

City of Willits

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 9, 2010
To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: Paul Cayler, City Manager
Subject: Administrative Progress Report

The following developments may be of interest to you and the community-at-large. Please contact me at (707) 459-4601, if you have any questions.

WATER MAIN FLUSH PROGRAM UPDATE

Since my last report, the Water Main Flush program continues. The water mains on Main Street have been completed through the City. I want to thank the following City employees that have been working the "Flush": Steve Anderson, JC England, Bill Wilson, Clarence Tarver, Darin Bowles and Simon Mulliush. Flushing the Main Street mains required night work in order not to inconvenience motorists or customers. Now that Main Street is completed, people can now expect to see the flush crew moving into neighborhoods on either side of Main Street. As I am writing this report, the crew is working in the Highway 20 and Coast Street area.

There have been a few delays caused by weather. For example, flushing was cancelled due to the snow day on Monday April 5th. Also, night flushing of Main Street was cancelled due to stormy weather last week.

The continued rainy weather is good though. It means that the reservoir water storage capacity is not being used up by the water needed to flush. See my item below on information that I received from the Mendocino County Emergency Service Coordinator on the extended weather forecast for April 2010. It looks like more rain!

A special Flushing Program public information telephone line has been set up. Interested people may call 459-7104 for a recorded message. This message is updated daily to report where flushing operations will take place from day-to-day.

SALES TAX RECEIPTS

The City recently received sales tax data for the Fourth Quarter of 2009. The data shows that the economy continued to shrink. Sales tax declined by a negative 2.9% when comparing the Fourth Quarter of 2009 to the Fourth Quarter of 2008. Willits performed better than Ukiah with a -6.2, Fort Bragg with a -9.0% and Mendocino County with a -12.6%. This is the first single digit decrease in sales tax in the past year.

The most recent four quarter total sales tax data indicates that over the past four quarters that sales tax is a negative 14.9% in Willits. Based on this data, Willits is in the middle of the pack when compared to Ukiah with a -12.2%, Fort Bragg with a -17.7%, and Mendocino County with a -18.3%.

The sales tax data indicates that Willits is presently at approximately the same annual sales tax collection as the City gathered in Fiscal Year 2005/2006.

This information of course impacts our efforts to bring the City's budget in line for Fiscal Year 2010/2011. The challenge will be great. I am hopeful that the trend toward single digit decline in sales tax collection is an indicator that the recession is beginning to bottom out and that we'll see a flattening of the sales tax trend line in the 1st and 2nd Quarters of 2010. The conventional wisdom is that the economic recovery will be slow and gradual.

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST

I received an email from the Mendocino County Emergency Services Coordinator that the National Weather Service is calling for below temperatures and above normal rainfall in April 2010. The reason for this forecast is that El Nino conditions continue in the equatorial Pacific Ocean with sea surface temperature anomalies between plus 1.0 to 2.0 degrees Celsius. The El Nino conditions are expected to gradually weaken through springtime. As of the writing of this report, this extended forecast appears consistent with the five day weather forecast which calls for rain this coming weekend.

WILLITS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BROWN BAG LUNCHESES

I attended the Willits Chamber of Commerce's first Bag Bag Lunch on Wednesday, April 7th, at the Chamber's Conference Room at the Train Depot. Council Member Larry Stranske was the featured speaker. The conference room was full of interested citizens and Chamber members. Council Member Stranske addressed a number of important issues facing the City, such as the Bypass Project, the Sewer Project, and progress made in the Water Department. Chamber President Ron Moorhead is the Moderator for the Brown Bag Lunch. I understand that the Chamber will be inviting more community leader to talk at the Brown Bag lunches twice per month. I fully support the Chamber's efforts in this area. Ongoing community dialog and communication is critical for the numerous challenges facing the community. Thank you Willits Chamber of Commerce for organizing this program. The next lunch will be April 21st. I have it on my calendar to try and attend. People interested in the lunches should contact the Chamber of Commerce at 459-7910 for advanced registration.