

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the report for the week ending November 6th, 2009.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17th.

2. **Sales Tax Update**

Finance Department staff met this past week with MuniServices, the City's sales tax consultants, to review sales tax amounts for the quarter ending June 2009. This period saw the biggest statewide decrease in revenues since 1946, at 20.8% below the prior year. The City of Richmond receipts for the same period dropped approximately 12% from the prior year, which, while significant, is as forecasted in the current (revised) budget. Finance staff will continue to closely monitor actual revenues received and compare them against budget projections, and we will continue to keep you informed.

3. **Business License Collection Programs Are Underway**

Finance Department staff is taking steps to enhance both current and future business license tax collections by identifying unlicensed rental properties and by implementing the business license amnesty program which was recently approved by the City Council. In particular, the Finance Department's Business License Division has mailed 8,500 letters, 6,000 of which went to persons whom the city believes to have rental properties in Richmond and should maintain a business license for the property. Revenue estimates for this program are at \$800,000 annually. The remaining 2,500 letters went to Richmond businesses that previously had a business license which is now expired. These businesses, if still operating, will be offered the opportunity to "catch up" on their business license taxes without paying late fees and penalties. Expected revenue generation from this program is approximately \$350,000. We will keep you informed about the success of these programs.

4. **Proposal for Financial Self-Sufficiency Center in Richmond**

I attended an organizational meeting this past week regarding a proposal to establish a family financial self-sufficiency center in the Richmond community. United Way of the Bay Area, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department are working to establish such a center for economic self-sufficiency ("SparkPoint") in Richmond. SparkPoint centers offer a one-stop source of services to help families manage debts, increase household income and build assets as a pathway to financial stability. Centers already exist in Oakland and American Canyon, and one is under way in San Francisco.

SparkPoint aims to lift families out of poverty by offering seamlessly integrated services in three areas:

- Debt management,
- Income building, and
- Asset development.

The organizational meeting was well-attended by initial sponsoring agencies, and the program was well-received by these agencies. I will keep you informed as this project moves forward.

5. **Kick-Off Breakfast For Holiday Toy And Food Drive**

On Tuesday, November 10th the Richmond/El Cerrito Fire & Police Departments will kick-off their annual toy and food drive with a breakfast hosted by the Richmond Courtyard Marriott from 6:30 AM to 9:00 AM. The program has grown significantly over the years, thanks to the tremendous involvement of local businesses, service organizations and community volunteers. It is expected that as many as 2,000 families will be provided with toys and food this holiday season. For further information contact Firefighter Rod Woods at (510) 774-5133 or the Richmond Fire Department at (510) 307-8031.

6. **Recreation Department Haunted House**

The Recreation Department successfully hosted the annual Haunted House at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium on October 30th and 31st from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM last week. Over 500 community members participated in touring the Haunted House and enjoying the carnival and game area. While in line, attendees were entertained by viewing a 6 minute movie about the “Clown” that lives in the auditorium. Participants offered very positive feedback about the Clown Auditorium theme and all the frights of the Haunted House. Staff and volunteers also enjoyed the event, and had a great time building, haunting and interacting with the community.

7. **Seasonal Flu and H1N1**

As part of our efforts to keep our employees and their families healthy, the Human Resources Department distributed the following information to employees, which may also be of interest to Richmond residents.

Contra Costa County Health Services will be providing free seasonal flu vaccines, and H1N1 for high risk individuals, on Saturday, November 7th at the Hilltop Mall in Richmond from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. H1N1 vaccines will also be provided to high risk individuals at Doctor’s Medical Center at 2000 Vale Road, San Pablo, near the hospital parking lot, on Saturday, November 7th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon.

Note that a high risk person is one that meets the following criteria:

- Pregnant women,
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants younger than six months of age,
- Healthcare personnel,
- Persons between 6 months to 24 years of age, and
- Persons 25 - 65 years of age who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications (chronic lung disease, diabetes, cardiac disease, kidney disease or immune compromised).

Persons who have egg allergies should not get the vaccine.

Contra Costa Health Services has also reminded our employees of four steps to staying healthy:

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
2. Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes. Germs spread this way. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your elbow.
3. Don't spread the flu! If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home. Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. CDC recommends that sick workers stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
4. Get vaccinated against seasonal flu. For more information about H1N1 vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm.