

**City Manager's Weekly Report**  
**For the week ending May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008**

**1. Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, beginning with a 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM budget session which will include departmental budget presentations and opportunities for City Council questions and answers.

**2. Update on Toluene Spill at Reaction Products, 841 Morton Avenue**

As you recall, on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, a hazardous chemical spill was discovered at Reaction Products, 840 Morton Avenue in Richmond. A storage tank that was vandalized during the prior weekend caused a significant spill of Toluene, approximately 3,300 to 3,600 gallons. The product flowed into a nearby drainage ditch and seeped under the railroad tracks into the Parchester Marsh, which opens into San Pablo Bay, with a resulting impact on fish and wildlife in the area.

On Tuesday, May 20, 2008, a multi-agency inspection was completed at Reaction Products, the site of this month's Toluene spill. Conducting the inspection were Deputy Fire Marshal Doug Murrey, Fire Inspector Robin Poindexter and Storm/Waste Water Inspector Lynn Scarpa from the City of Richmond; Hazardous Material Specialists Adam Springer and Todd Hickman from Contra Costa County Health Services; and Inspector Paul Grazzini from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

The Inspection Team met with business owner Dwight Merrill and cited him for the following violations:

- Non-reporting of specific hazardous materials, e.g. acid, lubricating oil, poly resins and nitrogen;
- Under reporting of toluene quantities;
- No secondary containment structure in place around storage tanks;
- Improper storage of flammable containers.

In order to remain in business, Mr. Merrill has fourteen days to comply with the following requirements:

- Update the facility site diagram to accurately reflect the location of all reportable hazardous materials quantities;
- Properly label all tanks and drums according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) placard system;
- Build the required secondary containment structure at the base of all storage tanks or remove them from the site;
- Cut all dry grass within a ten foot perimeter of all structures and tanks;

- Place all flammable containers in approved cabinets;
- Remove all extension cords in the building and replace with permanent wiring according to electrical code;
- Properly secure compressed gas cylinders to the floor and walls of the building.

We will keep you informed of the progress made at Reaction Products during the next two weeks.

### **3. Richmond BUILD Receives \$500,000 Grant from State of California**

Employment & Training learned this week that the State's Employment Development Department selected Richmond BUILD for one of the nine state-wide awards to provide short-term intensive construction skills training for dislocated workers. The \$500,000 grant will provide skills upgrade and retraining opportunities for 140 dislocated workers from the residential construction industry. The grant will also increase Richmond BUILD's capacity to train more Richmond residents by creating short term training modules that will include welding technology, scaffolding, Hazardous Materials Certification, safety training, and solar technology and installation.

Furthermore, Richmond BUILD was selected as the site for the State's Press Conference to announce the grant awards. Victoria Bradshaw, Secretary of Labor and Workforce Services, will attend the press conference that is scheduled for May 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM at the Richmond BUILD facility located at 360 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street (corner of S. 27<sup>th</sup> & Virginia). Councilmembers and community members are invited to attend the press conference.

### **4. Maritime Center Project Funding**

I attended a meeting this past week that included Mayor McLaughlin, Councilmember Butt, various City, Redevelopment and Housing Authority staff, and representatives from the School District, Richmond Children's Foundation, Contra Costa County, the National Park Service, Congressman Miller's office, LISC, and the Nystrom community to discuss the Maritime Center renovation project that is currently, and hopefully only temporarily, stalled due to lack of funding. Despite the large group, and the large number of constituencies represented, the meeting was very productive in terms of brainstorming ideas to make the project work in the context of the entire Nystrom neighborhood revitalization effort. These ideas will be more fully explored over the next several weeks by a smaller group representing the same constituencies, then brought back to this larger group for review, with the idea that a revised, workable funding plan can be set in place before the end of July.

### **5. Structure Fire at Nicholl Park**

This past Thursday evening, the middle building adjacent to the play lot and between the Bowling Green Club House and the restrooms caught on fire. The

Fire Department responded promptly, with Chief Banks on hand to provide direction. Despite these efforts, the building is now badly damaged and may need to be removed. Some old sports equipment had been stored there, but, otherwise the building had not been used. Public Works crews are boarding it up so that it is temporarily secure.

## 6. **Recreation Department Highlights**

The following are highlights of activities taking place in the Recreation Department:

- Over 200 participants attended the annual **Recreation Information Day**. After receiving information in the Social Hall, families enjoyed various fun outdoor activities facilitated by Recreation Staff in Nicholl Park.
- **The Recreation Department** sponsored 7 qualifiers from the citywide MLB Pitch, Hit, and Run Competition to compete in the Regional Finals in Cotati. Three of the 7 qualifiers brought back medals for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The Recreation Department first place winner now has a chance to compete at AT&T Park in June for a chance to move onto New York for the finals.
- **The Recreation Department** youth, in collaboration with Johnny Holmes and the Richmond Half Steppers, attended the Citywide Hershey track meet at Kennedy High School. The regional finals will be held in San Jose in June.
- **The Recreation Department** is currently preparing, fundraising and marketing for the upcoming US Youth Games in Oakland. Several coaches have been chosen and tryouts are being held. During the Coordinators' weekly meeting, several members from other states were inquiring about the TEAM RICHMOND t-shirt and loved the logo.
- **The Recreation Department** participated in the Open House at Peres Elementary School. An informational table was set up for parents and teachers with a display board showcasing the Department's work with the students through the community centers and programs.
- **The Recreation Department** held its annual Senior Information Day on Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Richmond Recreation Complex. Over 300 attendees were present. Eighty vendors representing various agencies and services participated in the event making the day a huge success.

## 7. **City Completes Restructuring of Variable Rate Debt**

As previously reported over the past several months, the City's variable rate debt obligations have been experiencing weekly interest rates as high as 10%, due to credit rating downgrades of the bond insurers. This past week, the City's Bond Finance Team completed the restructuring of the Redevelopment Agency (RDA)

2007A and Civic Center Bonds. The RDA Bonds' current weekly rate is 3.30%, while the Civic Center Bonds will pay a fixed rate of 5.52%. These rates will remain in effect for 18 to 24 months, to allow for the capital market to normalize itself. At the end of this conversion period, the bonds can be returned to their original mode of interest, if feasible.

**8. Neighborhood Council Community Budget Presentations**

In an effort to gather input on City services and priorities, the Finance Department and members of the Finance Committee have organized a series of neighborhood meetings concerning the operating and capital improvement plan budgets. Councilmember Ludmyrna Lopez and Finance Director Jim Goins were among the staff present to provide information and answer questions raised by those who attended the Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council meeting on Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Nevin Community Center and Fairmede Hilltop Neighborhood Council meeting on Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Sojourner Truth Church. Councilmember Maria Viramontes was also in attendance at the Fairmede meeting. The next community budget presentation is scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Richmond Heights Neighborhood Council meeting located at 6028 Ralston Avenue.

**9. West Contra Costa Business Development Center Awards Ceremony**

I attended the West Contra Costa Business Development Center Awards Ceremony this past Thursday night, at which Vice-Mayor Marquez, and Councilmembers Bates and Sandhu were also in attendance. I am please to report that Richmond's Community and Economic Development Director Steve Duran received a "Partnership" award at this ceremony for his work promoting business development in Richmond. Congratulations to Steve!