

City Manager's Weekly Report
For the week ending November 14th, 2008

1. Meeting Notes

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18th, beginning with a Closed Session at 5:00 PM, followed by a Study Session concerning the Honda/Port project and the Redevelopment Agency meeting at 6:00 PM, and with the regular City Council agenda scheduled for 7:00 PM.

2. "Deep C" Gang Operation

As you have undoubtedly heard, a take-down operation targeting the "Deep C" gang in Richmond was initiated early this past Thursday morning and was completed around mid-day with 18 arrests (multiple additional subjects who are outstanding will soon be arrested) as well as the confiscation of over 8 firearms, significant quantities of cocaine and marijuana, cash, and other evidence. I attended the press conference to highlight the operation's success which took place at 2:00 PM on Thursday. This press conference was led off by Chief Chris Magnus, and was attended by Attorney General Jerry Brown, District Attorney Bob Kochly, several Police Commissioners and community members, many law enforcement personnel, and members of the media.

I have excerpted below what I feel to be, perhaps, the most important part of the message delivered by Chief Magnus at the press conference. It describes a public safety and crime reduction strategy for the City of Richmond that recognizes effective law enforcement as just one part of our effort, and acknowledges the tremendous importance of building strong relationships with the community in all of the City's efforts. The following is from Chief Magnus' comments:

- We recognize that there is no single solution to the kind of crime that our residents have grown increasingly weary of and frustrated by. Suppression efforts alone will not address unemployment, lack of key social services, young people being raised by the streets, or insufficient resources for parolees being released back into our communities.
- But smart, targeted crime suppression efforts of this kind are critical to bring a sense of safety back to our neighborhoods and to send a message that gang members and other criminals are not in control of Richmond's streets.
- Today's arrests and confiscation of weapons and drugs are validation that when law enforcement works with the community, we can make a real difference. Richmond residents, regardless of their race, ethnicity, economic status, or background are unwilling to be held hostage in their homes by street thugs and criminals. An effort of this kind demonstrates our commitment to use every available resource to reduce crime and improve safety in our City.

Congratulations to all of those involved in these various crime reduction efforts and strategies, including policymakers, managers, both sworn and non-sworn personnel, other law enforcement agencies, and members of the community.

3. Public Safety Toy Program and Food Drive

On Monday, November 10th the Richmond/El Cerrito/Chevron Firefighter’s Toy Program and the Richmond Police Officers’ Food Drive held its kick-off breakfast at the Hilltop Courtyard Marriott. The event was well attended by representatives from local businesses, non-profit agencies, City employees and public safety members. Through the generous support of many individuals, the firefighters and police officers are able to provide toys and food baskets for the neediest in our community. This year in particular there has been a significant increase in the number of families that have registered to receive both toys and food baskets. The program has been in existence for nineteen years and has grown to serve over two thousand families in West Contra Costa County. Anyone wishing to provide monetary support, donate toys and/or food, or volunteer to help out should contact the following numbers:

Toys or monetary donations and volunteer opportunities	Richmond Fire Department 510-307-8031
Food or monetary donations and volunteer opportunities	Richmond Police Department Cindy Haden 510-375-3477, or Michele Milam 510-620-6538

The Toy and Food Giveaway will take place on Saturday, December 20th from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Coronado YMCA, 263 South 20th Street, Richmond.

4. Southern California Wildfires

Early this morning the Fire Department sent an Engine Company to assist in the Santa Barbara County wild fire. The crew was comprised of Captain Dan Linstad, Engineer George Figone, Firefighter Eric Munson and Firefighter Phil Zarubin along with four other Contra Costa County fire engines. They were assigned as a strike team to the “Tea Fire” located near the community of Montecito. So far the fire has burned 2,500 acres and destroyed at least 100 homes. Thirteen people have been injured, with ten treated for smoke inhalation and three suffering burn injuries. Over 5,400 residents have been evacuated with many more possibly being forced to leave if the fire spreads. Unfortunately, the fire situation in southern California may become worse as there is a high wind warning in effect for Los Angeles and Ventura Counties through Saturday.

5. Richmond Library to Host Pulitzer Prize Winner, Sonia Nozario

On Wednesday, November 19th, at the Richmond Recreation Center, 3230 Macdonald Avenue, the Richmond Library will host Pulitzer Prize winning author Sonia Nozario. Ms. Nozario is the author of *Enrique’s Journey*, which chronicles an immigration journey through the eyes of a Honduran boy seeking to reunite with his

mother in the United States. The book has become standard text in the curriculum of many schools and colleges.

The Richmond community is very fortunate to be able to host Sonia Nozario, and to have the opportunity to think about and discuss issues related to immigration through her literature.

6. Richmond BUILD's Graduation Ceremony

The staff and partners of Richmond BUILD will be hosting a graduation ceremony for cohort 7 on Friday, November 21st from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at the Richmond BUILD training facility located at 360 S. 27th Street. Twenty four (24) students will participate in the graduation ceremony, of which eight (8) participants have already obtained employment or have a job commitment.

The Richmond BUILD program continues to achieve an outstanding job placement rate for program graduates at an average starting wage of \$18.00 an hour. The strong partnership with Solar Richmond, Solar Living Institute, GRID Alternatives, Adult Education , and Rising Sun Energy Center have significantly contributed to the overall success, and the partnership continues to devise new strategies for expanding and strengthening the training program. The new strategies will include the expansion of the Solar Technology component from two weeks to five weeks, and the implementation an Energy Efficiency training component.

Richmond residents interested in participating in the Richmond BUILD Pre-apprenticeship Construction Skills & Solar Installation training program can register at the RichmondWORKS One Stop at 330 25th Street.

7. Weekly Rate Resets of 2008 Wastewater Bonds

As you may recall, the City recently completed the refunding of the Wastewater Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2006B, by issuing variable rate demand bonds. The interest rates carried by the 2006 bonds were negatively impacted by the credit downgrades of the bond's insurer, Ambac, and spiked to a high of 10% in late September. The refunding of the bonds removed Ambac as the bond insurer, with Union Bank of California providing credit enhancement through a letter of credit, which resulted in an initial weekly interest rate of 2.40%. Since the issuance of the new bonds on October 14th, the weekly interest rate has continued to decrease, to the current 1.05%.

8. Rising Sun Energy Center

As you may recall, the City Manager's Office and the Department of Employment and Training contracted with Rising Sun Energy Center, a Berkeley based non-profit, to expand its California Youth Energy Services (CYES) program to the City of Richmond this summer. CYES hires and trains local youth to provide free in-home energy education and hardware installation to local homeowners and renters. Overall, 11 Richmond youth (ages 15-22) participated in this summer's CYES

program and provided 211 local residences with the following energy and water savings hardware at no cost:

- **1,932** Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)
- **109** Efficient-flow showerheads
- **124** Efficient-flow bathroom aerators
- **95** Efficient-flow kitchen aerators
- **21** Retractable clotheslines
- **28** CFL floor lamp torchieres

CYES estimates that these Richmond installations will result in an annual savings of 86,300 kilowatt hours of electricity, 250 therms of natural gas and more than \$9,500 in annual energy savings to local residents.

9. Battery Recycling at City of Richmond Fire Stations – Open to Richmond Residents

In an effort to continue to green Richmond's municipal operations, and to provide expanded recycling opportunities for residents, the Richmond Fire Department and environmental staff have teamed up to initiate a battery recycling program at all seven City fire stations. The Fire Department will recycle batteries generated through internal operations and will also accept all household batteries from Richmond residents for recycling. Household batteries contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium, and nickel and are considered hazardous waste by the State of California. Disposing of batteries in the garbage is illegal. The City's website provides the locations of the fire stations accepting batteries. (Links: View a [list](#) of the seven City Fire Stations. View a list of other [locations](#) that accept household batteries in West Contra Costa.)

10. Richmond Greenway Phase II Bid Opening

Bids were opened this past Thursday for the Greenway Phase II project, with the apparent low bid coming in at just below \$800,000. The Engineer's estimate for bidding purposes was \$1,200,000. The contract should be on the City Council agenda before the end of the calendar year.

11. Public Works Highlights

Nevin Center Face Lift:

Public Works completed painting the exterior of the Nevin Center as part of the "face lift" for the Nevin Center complex. Next week Public Works employee forces will paint the interiors of the Nevin Center. The contractor at Nevin Park is finishing concrete and decomposed granite surfaces and is detailing finishes to fences and structures. An opening celebration for this park is now postponed until January 31, 2009 to accommodate additional installations of fencing and surfaces.

Parks:

Parks staff installed over 300' of French drains at Hilltop Lake Park. A new flag pole was installed at the bowling green in Nicholl Park. Crescent Park has been prepared for replanting and staff are making selections and placing plant orders.

Paving:

Public Works will complete the paving of Humphrey Avenue from 29th to 36th Streets and start grinding Cerrito Avenue from 37th to 39th Streets.

12. Update on Graffiti Abatement Program

Trina Jackson has provided the following “statistical” update on the graffiti abatement program for September and October:

Abatement/Eradication

- 1871 tags were abated by staff in the month of September 2008
- 304 of the tags were gang related and cleaned within 48 hours of notification

Volunteers

- 122 registered volunteers as of October 31st
- 6,800 square feet potentially abated, per the amount of solvent distributed.
- 4 presentations made by volunteer coordinators and/or volunteers

13. Recreation Highlights

The following are highlights from the Recreation Department for the current week:

- The Swim Center is conducting its second “Dive-In Movie” on Friday, November 14, 2008, from 5:30 to 9:00 PM. Participants will be able to purchase snacks at the light concession stand while splashing in the pool and enjoying the movie *Shrek*.
- The Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Lawn Bowling Association, are planning a second training clinic and forming a league.
- Youth activities staff from the Recreation Department escorted nine teenagers on a mountain biking and hiking excursion at Tennessee Valley in San Rafael. Trip leaders engaged the teens in environmental stewardship, teamwork, challenging physical activities and bike handling skills.