West 6th, 9th and 12 Streets located at the beach parks, the bottom of First Street near the pier, the levee trail located on Bay Shore Road between Amports and the train trestle, the Briato Open Space located on Hastings Drive between Solano and Brentwood Dr., Willow Glen Park located at W 7th and K Sts, and Bayshore Road near the train trestle - volunteers were urged to come to the last two sites, as they had fewer volunteers going into the event.

Volunteers were asked to bring their own work gloves and a reusable bag or bucket in which to collect and dump trash, but bags/buckets and rubber gloves were also available. Local dentists Dr. Gordon, Dr. Freer, Dr. Gainza, Dr. Pickett and Dr. Graves donated cash so reusable gloves could be purchased. The City purchased 98 pairs of gloves and 10 buckets with their donation.

We had 889 volunteers. The City received calls from people that wanted to come here from Novato, Vacaville, Fairfield and Vallejo and participate in the Benicia Coastal Cleanup. All Benicia schools were given fliers and waiver forms. The Benicia High School ECH2O Academy helped out at the cleanup and categorized the trash near the

high school into two major categories: Starbucks and Taco Bell. In addition to the high school students, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts also lent a hand. *Wheeleeze* in the industrial park offered the use of their boat carts to help haul debris. The carts were very helpful picking up large boards and pieces of styrofoam from the First Street beach. The Benicia Lions Club served 400 people at the BBQ for the cleanup. The City of Benicia donated the food for the cleanup.

6,000 pounds of trash and recyclables were recovered last year. This year the amount of trash picked up was 2,900 pounds because volunteers cleaned up in town as opposed to the outskirts of town where most of the dumping occurs. The City will recycle recovered tires, appliances, cans and bottles. If the recycling is too contaminated it cannot be recycled. Notable items found this year included one man's release papers from San Quentin prison, couches and lots of cigarette butts. - *Public Works & Community Development*

**HISTORIC CONTEXT AWARD:** The recently completed City of Benicia Historic Context Statement has won a statewide 2011 award for Cultural Resource Studies/Reports from the California Preservation Foundation.

The historic context statement provides a comprehensive basis for evaluating and designating local historic resources and formally documents the history of development in Benicia. It has already proven useful in assisting in the preservation and protection of existing historic resources, and is expected to help identify potential additional historic resources and/or districts. It also provides a tool to help guide building renovation and new development downtown and at the Arsenal, and it is an interesting and easy-to-read account of our local history.

Preparation of the context statement was made possible through a Certified Local Government Grant that Benicia was fortunate to receive. The grant funds allowed the City to collaborate on this important project with Page & Turnbull, a private historic preservation firm in San Francisco.

The City of Benicia is proud to be recognized for its "contribution to the preservation of California's rich and diverse historic resources," as cited in the award. The Historic Context Statement is available on the [City's website](#), as well as in the Benicia Public Library and Public Works & Community Development Department. - *Public Works & Community Development*



**TULA SISTER CITIES DELEGATION VISIT:** In 1979, the City of Benicia adopted the City of Tula as its sister city. The program was established to create an ongoing program between the citizens of Benicia and Tula to establish greater international understanding, to cultivate friendships with the people of another country, to learn to respect the rights and views of people from another country

and culture, and to promote lasting peace in the world.

A delegation from Tula will arrive on September 30, 2011 and a welcome reception will be held at the Benicia City Hall from 12:30 – 1:30. A series of events and activities for the delegates will occur from September 30 through October 4. More information at [Benicia – Tula Sister City program](#). - *Library*

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: IN SEARCH OF A BETTER WORLD EXHIBIT:** This exhibit, made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, looks at the remarkable life and achievements of one of America’s most beloved personalities. Special events still ahead: a lecture on Benjamin Franklin’s Search for Order on September 25 and Benjamin Franklin Abroad on September 30. More information at 707-746-4340 or [www.BeniciaLibrary.org/Franklin](http://www.BeniciaLibrary.org/Franklin) - *Library*



**LIBRARY CARD SIGNUP MONTH AND FINE FORGIVENESS WEEK:** September is National Library Card Signup Month, and libraries across the country remind parents that a library card is the most important school supply of all. Thousands of public and school libraries join together each fall in a national effort to ensure that every child signs up for their own card. For those who already have cards, the library held “Fine Forgiveness Week.” This allowed over 600 people to return overdue or lost books, have their fines waived, and start to use the library again with a clean slate. - *Library*

**LIBRARY CLOSURE PLANNED:** In conjunction with other Solano and Napa County Libraries, the library’s circulation and automation programs will be upgraded through a system-wide migration in February. This will make the library’s public computers, catalog, and circulation system unavailable for three days. In order to implement this change without loss of patron records or circulation information, the entire online system will need to be shut down from February 18-20. - *Library*

As a result, the Benicia Public Library will be closed from February 17 – 20. All Solano County Library branches will be closed February 18 – 20. The Benicia Library will be closed one additional day, February 17, for installation of new safety features in the staff workroom. Books will have extended circulation periods to prevent them from becoming due during this time period. - *Library*

**LIBRARY NEWSLETTER:** The Library has recently started to publish a [monthly newsletter](#) that will include statistics on library use, successful past activities, and information on future programs and events. The newsletter is available at the kiosk in the library or on the Library’s website. – *Library*

**POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER:** The Police Department also has a [monthly newsletter](#) full of crime prevention information. This month's newsletter covers information on home security, how to react to an assault, a reminder to check your credit report, and disaster preparedness planning. – *Police Department*

**CEMENT HILL GRASS FIRE:** On August 27th, Benicia Fire Department received a mutual aid request for a grass fire on Cement Hill. We filled the request with the response of Engine 12. The incident was named the [Beacon Fire](#). The incident went to eight alarms, which is the highest level of resource request within our county wide mutual aid system. Cal Fire (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) also responded a full alarm. Additional resources were requested through Contra Costa County. Each alarm level brings units to the scene of the incident and also backfills the hosting agency's stations for additional calls for service. The Solano County Incident Management Team, which is made up of chief officers from throughout the county, also responded to assist with incident management functions. The fire burned approximately 700 acres. No structures were damaged. - *Fire Department*

**SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> MEMORIAL:** The members of the Benicia Fire Department set up a display in the City Park in memory of the firefighters that gave their lives during the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack. The display included a brief description of each firefighter that died and a flag was displayed for each firefighter as well. There were 343 active New York City Firefighters and two retired firefighters honored with the memorial. Donations were collected for the New York City Firefighters Widows and Orphans Fund. - *Fire Department*



Benicia Amateur Radio Corp.

We experienced an unanticipated glitch in our communications plan involving one of our City's radio frequencies. Fortunately, we were able to initiate our back up communications plan using primarily our ham radio operators. In addition to our ham operators, we used our Nextel direct connect

**CITYWIDE DISASTER DRILL:** On August 20, 2011, we conducted a [Citywide Disaster Drill](#) within the City of Benicia. The drill incorporated a response from several different agencies including, but not limited to, the American Red Cross, Medic Ambulance, Benicia Police Department, Benicia Fire Department, Benicia Emergency Response Team, Benicia Medical Reserve Corp, and



features on our cell phones and our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) cell phones. We were able to send a runner to the EOC and retrieve twenty phones to distribute to all the team leaders and group supervisors.

Another tool we found useful during the exercise was our newly purchased Samsung Galaxy Tablet. Because of the increased amount of radio traffic on our back up radio frequency, one of our group supervisors found it more effective to relay information to the Dispatchers through email using the tablet.

All in all, the drill was a success and provided us with a great learning experience! - *Fire Department*

**CODA AUTOMOTIVE COMES TO BENICIA:** On Monday, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, CODA Automotive held a press conference at Amports announcing their partnership with Amports to assemble all electric vehicles here in Benicia. This agreement will generate 50 new jobs and within the next 18 months CODA will assemble 10,000-14,000 all-electric vehicles. These vehicles will be able to travel up to 85 MPH to a distance of 150 miles per charge.



- *Economic Development*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information on any of the items in this report, please contact one of the following departments:

**[City Manager/HR/Economic Development](#): 707.746.4200**

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

**[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 & Community Development](#): 707.746.4240 or 746.4280**