

The Herculean

Spring 2011



Art Exhibit Celebrates Black History



City of Hercules

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CITY DIRECTORY

City Manager	799-8206
City Hall-General Information	799-8200
City Hall Fax	799-2521
Community/Swim Center	799-8291
Parks & Recreation Department	799-8291
Hercules Municipal Utility	799-8285
Hercules Senior Center	799-8219
Finance Dept/Business License	245-6509
Business/Community Development	245-6529
Public Works & Engineering	799-8241
Inspection Request Line	799-8240
City Clerk	799-8215
Police Department	799-8260
Rodeo-Hercules Fire District	799-4561

City Council 799-8206
Meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Joanne Ward, Mayor	Donald Kuehne
Myrna de Vera, Vice Mayor	Vacant
John Delgado	

Planning Commission 245-6529
Meets the first and third Monday of each month.

Sherry McCoy, Chair	Cletia Hart
Jose Bibal	Richard Mitchell
Mike Bowermaster	

Community and Library Services Commission 799-8291
Meets the second Monday of each month

Sherry Madfes, Chair	Steve Kirby
Adoria Williams-Weinstein, Vice Chair	Jeff Wisniewski
Han Chen	Justin Jones
Nicole dela Vega	

For additional information, please visit the City website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us

Featured on cover:
Tonya Marie Amos from the *Grown Women Dance Collective* performing during the 2010 Black History Month Art Exhibit
Image Courtesy of Wing Lee

2010 Officer of the Year

Corporal Ian Baisas was named and recognized as Police Officer of the Year for 2010 at the annual crab feed held on January 29th, hosted by the Pinole-Hercules Exchange Club. Corporal Baisas was born in the Philippines and was raised in New York and Daly City. He graduated from the New York Military Academy in 1982 and from the California Fish and Game Basic Police Academy at Napa Valley College in 1996. A year later, he graduated from the Federal Law and Enforcement Training Center in Glynn County, Georgia. While working full time, Corporal Baisas also completed coursework and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management from Saint Mary's College in 2007.



Corporal Ian Baisas was selected by his peers as the 2011 Officer of the Year

service in preventing juvenile delinquency. To stay involved with the schools in our community, Corporal Baisas played a key role in the Hercules Police Officers Association Art Competition that involved ALL the schools in Hercules. He is also a member of the Special Response Team and recently completed a two week SWAT school in Stockton, CA. Currently assigned to the Patrol Division, his duties include the role of Field Training Officer and a mentor for new officers. As part of the police department's bicycle patrol team, Corporal Baisas also works with members of other police departments to coordinate the "Bike the Bridges" fundraising event that recently raised over \$62,000 for Special Olympics in Contra Costa County.

Corporal Baisas has been with the Hercules Police Department for 12 years and within this time has served as a School Resource Officer at Hercules Middle High School from 2006 to 2008 and received a Certificate of Recognition from the California State Assembly for his outstanding

Corporal Baisas "is a major asset to the Hercules Police Department and the citizens of Hercules." As noted by his peers, "his enthusiasm and dedication is second to none and he is willing to go the extra mile to ensure the quality of service is given". ♦



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Art Exhibit Focuses on Black History

Last month, the Hercules Chamber of Commerce, MACMO and City of Hercules hosted the City's first ever Black History Month Art Exhibit titled "History, Herstory, My People." The Exhibit featured original portrait artwork from local artist, b jAXON and numerous special events including a book signing, documentary screening and a two self improvement presentations.

People came from all over the Bay Area to see the exhibit and participate in the festivities. After hearing about the event, artist Breigh Kaanoi drove to Hercules opening night to have her artwork featured. One of the highlights of the Exhibit was a poetry slam on Monday night, where



Artist b jAXON spearheaded the first ever Black History Month Art Exhibit utilizing many of his own portrait art pieces

students from the Hercules High School African American Student Union read their own poetry, some of which were created specifically for the exhibit. Another highlight was the opening Hercules Chamber of Commerce mixer which brought in the business community to see the exhibit and previewed the many special events taking place.

The exhibit was so successful, Mr. jAXON was invited to showcase his work at I've Been Framed in downtown Martinez through the end of February. Special thanks to him for sharing his passion with the Hercules community and to all exhibit participants and sponsors. ♦



Bay Area residents came from all over to enjoy the art exhibit and the many special events including a Hercules Chamber Mixer



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Each event is weather permitting

Sponsored by the City of Hercules and Muzick Communication Arts Media Organization



New Fire Chief Comes to Hercules



The Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District welcomed Fire Chief Charles Hanley last November. Chief Hanley was chosen over a field of highly qualified candidates recruited by the National Executive Search Firm, Avery & Associates. Chief Hanley was previously the Deputy Chief of the Santa Rosa Fire Department where he worked for 27 years, advancing through the ranks of the organization. Prior to his time with Santa Rosa, he was a firefighter and engineer with the California Department of Forestry (now CALFIRE).

Chief Hanley has a Masters Degree from Cal State Long Beach, a Bachelor in Public Administration from the University of San Francisco and an Associate of Science Degree from Santa Rosa Junior College. His professional accomplishments include the addition of fire companies to the Santa Rosa Fire Department, development of a fire training center, development of the City of Santa Rosa Emergency Plan, successful grant award and administration, serving as President of the Marin/Sonoma Training Officers, Emergency Management Coordinator, participation on federal

incident management teams and serving as a FEMA Urban Search Rescue Task Force Safety Officer. He is also an accomplished master instructor and adjunct faculty member at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Chief Hanley is married with three children. A badge pinning ceremony was held December 2 at Hercules City Hall which was attended by the Chief's family, local agency Fire Chiefs, representatives from the City of Hercules and members of the District's Board and personnel. The Rodeo Hercules Fire District and City of Hercules look forward to working with Chief Hanley. ♦

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From left to right: Retired Pinole Fire Chief Jim Parrott, retired RHFHD Chief Alan Biagi, new RHFHD Chief Charles Hanley and Contra Costa County Fire Chief Daryl Louder



JOHN SHERMAN MILLS, JR.
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

IAN BAISAS
POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

MELISSA CAMILLE OLIVA
YOUTH OF THE YEAR

LYNNE DIRK
EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR



LA STRADA
BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

SYLVIA VILLA-SERRANO
WOMAN OF THE YEAR

CAPTAIN DARREN JOHNSON
FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

YUEMING WANG
YOUTH OF THE YEAR

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Dedicated Hercules Employee Retires After 27 Years of Service

After 27 years of service with the City of Hercules, Recreation Program Manager Marsha Reynolds recently retired from City service. Marsha began her long career in Hercules as a part-time Tiny Tot teacher. Over the years, her strong work ethic and positive leadership style led her to multiple promotions including becoming a Tiny Tots Coordinator, Recreation Supervisor and Recreation Manager.

For the last seven years, Marsha has supervised the City's three child care sites and senior center programs. She also served as the Project Manager for the Hercules Library, overseeing the fundraising, grant administration and construction.

Besides sharing her wisdom and experience with other staff, Marsha was always on top of State licensing requirements, ensuring our child care sites were exceeding state standards



Marsha Reynolds (bottom right) served in the Parks and Recreation Department for 27 years, her wisdom, friendship and commitment to improving Hercules will be missed

and keeping up with emerging trends. Marsha constantly looked for ways to improve programs to better serve the ever-changing needs of the community. Marsha also worked to increase wages for childcare staff, many of whom are often underpaid, in an effort to attract and retain qualified employees.

According to Greg Dwyer, long time Recreation Program Manager, "Marsha was always willing to assist someone or work wherever she was needed. Her kindness, knowledge, generosity and great cooking will surely be missed."

The entire City of Hercules family would like to thank Marsha for her dedicated service to the City and personal friendship with us. We wish her all the best in the future. ♦



Marsha Reynolds (center) with childcare coordinators, Claudia Vega (left) and Gwen Windam (right)

Coat Drive Businesses Honored By Council

On February 8, 2011, the Hercules City Council honored the participants of the 2010 One Warm Coat Drive. Several businesses and organizations contributed to the success of the program and on Tuesday, Council thanked each participant with a certificate. The Bay Area Rescue Mission, where the items were donated, has also reported that many of the items have already been distributed to those in need.

Over 200 coats, hats, scarves, gloves and other warm apparel items were collected and donated by Herculeans in January. In addition to the warm apparel, new socks and underwear were also collected. The Bay Area Rescue Mission has been caring for the poor and impoverished in West Contra Costa County for over 40 years.

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals for your dedication to the 2010 One Warm Coat Drive: Big Lots, Broadway Rhythm Dance Company, Dynamic City Skate Shop, Dynamic City Apparel, Hercules Chamber of Commerce, Hercules Fitness Center, Hercules Wellness Center, and Sycamore Hills by the Bay. And most importantly, thank you to the Hercules community, for your generosity and kindness. ♦



The Treasure Box – A Solution to the High Cost of Feeding Today’s Family



The Treasure Box contains close to 25lbs of high quality, frozen foods including chicken, pork, beef or seafood, in addition to vegetables, side dishes and a dessert.

A recession is a difficult time for everyone and it can be challenging to figure out where to cut costs and stretch finances. A family’s grocery bill can put them over budget in no time, especially as the cost of food continues to rise. The Treasure Box has developed a solution to the high cost of feeding today’s family.

The Treasure Box provides families and individuals with a substantial box of grocery store quality food retailing between \$65 – 100 for just \$32.00 each. The Treasure Box cultivates relationships with more than 500 major food manufacturers across the country to purchase and provide top quality, nutritious food at sizeable volume discounts to the general public.

Janet Bewley, Hercules Senior Center Coordinator, and Diane Cockrall, Property Manager for Sycamore Hills by the Bay, were key to helping Hercules become a distribution point. “We recently discovered The Treasure Box program and are so excited to be a community partner. I truly believe this program is of great benefit to Bay Area residents of all income levels.”

Each Treasure Box contains between 21 – 25 lbs. of quality, frozen foods, including chicken, pork, beef and seafood as well as vegetables, fruit and a dessert. One Treasure Box is enough food to nutritiously feed a family of four lunch and dinner for almost a week or one individual for nearly a month. The

Treasure Box also offers a breakfast box, vegetarian friendly box, hearty meat protein box, and quick & healthy meal box, for the same low price of \$32 per box. The menu changes monthly, so interested families should visit thetreasurebox.org to check out the current menu, as well as other pick-up locations throughout the Bay Area. The order date and pick up schedule is also posted below for quick reference.

The Treasure Boxes can be ordered online and picked up at the Hercules Senior Center once a month. Cash payments are accepted at the Senior Center from 1-3pm on Mondays and 9am-12pm on Thursdays. There are no restrictions, conditions, coupons or qualifications needed to order one or more Treasure Boxes. “Even though the Senior Center is a distribution point, this program is not just for seniors. It is for any individual or family that wants or needs affordable, nutritious food,” says Bewley.

Anyone can purchase a Treasure Box for the low rate of \$32 for their family or someone they know. Whether you are on a fixed income, out of work, or just looking to cut costs, The Treasure Box is a valuable program that can offer families or individuals a world of savings. Bewley adds, “If it isn’t what you’re looking for I bet you know someone it can help in these times.”

Please visit www.TheTreasureBox.org today for more information on this wonderful program or call the Hercules Senior Center at 510-799-8219. ♦

2010/2011 MONTHLY ORDER & DELIVERY SCHEDULE

MONTH	ORDER DEADLINE	DELIVERY DATE
August	8-16-10	8-28-10
September	9-12-10	9-25-10
October	10-10-10	10-23-10
November	11-7-10	11-20-10
December	12-05-10	12-18-10
January	1-16-11	1-29-11
February	2-15-11	2-26-11
March	3-15-11	3-26-11
April	4-17-11	4-30-11
May	5-08-11	5-21-11
June	6-12-11	6-25-11
July	7-17-11	7-30-11
August	8-15-11	8-27-11
September	9-11-11	9-24-11
October	10-16-11	10-29-11
November	11-6-11	11-19-11
December	12-04-11	12-17-11

MADD Award Presented to Hercules Officer

As high-visibility enforcement remains the cornerstone of successful efforts to reduce drunk driving –the American public supports these efforts by law enforcement agencies as they patrol the roads, day in and day out, to protect the public from drunk drivers – which is why Officer Dwayne Collard earned the title of “DUI King” for the Hercules Police Department (one of this year’s Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) California Hero Award winners, a prestigious honor awarded to a select group of officers).

In 2009, Officer Collard was named Police Officer of the Year for his hard work and commitment to the department. In 2010, due to his diligence and superior work ethic, Officer Collard made 14 DUI arrests resulting in the contribution of removing drunk drivers from the roadways to keep law abiding citizens safe. Because of his dedication, Officer Collard will be honored at the 13th Annual MADD California Statewide Law Enforcement & Community Recognition Event on March 26th in Sacramento. The event will honor law enforcement officers who have worked to reduce driving under the influence and to prevent underage drinking. MADD



Officer Dwayne Collard earned the title “DUI King” for the Hercules Police Department

Affiliates and Community Action Sites provide recognition to law enforcement agencies serving their local areas.

MADD supports law enforcement agencies nationwide in their efforts to reduce drunk driving fatalities and injuries. They support high-visibility law enforcement crackdowns such as saturation patrols, roving patrols and sobriety checkpoint during high-risk holidays including Labor Day and the end-of-year/New Year’s holidays.

Congratulations Officer Collard!

Myth: You can drive as long as you are not slurring words or acting erratically.

Fact: The coordination needed for driving is compromised long before the signs of intoxication are visible. Plus, the

sedative effects of alcohol increase the risk of nodding off or losing attention behind the wheel.

Myth: Drink coffee. Caffeine will sober you up.

Fact: Caffeine may help with drowsiness, but not with the effects of alcohol on decision-making or coordination. The body needs time to metabolize (break down) alcohol and then to return to normal. There are no quick cures—only time will help. ♦

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Governor Proposes Slashing Redevelopment

In an effort to decrease the State of California's continued and long term deficit, Governor Jerry Brown has proposed to eliminate all redevelopment agencies throughout California. The proposal has prompted much concern by County and City officials, who say this plan is not only just smoke and mirrors, but violates the will of the people.

"Eliminating redevelopment agencies is another gimmick that will likely result in extensive litigation," John Shirey, Executive Director of the California Redevelopment Association, said in a written statement. Chris McKenzie, Executive Director of The League of California Cities adds that "[the proposal] is so contrary with so many things [Gov. Brown] wants to accomplish."

A key area of contention is the recently passed Proposition 22, which prevents the state from taking local money to balance the state budget. The voter-approved ballot measure specifically includes redevelopment funds, which are estimated to bring in \$2 billion in local and state tax revenue annually.

At a recent conference with newly elected Mayors and Council Members, Gov. Brown pitched his proposal telling the group "I think we have to, all of us, rise above our own particular perspective, get out of the comfort zones, and try to think of California first."

Under Brown's proposal, redevelopment agencies would cease to exist beginning July 1 of this year. This would result in \$1.7 billion in property tax money being shifted to the State. For future budget years, these funds would be shifted to local schools, fire districts, and other local agencies that receive property tax revenue. Local governments would still receive funding to cover existing debt obligations, although no new debt could be issued once the budget is adopted.

As most Herculeans know, redevelopment is a vital local government tool in revitalizing blighted communities and bringing them back to economic vitality by creating jobs, funding affordable housing, building public infrastructure

improvements, and creating commercial opportunities. If redevelopment were eliminated, it will have a direct and lasting negative impact on the California economy.

"The State and local governments have very few tools to stimulate the economy, but redevelopment is the exception," added Shirey in a written statement. "Redevelopment is already a locally-governed service which generates hundreds of thousands of jobs and puts people to work at a time when unemployment is soaring over 12 percent. Redevelopment contributes tens of billions of dollars to our economy...it makes no sense to kill this economic engine."

According to the California Redevelopment Association (CRA), "the Administration's proposal raises a number of constitutional and other legal issues that are being thoroughly examined by CRA's lawyers." CRA sites Proposition 22, which was passed by 61% of voters, to stop state raids of local funds as one legal restriction. However, Brown's budget does not actually take redevelopment money, it first eliminates redevelopment

and then redistributes the funds.

For Hercules, the elimination of the Redevelopment Agency would be detrimental, especially for the long term. Since Hercules is a low property tax city, redevelopment is the driving force for projects in this community. The Intermodal Transit Center, Hercules Bayfront, New Town Center, and Sycamore Crossing projects would be very difficult to achieve without the Redevelopment Agency. Additionally, Affordable Housing programs throughout the state would cease. Uncommitted property tax increment from completed projects including Victoria by the Bay, Promenade, Bayside and Baywood would also stop flowing into Hercules.

While the economy is in a recession, losing redevelopment agencies may not seem that bad. Property tax increment is already 30% lower than just a few years ago, and many

□ *Continued on page 8*



The Hercules Redevelopment Agency has spurred development such the Victoria by the Bay neighborhood

Code Compliance Corner

If I add a room addition to my house will I have to comply with the new green building code?

The short answer is no. The new green building code, referred to as CalGreen only applies to new construction and demolition projects. New construction does not include additions, alterations or repairs.

As of January 1, 2011, California requires new buildings to reduce water consumption, employ building commissioning* to increase building system efficiencies, divert construction waste from landfills, and install low pollutant-emitting finish materials. Typical buildings covered in the code are: state-owned, commercial, low-rise residential (up to three stories), public elementary & secondary schools, hospitals, and community colleges.

CalGreen has approximately 52 nonresidential mandatory measures and an additional 130 provisions that have been placed in the appendix for optional use. Some key mandatory measures for commercial occupancies include: specified parking for clean air vehicles, a 20% reduction of water use within buildings, a 50% construction waste diversion from landfills, use of building finish materials that emit low levels of volatile organic compounds[^], and building commissioning for new, non-residential buildings over 10,000 square feet.

The critical requirement for residential construction is also a 50% construction waste diversion from landfills. This is accomplished by filing a pre-construction estimate of waste and then a post-construction filing of actual debris diverted with attached waste/reuse+ receipts. Construction and

demolition debris account for 17% of waste disposed at the transfer station in Richmond.

The code addresses compliance verification by utilizing the existing building code enforcement infrastructure; public agencies will incorporate the CalGreen code provisions into their construction field inspections. The mandatory CalGreen provisions will be inspected and verified by the City of Hercules building division.

The code is not perfect. However, CalGreen is a fundamental and vital step in focusing attention on green building design and a tremendous step towards reducing the carbon footprint a building will have on the environment in California.

*Building commissioning is a process that determines the proposed energy usage and savings based on building design and the acceptance that these measures have been achieved after construction is completed. Commissioning includes final reports and training for building operators.

[^]Volatile organic compounds are commonly referred to as V.O.C.s which is defined as a chemical compound based on carbon chains or rings with vapor pressures greater than 0.1 millimeters of mercury at room temperature. These compounds typically contain hydrogen and may contain oxygen, nitrogen, and other elements.

+Re-use is the use, in the same form it was produced, of a material which might otherwise be discarded.

For more information, please contact the building division at 510-799-8244. ♦

□ *RDA continued from page 7*

redevelopment projects have already been stalled or slowed. However, the Redevelopment Project Area, which encompasses much of the Hercules Waterfront and Central Hercules, will bring additional revenues into the City of Hercules until 2045. Over the life of the Hercules Redevelopment Agency close to \$750 million could be lost. Without these important and long term redevelopment dollars, the community's vision will be in jeopardy.

Residents are encouraged to visit protectourlocaleconomy.com to get the most up to date information on the Governor's proposal and find out how you can get involved. ♦

Holiday Lighting Reminder

Although holiday lighting is not specifically addressed in the Municipal Code, it is covered by the requirements of the California Electrical Code which is adopted by the city of Hercules. The Code states that holiday lighting use shall not exceed 90 days and must be removed when not in use. These requirements are based on the likelihood of a hazard due to the continued exposure to the outside environment. The wire can become brittle and crack, and when exposed to inclement weather may short out and cause an electrical fire. In addition, Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) has tested and labeled the wiring, advising that lights are to be used a maximum of 90 days. If the manufacturer's recommendations are not adhered to, a fire may result and your insurance company could refuse to pay the claim.

City's Grim Financial Outlook

Over the next few months Municipal Resources Group, LLC will conduct a thorough review of the City's finances. As has been reported at various Council meetings, the City is facing significant fiscal challenges for both the Redevelopment Agency and the City's General Fund. These challenges will require an extensive effort by the City Council, City staff and community to resolve.

One of the biggest challenges is due to the current recession. Declining property values have resulted in a 22% decrease in revenues to the Redevelopment Agency since 2008. This totals to about \$3 million in funds and has dramatic impacts on the financial health of both the City and Redevelopment Agency.

Because the tax increment takes property taxes away from other overlying public agencies, state law requires that the Agency give a portion of its tax increment revenues to other agencies, the County, Special Districts, etc. After these, "pass-throughs" are paid, the Agency has a "net tax increment" to use for accomplishing its mission. The remaining is divided into two parts as required by state law: a 20% "housing set aside" and the rest as "unrestricted." The Redevelopment Agency can then legally use tax increment for only one purpose, to repay debt. The proceeds from debt are used to pay for projects like the Intermodal Transit Center and Sycamore North.

The Agency incurs many kinds of debt: the highest priority is to pay principal and interest on its bonds. Since 2005, the Hercules Redevelopment Agency has issued about \$138 million in bonds (both for housing and for unrestricted purposes) and pays an annual debt service of about \$10 million.

In 2007/08, the Redevelopment Agency had a \$2 million surplus compared to bond service and was able to pay that surplus to the City to reimburse administration cost and to reimburse advances that the City made in the past toward redevelopment projects. This reimbursement went to the City's General Fund to pay for municipal services that benefited the Redevelopment Project Areas.

In addition to paying bond service, the Hercules Redevelopment Agency has incurred a debt to the Catellus development company to reimburse it for infrastructure that it installed associated with development at the old refinery Spring 2011  Page 9

site (Victoria By the Bay). The Agency had a dispute with Catellus on how much it owed on this debt and the lawsuit was settled this year, resulting in a legal agreement that the Agency must pay Catellus 75% of the tax increment from the old Project Area 2. This legal obligation results in an annual cost to the Agency of about \$1.8 million per year.

So after the \$10 million in annual bond payments and the \$1.8 million in payments to Catellus, the City and Agency faces two major problems:

- First, it appears that the Redevelopment Agency does not have enough tax increment to pay its obligations for bond payments and the Catellus payment and will have to do so using other resources; and,



- Second, there is no surplus to make the reimbursement payments to the City's General Fund for administration costs and for prior advances that the City made to Agency.

The result of the second problem is that the City's General Fund revenues are insufficient to pay its current costs for municipal services.

At the time of print, the City is aware of the situation and is doing several things to address it. They are:

1. Hired Municipal Resources Group to fully analyze the City's current financial situation to determine legitimate revenues and expenses and determine a course of action based on that information.
2. Created an Ad-Hoc Citizen's Finance Advisory Committee to review cost savings measures and make recommendations to the City Council.
3. All Departments are being required to hold the line on spending. Once the fiscal review is finished, the City will begin to develop a preliminary budget based on the analysis. It is likely that all Departments will be required to make severe cuts across the board.
4. The City has entered into discussions with its Labor Unions to be sure they understand the current situation and start to identify how they can be part of the recovery process.
5. The City instituted a hiring freeze unless the position can generate new revenue to the City.

□ *Continued on page 10*

Emerging Diseases of Tomorrow

How the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District Works to Prevent Them Today!

Your great-grandparents created us. Your grandparents supported us. In your parents' era, we expanded our services. And today, you and your family need the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District more than ever because just as previous generations knew, insects and animals cannot only make us sick, but new diseases are always on the horizon.

CCMVCD protects the health of Contra Costa County residents from vectors, the insects and animals that can transmit disease. This is our mission since opening our doors in 1927. At that time, Californians became sick and died due to malaria-carrying mosquitoes, while the relentless salt marsh mosquitoes wreaked havoc in Contra Costa County. Schools were closed, real estate would not sell and many businesses temporarily closed due to mosquitoes.

Today, the mosquitoes that can transmit malaria still exist in California, just one of 23 types of mosquitoes in Contra Costa, but thanks to CCMVCD, residents are less likely to get sick and die from malaria because the District's state-certified technicians and inspectors control the mosquitoes that we know can transmit disease while constantly looking for evidence of new vector-borne illness.

Why do mosquitoes like Contra Costa County so much? The same reason people do – it's a desirable place to live. For disease-transmitting animals and insects like mosquitoes, the county provides the environment and habitat they need to flourish. During the District's 80-plus years of existence, the risk of plague, rabies, western equine encephalomyelitis, St. Louis encephalitis, Lyme disease, and West Nile virus is reduced due in large part to the District's vigilance through control, research, investigation, and public education, we provide to county residents.

Among the District's free services and associated benefits:

- Skunk inspections to reduce the risk of rabies
- Rat and mice inspections to reduce the threat of rodent-borne disease including Hantavirus
- Ground-nesting yellowjacket and bee swarm inspections resulting in nest treatments to reduce the risk of stings
- Lead agency for Africanized Honey Bee (aka "Killer Bees") identification and response
- Tick identification to reveal areas with a higher probability of Lyme disease
- County-wide surveillance and control of mosquitoes, distribution of mosquitofish, and public education to lower the possibility of mosquito-borne illness including West Nile virus

West Nile virus is in fact the latest vector-borne disease to reach Contra Costa County, but history tells us it won't be the last. Just as it arrived in the United States in 1999 for the first time from distant countries, District scientists vigilantly watch for the next mosquito-borne illness that will arrive. Will it be Chikungunya, which is responsible for epidemics in Africa, Asia and some parts of Europe? Or will it be another, or perhaps a still unknown disease?

The Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District: protecting county citizens from vector-borne disease yesterday, today and tomorrow. For more information or to request a free inspection, please call 925-771-6184 or visit our website at www.ContraCostaMosquito.com. To book a free informational presentation for a community group or school, please contact Community Affairs Representative Nola Woods at 925-771-6158. ♦

❑ *Finances continued from page 9*

6. All consulting contracts are being reviewed to determine which can be delayed or are unnecessary at this time, including the stoppage of payments to Red Barn, the developer of the New Town Center.

Once the results of the financial review are available, they will be presented to the City Council and will also be posted to the City's website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us. This will be a long and difficult process. The City is committed to being open and transparent, and has pledged to keep the community informed as information becomes available. ♦

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Make Way for Street Sweepers

Most Herculeans understand the importance of street sweeping. In addition to clearing trash and debris making neighborhoods look better, street sweeping reduces water pollution by reducing waste and particulates from entering our waterways through storm drains.

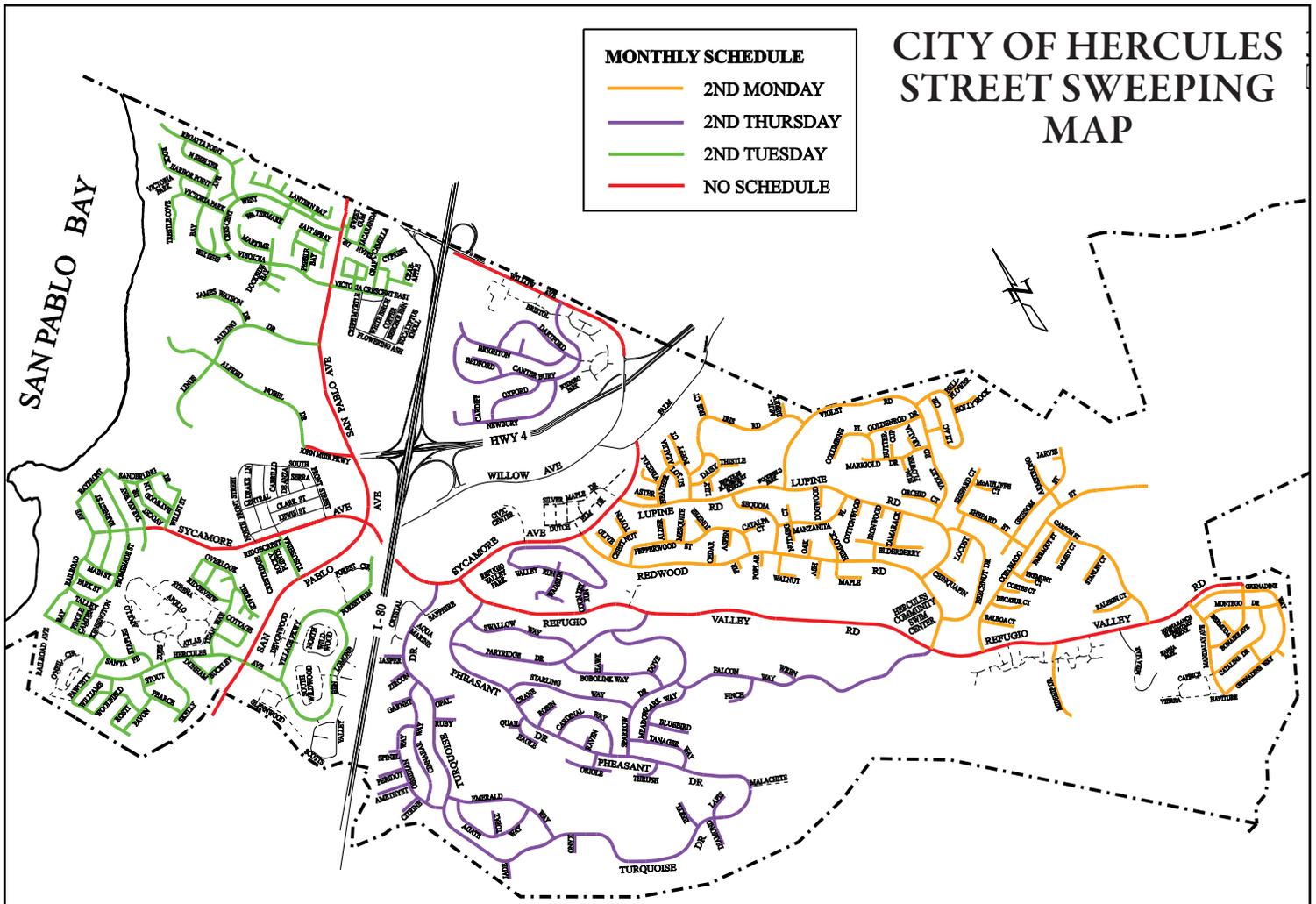
Herculeans can do their part in the street sweeping process by not parking their cars on the street on their neighborhood's scheduled day and pruning bushes back. Sweeping around parked cars not only requires more time, it is not as effective since a portion of the street is missed. Residents are also encouraged to remove garbage cans from the street and prune plants and bushes away from the

curb, and trees to a height of at least 14' above the street. These simple steps help make sure every corner of the street gets cleaned keeping neighborhoods looking their best and reducing waterway pollution.



Street sweeping helps reduce the amount of debris that enters our waterways

Residents are asked to review the map below to confirm the street sweeping schedule for their neighborhood. Streets are usually swept between the hours of 7:00am and 4:00pm, so cars should be moved during this time. San Pablo Avenue, Willow Avenue, Sycamore Avenue and Refugio Valley Road are listed as having 'no schedule,' however, these streets are actually swept on the second and fourth Saturday of the month. ♦



Offender Reconciliation Program Seeks Justice For Victims

The Hercules Police Department has recently elected to participate in the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) that may help decrease the city's crime problems and increase the payment of civil restitution to victims. This program will effectively address youthful offenders as a supplement to the juvenile county system.

What is VORP? VORP is a non-profit organization that is a community based restorative justice program designed to facilitate agreements between juvenile offenders and victims of crime with the goal of making things as right as possible. It's a different approach to juvenile crime by giving the involved parties the opportunity to decide how to best address the offense. VORP is a restorative justice process which grew out of the experience of victims, juvenile offenders, their families, and the juvenile court system in New Zealand. Under restorative justice principles, an offender is given an opportunity to admit the offense, make an apology, and offer restitution, usually with the help of family and other support members.

How it works. Geared toward juvenile crime, VORP provides a process which takes into consideration the needs



and concerns of the victim, the offender, and the community. With the assistance of a trained volunteer mediator (must have completed Mediation Mentoring Program through Congress of Neutrals), the crime and damage are recognized and discussed and an agreement is reached on how equity can be restored and future intentions are clarified. Once the agreement is in place, VORP will monitor the plan and assist parties in meeting their obligation.

VORP provides the opportunity for victims to ask questions, express feelings and opinions, and work out a written agreement for restitution. For the offender, VORP provides the opportunity to take responsibility for actions and involvement in the offense, work out a written agreement for restitution and other matters necessary to make things right, and get past the offense by making things right directly with the victim.

In addition to serving as mediators in the Contra Costa County Superior Court Program, many of its panelists are available to conduct private mediations and other alternative dispute resolution services in many types of cases, including homeowner association, landlord-tenant, competing businesses, neighborhood, elder and family disputes.

*With certain exceptions, all minors involved in misdemeanor cases will be eligible for mediation/VORP.

Statistics show that juvenile offenders who have participated in a victim offender program are much more likely to make restitution and much less likely to re-offend.

For more information about VORP, please contact the Hercules Police Department at 510-799-8260 or visit www.congressofneutrals.org. ♦

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Hercules Begins Environmental Study for Wastewater Treatment Plant

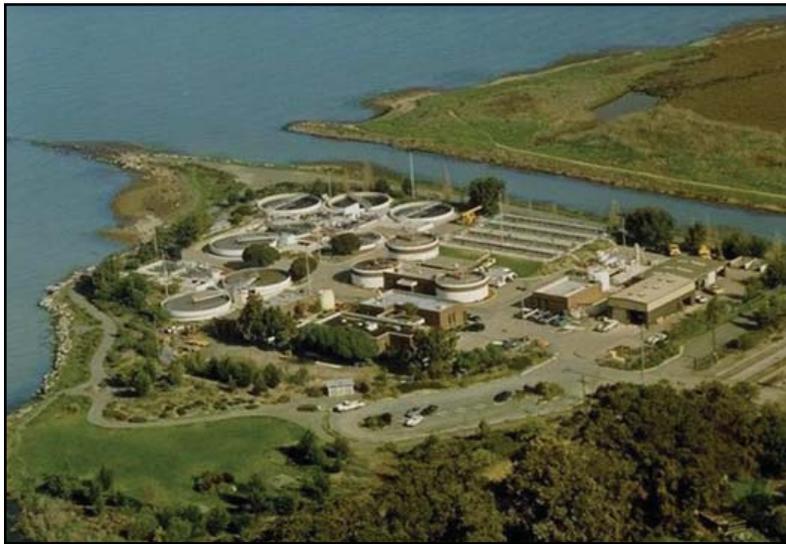
At times over the last 20 years the relationship between the Pinole and Hercules regarding wastewater has been challenged and troubled. Upgrades to the existing Pinole/Hercules facility were made in the early 80's and again in 2007. The latest improvement was the addition of a new digester. That decision came during a heated joint meeting between the Hercules and Pinole City Councils. Only after the Pinole City Council agreed to create a new joint powers agreement did the Hercules City Council agree to pay for 50% of the new digester. Although Hercules paid its share of the digester, about \$6.5 million, a new joint powers agreement was never created.

In addition to having very little input in the decision making process due to the outdated joint powers agreement, two main problems have plagued the facility for quite some time. The first is high BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) and TSS (Total Suspended Solids) levels. The second problem is the problem of infiltration and inflow (INI) during significant rain storms. Both cities have infiltration problems. The Hercules City Council established a program to video and repair the collection system to reduce infiltration and also adopted a program to inspect lateral lines each time a home is sold in Hercules. Pinole has not established any similar program to reduce infiltration in their City.

The design capacity of the Pinole facility allows for 4.06 million gallons per day (mgd) of flow. Because of high BOD and TSS levels, meaning the fluid requires a longer time to process due to the high level of solids, the Regional Board has lowered the actual plant capacity to 3.52 mgd. Currently, the facility is processing about 3.31 mgd, meaning that the two cities combined are approaching capacity. While the addition of the new digester has helped to alleviate some of the problem, Pinole's infiltration levels are 40%

higher than Hercules. Furthermore, without a program to correct the TSS levels, the issue will only escalate and the plant will soon reach its capacity.

Because of these issues, and the reality of ever increasing environmental oversight, in 2010, the City Council chose to explore the possibility of moving the Hercules wastewater flow to the West County Sanitation District (WCWD) facility in Richmond. The WCWD facility has the current capacity to accept our (Hercules) current and future (built-out) flow, but several improvements would have to be made to accommodate Hercules. A number of different studies have been done over the past three years. Four different options were reviewed by both the Pinole and Hercules City Councils and the Joint Powers Board. Hercules did offer Pinole the opportunity to join forces and have both cities move to WCWD. The City of Pinole declined this offer.



Every year, the Pinole/Hercules Wastewater Treatment Plant, seen here, requires a high level of ongoing maintenance, in addition to needing several major capital improvements

Since Pinole decided to keep the current facility operating, the City is now in the process of renewing their operating permit with the Regional Water Quality Board. As of now, they are planning to renew their permit without Hercules. With or without Hercules, Pinole faces several challenges. First, there is a limited area in which improvements to the existing facility can be made. Like Hercules they have other services they must provide and funds continue to remain scarce. WCWD is in one business: wastewater. They have the current capacity and a sufficient surplus of property to expand if needed.

Following the Council's approval of studying the option to move to WCWD, the City contracted with Urban Logic to create preliminary designs of the wastewater conveyance system. The designs were required to do an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), since the location of the conveyance

❑ *Continued on page 14*

❑ *Wastewater continued from page 13*

system would possibly effect the environmental impacts of the proposed project. The Council agreed to have WCWD serve as the lead agency for the EIR and to reimburse West County for the costs. This work is currently underway with the preliminary design scheduled for completion in July of 2011 and the EIR to be completed sometime in 2012.

If the proposed project to move the flow to WCWD passes the EIR process, it will take approximately 4 years to complete the project. Since the Pinole plant improvements must be completed by 2015, as required by the Regional Quality Control Board, Hercules needs to make the decision whether to move to WCWD or stay with Pinole in the next year. This way, Pinole is given sufficient time to make the required upgrades and Hercules is able to move forward with its plans: whether that be to participate in the Pinole upgrades or make the transition to WCWD.

It is important for residents to understand, that whether or not Hercules moves to WCWD, there are significant capital improvement costs for Hercules over the next five years. It is estimated that the upgrades to the Pinole plant will cost approximately \$45 million (to be split between Pinole and Hercules). This does not include the cost of relocating the Pinole Corporation Yard, as this land will be needed for the placement of a retention tank. It is also unknown what the costs will be of de-commissioning the Pinole plant while these improvements take place.

The estimated construction costs for moving the wastewater flow to WCWD is approximately \$38 million, all of which would have to be paid by Hercules. With the buy-in and soft costs of moving Hercules flow, the total cost is estimated around \$62 million.

Hercules and Pinole have commissioned various studies, with conflicting outcomes on which is the better option. A study completed in June 2009 by Dodson Engineering maintains that improving the Pinole plant is the best option, however another study, completed in May 2008 by Carollo Engineers shows that moving to WCWD is the best solution. Based on the potential growth in Hercules over the next ten to twenty years, and the constraints of increasing the Pinole plant capacity, Hercules officials believe moving to WCWD is the best option.

In the long term, Hercules officials believe that by moving to WCWD, rates for residential service will be reduced. West County customers currently pay just \$18 a month for resident service, Pinole and Hercules residents pay approximately \$45 a month. Hercules' current residential rates al-

ready include funds to pay for improvements at the Pinole plant, so while increases will be necessary over the next 30 years, they would not be as drastic as would be required if the entire \$62 million would have to be raised.

It is also important to note, that Hercules officials are still in the studying phase of the project. The City Council has not made a formal decision as to whether Hercules will be moving our wastewater to West County. The Hercules City Council will hold at least two public hearings to review the EIR and proposed design of the conveyance system, before a decision will be made.

Regardless of that decision, Hercules wastewater flow will remain with Pinole until at least 2015. The Hercules City Council will continue to meet with the Pinole City Council to discuss the plant and make decisions that are in the best interest of both cities. ♦



Moving is the best medicine. Keeping active and losing weight are just two of the ways that you can fight osteoarthritis pain. In fact, for every pound you lose, that's four pounds less pressure on each knee. For information on managing pain, go to fightarthritispain.org.



City Seeks Volunteers for Commissions

The City of Hercules has begun recruiting for community members to join the Planning Commission and Community and Library Services Commission (CLSC). Commissioners serve as the voice of the community and assist the Hercules City Council with review of planning and parks and recreation issues. Commissioners are appointed by the City Council and serve two-year terms. There are three openings on the Planning Commission and four openings on the CLCS, as well as three seats on other local commissions.

The Planning Commission recommends and advises the City Council on land use and zoning and ensures all projects in the City comply with the scope and intent of the General Plan. The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7:00pm.

The CLSC provides oversight to the City's recognized service organizations, parks and recreation programs and

Hercules Library service levels. The Community and Library Services Commission meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00pm.

Members of the public that would like to serve on a City Commission should review the minimum qualifications listed on our website. All applicants must complete a volunteer application and a supplemental questionnaire available at www.ci.hercules.ca.us and City Hall. Interested candidates are welcome to apply for one or both Commissions depending on their interest.

Applications are due to the City Clerk's office by March 11, 2011 and interviews will take place in late March. For more information or to download your application today, please visit the Commissions page on the City of Hercules website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us or call 510-799-8200. ♦

California Tackles Distracted Driving

It's in the news almost daily and it puts us all at risk. Distracted driving, particularly the use of cell phones, is quickly emerging as a serious traffic safety issue requiring an innovative approach. California is doing just that. Distracted driving now ranks along with DUI and speeding as top traffic safety concern in California. The problem is so widespread among drivers of all ages, not just teen drivers, that multiple initiatives are underway to convince people to monitor their own behavior and hang up and drive.

This past summer California tackled the distracted driving issue in a multitude of ways, including regional approaches in key markets, as well as integration into the world of social media. OTS (Office of Traffic Safety) is currently sponsoring The Great Hang Up campaign on Sacramento's ABC TV affiliate. The campaign is a year-long, integrated effort combining news stories, talk show appearances, special events, PSA's, websites, and social media. So far, 11,000 drivers including dozens of entertainment and sports celebrities have pledged to stop texting, emailing or talking on the phone while driving.

Numerous studies show that talking on a cell phone, whether hand-held or hands-free, causes slower reaction time, lowers the ability to stay within lanes and actually causes "inattention blindness," where the brain is not able to perceive things that are in plain sight. Texting while driving can also delay a driver's reactions as much as having blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08, the same as a drunk

driver. Research indicates that hands-free is not safer since the brain is still engaged in the conversation and not the road.

"We know that people have developed some bad habits behind the wheel that are dangerous and put everyone at risk", said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. "The real concern is that while the public is becoming increasingly aware of the risks of texting while driving or talking on the phone, the behavior continues."

Cell phones and texting aren't the only driver distractions causing problems. Eating and drinking while driving adds to the car chaos. "When your hands are busy drinking coffee or eating a burger, your ability to react to potential problems on the road is diminished," said Murphy. "If you add ringing cell phone or incoming text message to the mix, it's a recipe for disaster."

California is one of 29 states that have added Distracted Driving to their Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP). Several states are also conducting public education campaigns, including Minnesota's Take Action to Stop the Distraction and Washington's Text, Talk, Ticket.

"The best advice by far is to keep both hands on the wheel and not talk or text while driving," Murphy said. "It's not where your hands are...it's where your head is." ♦

Article from The Official Publication of The California Office of Traffic Safety

SPRING 2011 HERCULES CITYWIDE GARAGE SALES

A Benefit for the Hercules Sister City Association's Youth Ambassador Program

Saturday, April 30, 2011

8 a.m. - 3 p.m.



All Hercules residents are invited to participate in this exciting event! Sponsored by the City of Hercules and the Hercules Sister City Association (HSCA) to support the Youth Ambassador Program, this event encourages the re-use and recycling of unwanted items instead of throwing them away. There may even be treasures to be found! Clean out your closets, enjoy the opportunity to get acquainted with neighbors, build community trust, and promote good will locally and globally.

Rain or shine, the event will be held. The registration fee to list your home on a current map of the City of Hercules is only \$20. Shortly after the registration deadline, as a confirmation of the receipt of your registration, you will be mailed a sign to display at your home showing that you are an official participant in the event. Also, you will receive a list of helpful hints for the event. HSCA will provide event advertising in publications (both printed and on-line) that cover a large geographical area around Hercules. The event is 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 30, 2011. However, you may choose to start or end earlier on Saturday or also conduct sales on Sunday. All of the money you make from the sale of your items is yours to keep. Please be aware that your HOA may have some restrictions and that City parking enforcement will be in effect.

Maps listing participating homes will be available for sale to prospective buyers for 25 cents each starting at 8 a.m. on the day of the event, outside, in the parking lot side of the Hercules Public Library at 109 Civic Drive (off Sycamore Ave)

Should questions arise about this event, call 510-724-7063. Additional registration forms may be downloaded from the HSCA website at <http://tsushima.home.comcast.net>, where you can also read more about the Hercules Sister City Association.

REGISTRATION FORM

Registration Deadline: **Sunday, April 10, 2011**

Name: _____ Phone: () _____

Mailing address: _____

Address of Garage Sale (if different): _____

Send this completed registration form to:
Hercules Sister City Association
P.O. Box 5092, Hercules, CA 94547-5092
Include your payment of \$20 (check should be payable to HSCA)

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