

Measure R To Fund Key Corridors

Sales Tax Passage Gives Local Projects Better Chance For Fed/State Grant Money

Valley Voice, Monday, November 6, 2006

Tulare County - Two key things voters might want to consider when deciding on Measure R—the ½ cent sales tax measure on the ballot November 7.

First, the monies received from the tax will go to upgrade key highway corridors everyone in Tulare County depends on. Whether you are from Three Rivers or Exeter and depend on Spruce Ave. from Porterville and have been waiting for funds for accident alley—Highway 65 from Lindsay to Kern County, up in Dinuba where the priorities are El Monte and Rd. 80 the town's connection to Highway 99 and to Visalia. Down in Tulare the monies could make the difference building several key interchanges on Highway 99 and in Visalia where the fund will be used to widen Mooney, widen Caldwell from Exeter, help build major new offramps at Lovers Lane where there is a traffic nightmare twice a day and out in Goshen where the local monies will help in funding the new Betty Drive interchange that will give a major economic boost to Goshen and to the Visalia industrial park.

Altogether, Visalia by itself will see \$348.4 million in revenues over the 30 year life that tax. Regional projects will get about 50 percent of the funds with 35 percent of the monies going to local projects and 14 percent to projects locally that will help [clean the air](#). So the plan includes bike paths and monies to preserve a length of rail alignment for the future.

The second major thing voters want to consider is that with the local sales tax measure Tulare County will join other “self help” counties who have local sales tax measures who can more likely qualify for discretionary federal and state grants that require a “local match” to be funded. Fresno County is an example and its road system benefits from having that local pot of money.

In that sense, passage of Measure R keeps both local and state and federal monies for roads - at home where we can benefit from them every day.

This past week Tulare County Economic Development Corp. weighed in on the importance of the initiative saying it would produce a \$950.4 million economic impact on business here including adding 10,000 jobs over the 30 year life.

The measure put forward by leaders through Tulare County includes a citizen oversight committee who will monitor how funds are spent.

Encouraging a yes vote November 7 are farm and business groups across the county and the chamber of commerce from each community.

Tulare-Kings Hispanic Chamber director Gil Jaramillo noted the importance of rebuilding and maintaining the rural roads that are essential in getting Tulare County's commodities to market.

We represent thousands of businesses all over the county,” noted Visalia Chamber executive director Mike Cully. “We are joining forces because Measure R is good for business—it is critically important to our economic health and vitality, and for our future quality of life.”

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What's New

Valley Voice, Monday, November 6, 2006

The San Joaquin Valley Partnership boasted by Governor Schwarzenegger as the new strategic action plan for the valley is proposing several key ideas that would affect dairies including making it easier to establish “net metering” with the big utilities, promoting biomass power, increasing research for dairy waste control and best available control technology for dairy emissions and the construction of 10 methane powered co-generation plants located at dairies and other wastewater facilities in the valley.

Guardian Corp. reveals major investment plan

By Amy D. Fienen, Recorder Staff Writer
Kingsburg Recorder, November 6, 2006

Guardian Industries Corp. announced recently that it will invest over \$75 million in its local glass plant over the next few years, a decision that brings with it economic security for Kingsburg.

The plant, which opened in 1978, nearly closed a couple years ago, but their decision to stay in Kingsburg has provided 300 jobs for local workers.

The plant produces float glass, tempered glass and coated glass for energy-efficient windows and commercial buildings. Improvements to the plant will include the installation of a state-of-the-art air pollution control system that will set the standard for [emission controls](#) in the glass industry, and a furnace repair that will improve production. Part of the refurbishment will convert the furnace from fuel oil to natural gas, lowering its greenhouse gas emissions by about 15 percent.

"With these improvements, we feel we will be able to better service our West Coast customers and meet or exceed all of California's environmental standards," said plant manager Jeff Booe. "We had actually considered closing the plant and opening in another western state, but because of the support and incentives we received, we made the decision not only to stay, but to repair, expand and improve our operations."

In 2004, the plant underwent a \$40 million expansion that added a technologically advanced glass coater and 50 new jobs.

City Manager Don Pauley said that the city is thrilled with the announcement and what it means for the community. This announcement means that Guardian is here for the long haul, and they are an important economic staple in Kingsburg.

"The jobs that they provide and will be adding will be retained by local workers," Pauley said. "These are high paying, high quality jobs."

Pauley also commented on the environmental benefits that will come with the planned changes.

Construction on the project will get underway in 2008, and will result in a shutdown of the plant that will last for about four months.

Local station to have ethanol pump

Tulare Advance-Register, Saturday, Nov. 4, 2006

The federal Department of Energy is beginning a move to get grant money to start an alternative fuel network in the state.

One Tulare man is participating - Dennis Stanley.

He has agreed to have an ethanol pump at his new gas station on Cartmill Road and M Street, according to a city press release. The city plans to lease 17 vehicles from Enterprise and fill them up at Stanley's new pump.

The federal grants would give only \$30,000 per pump, according to the release. It will cost \$130,000 to install a pump and aboveground storage tank at Stanley's.

The city sought to acquire the remaining dollars from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's alternative fuel fund but was denied. The district doesn't deem ethanol an alternative fuel. The California Air Resources Board is another possible source for funding.

News Briefs from Around California

from the Associated Press
in the Sacramento Bee, Saturday, November 4, 2006

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) - Southern California's anti-smog agency approved \$36 million for a program to reduce truck pollution at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The money approved Friday by the South Coast Air Quality Management District will be used to help truckers replace older diesel equipment with cleaner-burning new rigs.

The twin ports, together the largest port complex in the nation, already pledged \$166 million to reduce truck emissions.

Authorities say pollution from the estimated 12,000 diesel trucks operating daily at the ports could lead to an increased risk of asthma and other illnesses for nearby residents.

"We hope to reduce the health risk to these communities by helping to defray the cost of purchasing new, cleaner trucks," AQMD Board Chairman William A. Burke said.

Cities move to swiftly extend dirty-power contracts

The municipalities want to renew pacts with the Utah coal-fueled plant before the state's law targeting greenhouse gases takes effect Jan. 1.

By Janet Wilson, Times Staff Writer

L.A Times, Saturday, November 4, 2006

Bucking a landmark California law to reduce greenhouse gases, several Southland cities are moving toward accepting a Utah utility's offer to extend for decades contracts for dirty, coal-fired power before the new law - which would ban such renewals - takes effect Jan. 1.

The law, passed by the Legislature last summer, seeks to combat global warming by prohibiting utilities from contracting for power from sources that don't meet stricter greenhouse gas standards. The law bans power from sources that generate more greenhouse gases than in-state natural gas plants.

Officials noted that the Utah utility's coal-fired plants are the largest sources of electricity for six Southern California cities, including Los Angeles. Many said that if they didn't renew their contracts, the power would just be sold elsewhere, not eliminated, and would cost their customers billions.

"We in Burbank don't believe that law will reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Burbank Water and Power Assistant Manager Fred Fletcher, who added that extending its contract with the Intermountain Power Agency in Delta, Utah, would save ratepayers \$300 million to \$600 million. The mayor and council voted unanimously last week to extend their contract to 2044.

Riverside Public Utilities' advisory board voted unanimously Friday to ask city officials to renew their pact, said General Manager David Wright, while power managers for Glendale and Pasadena said they would ask their cities to renew their contracts within three weeks. Anaheim officials are weighing what to do, a spokesman said.

The contracts are not set to expire until 2027, but utility officials said they needed to act now to extend them because the new law was looming and because they needed to lock in lower costs in future years.

The officials said that they had been paying off capital costs to construct the Utah power plants since the late 1980s and that if they didn't renew, they would lose the right to buy power for about 50% less once those costs were paid off in 2027.

"It would be akin to paying off the mortgage to your house only to have it revert to the previous owner," said Pasadena Water & Power General Manager Phyllis Currie.

But the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which buys 66% of the power produced by the Utah plants and uses it to supply nearly half of the city's power, will not seek to renew its contract, said board of directors President David Nahai.

"I think the Legislature has spoken clearly on this issue," said Nahai, who added that he did not fault other utilities for their decisions. He said he was not worried about replacing the city's largest, cheapest power source in 21 years.

"By the time 2027 rolls around we hope to be in a position to have many other options available," he said. "We're on the verge of a new paradigm as far as energy supply to this city is concerned. It's moving away from coal toward more renewable energy sources like wind, geothermal, solar and biomass."

Environmentalists lambasted the decisions by the smaller cities, while lawmakers expressed concern.

"It's a giant step backward," said V. John White, head of the Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technology, a Sacramento-based nonprofit. "This is penny wise and planet foolish."

He and others said coal's apparent lower costs might evaporate if state or national regulations changed to impose taxes or costly fees on such power, and they noted that there could be liability issues down the road as well. He said there was ample time for the cities to come up with alternative sources.

Fossil-fuel-fired power plants are the largest producers of greenhouse gases in the U.S., contributing nearly 40%. Most of the nation's plants are powered by coal and emit a host of other air pollutants. A report this week found that California's greenhouse emissions grew 14% from 1990 to 2004.

Alicia Trost, press secretary for the law's author, Sen. Don Perata (D-Oakland), said: "Even though this bill doesn't take effect until January, that doesn't mean we're not trying to send a clear message today.... All the evidence seems to point to [these cities] trying to get around this impending law.... Our main concern is: These were major opponents of the bill, the governor signed the bill, they lost the battle and now they're trying to win the war."

She said top staff for Perata had contacted the Southern California Public Power Authority, which represents all six municipal utilities that have contracts with the Utah utility, and voiced their displeasure.

The authority's executive director, Bill Carnahan, said he couldn't speak for the individual cities but believed that they were trying to comply by taking action before the law went into effect.

"If a city is interested in doing the extension based on the merits, then it only makes sense for them to try to do it before the 1st of January," Carnahan said.

He added that even as utilities switched to increasing amounts of renewable energy, Burbank in particular had argued "very logically" that coal would offer a reliable, affordable backup.

"The problem with wind resources is you can't count on the wind blowing every day. You can't count on the sun shining every day, plus solar is three or four times more cost," he said. "If the wind is not blowing, and you've got a summer day and the customers are still there, then you have to crank up a conventional resource."

Perata's bill, SB1368, was passed as a companion piece to legislation that caps emissions for some industries and requires California to slash greenhouse gases by 25%. Implementation of AB32 will take years, but the Senate law is designed to make an impact sooner.

Southern California municipal power officials who are pursuing renewal contracts insisted that they were fully committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in other ways and said efforts to renew their contracts with Intermountain had been underway for years, long before SB1368 was passed.

All the utilities - including Los Angeles' - also want to maintain access to a huge, cross-Western transmission line owned by Intermountain that can be used to ship power from wind as well as coal. Renewal of the cities' power contracts will include the right to continue transmission use. Officials at L.A.'s DWP said they would try to negotiate a separate agreement for continued transmission line access.

GM to keep investing in China market

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer
Sacramento Bee, Monday, November 6, 2006

SHANGHAI, China (AP) - General Motors Corp. intends to keep investing in China's fast-growing market, and it is confident its sales are still outpacing the industry average, GM's chairman Rick Wagoner said Monday.

"We are willing to invest ahead of demand here because we are very bullish that demand is going to keep growing here," Wagoner told reporters after taking a ceremonial spin, with Shanghai Mayor Han Zheng, in GM's hydrogen fuel cell-powered Sequel.

GM's sales jumped 36.7 percent in the first three quarters of this year, helped by strong demand for newly launched models such as the Buick LaCrosse.

Wagoner said GM expects its sales growth in China this year to outpace the industry average of about 20 percent.

China and other overseas factories accounted for more than half of GM's total output of 9.2 million vehicles last year, Wagoner said. The company says its total production will remain at about that level this year.

Monday's event was meant to showcase GM's progress in bringing its newest technology to market, and its willingness to cater to China's appetite for advanced technology as it builds up its auto sector.

Shanghai GM, the company's joint venture with local partner Shanghai Automotive Industrial Corp., plans to begin manufacturing hybrid gas-and-electric powered vehicles by 2008, part of the effort to shift into next-generation technologies that might help reduce the environmental impact of growing vehicle use among the 1.3 billion Chinese.

Ultimately, GM is betting on hydrogen fuel-cell technology such as that used in the Sequel, which looks like a minivan and has a range of 300 miles.

"We believe fuel cell vehicles offer the best long-term solution for meeting the world's growing demand for automobiles in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner," Wagoner said.

"Sequel represents the most production-ready fuel cell vehicle available today," he said. "We've made a lot of progress in making it a real life technology."

Still, the vehicle is far from ready for commercial use, Wagoner acknowledged.

Nearly all the world's major automakers are testing hydrogen-powered vehicles, with some in use by government workers.

The pollution-free technology holds the potential of zero emissions and a sustainable source of energy produced when hydrogen and oxygen are mixed. Experts say they could begin arriving in showrooms by 2020, or perhaps earlier.

But many obstacles exist, including the high cost, relatively short range and a lack of fueling stations.

GM has managed to reduce costs for making the Sequel by 12 times, but still needs to reduce them by seven times more to make it competitive, Wagoner said.

And automakers need help from governments in developing the infrastructure for hydrogen fueling, he said.

"Developing new technologies is really a team sport that requires business and governments to work together," he said. "It's doable, it's not that expensive, but it's going to require some work."

[Fresno Bee editorial, Monday, November 6, 2006:](#)

Vote for California's future

Infrastructure measures are an investment in our state.

Voters on Tuesday will get a chance to make significant investments in California's future by supporting several state bonds and local transportation measures.

At the end of a long campaign, most voters just want the election to be over. We sympathize with that sentiment. But we hope that citizens are not so tired of the campaign that they'll skip out on this important election altogether.

Vote on Tuesday. And if you want to leave a better California for your children and grandchildren, support these vital infrastructure and transportation measures:

Proposition 1B: This would invest \$19.9 billion into a balanced highway and transit package. Highway 99 is scheduled to get \$1 billion for improvements.

Proposition 1C: It would provide \$2.85 billion to help low-income renters, first-time homebuyers and the homeless. Some money also would go to traditional programs, such as efforts to provide shelter for battered women and low-interest loans for qualified homebuyers.

Proposition 1D: The measure would dedicate \$10.4 billion to build facilities for school districts, community colleges and universities. The Valley would benefit greatly from this measure.

Proposition 1E: It would provide more than \$4 billion for levee protection and flood control. The majority of the money would be spent in the Central Valley and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Proposition 84: would authorize \$5.3 billion in bonds to clean up beaches and drinking water supplies, fund water conservation programs and improve state and local parks. It includes \$100 million for restoration of the San Joaquin River, \$40 million for water quality improvements along the river, and \$36 million for the San Joaquin River Parkway.

There are also several local transportation measures that should be supported on Tuesday.

Vote "yes" on Measure C in Fresno County, Measure T in Madera County, Measure R in Tulare County, Measure G in Merced County and Measure I in Kern County.

Fresno County's Measure C would extend a half-cent sales tax for another 20 years. Designers of the measure have crafted a proposal that builds on the first Measure C in a way that makes sense for all county residents.

The extension would provide funds for better city streets and county roads, freeway improvements, investments in transit and other alternatives to the automobile, cleaner and safer school buses and steps to improve the Valley's air quality.

There have been a lot of claims made in this election by candidates and supporters of the many propositions on the ballot. Most are political spin. But these infrastructure measures are solid investments in California's future. They deserve your support.

[Fresno Bee editorial, Sunday, November 5, 2006:](#)

VALLEY'S TOP 10: Reasons not to vote on Tuesday

10. More fun to watch reality TV than read sample ballot.
9. Too busy chatting on MySpace.
8. Urgent need to rearrange sock drawer.
7. Think President Clinton is doing a great job.
6. Can't read sample ballot.
5. Already voted on "Dancing With the Stars."
4. It's a Spare the Air day, I really shouldn't be driving.
3. All the unfinished road construction stops me from getting to my polling place.
2. The (left-wing/right-wing) conspiracy will just manipulate the results.
1. I was listening to a speech by the mayor, and the polls closed before he finished.

[Fresno Bee editorial, Saturday, November 4, 2006:](#)

Think Valley

Regional partnership offers great promise for the future.

The eight counties of the San Joaquin Valley share persistent problems: lower levels of education and income, higher crime rates and poor air quality.

For the past year, 26 elected and community leaders from throughout the Valley have met to identify ways to make things better.

This group, the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, was created in 2005 by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a state leader who finally recognized the Valley's problems and potential. Schwarzenegger assigned his top Cabinet people to give the partnership a high priority.

Last week, Schwarzenegger visited the Valley again as the partnership approved its strategic action proposal. In Fresno, the governor praised the work of the partnership and said it is laying the foundation for improving the region's economy.

Its proposal outlines six major strategies:

Create a diversified, globally competitive economy supported by a highly skilled work force.

Create model K-12 public schools.

Implement an integrated framework for sustainable growth.

Build a modern transportation system.

Meet clean-air standards.

Develop high-quality health and human services.

Valley leaders had to think regionally to form these conclusions. Now, the real work begins and the hardest parts will fall on Valley residents - not only those in elected positions, but in business and nonprofit roles.

Counties will need to cooperate, rather than compete, in building industry and tourism. They need to celebrate each other's successes and, as appropriate, emulate them. They need to establish and nurture trust.

Citizen support will be critical. Valley residents need to think beyond their neighborhoods. They need to support candidates who have demonstrated that they will work for the interests of the entire region.

Two items on the Nov. 7 ballot are key - the gubernatorial election and the infrastructure bonds.

Schwarzenegger backs up his words with funding. His commitment is refreshing and real; he deserves Valley residents' support.

The five state bond proposals - Propositions 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E and 84 - represent a long-term investment in economic prosperity and in safety. Especially important for the

Valley is Proposition 1B, which contains \$1 billion to improve Highway 99.

The partnership is advancing plans to make the Valley better. There's a sense of momentum; this is no time for us to lose it.

[Visalia Times-Delta, Letter to the Editor, Monday, Nov. 6, 2006:](#)

Measure R is a vote for road improvement

I'm writing to support Measure R, the "pothole measure," because we will actually save money if we fix our roads because then we won't have to keep fixing our cars.

We all know that driving on potholed roads is a bumpy ride and that means wear and tear on our vehicles. I saw a report recently that says the average motorist in the U.S. pays \$383 a year in operating costs because we're driving on roads in need of repair.

On the other hand, Measure R (a half-cent sales tax) will cost a person earning \$30,000 per year only about \$30 in additional sales tax, according to the Franchise Tax Board. Any way you look at it, we're better off fixing our roads.

Fewer potholes, less congested roads and improved school crossings will help make our roads safer, too. And Measure R includes money to synchronize traffic signals, [so our cars idle less and pollute less](#).

I encourage you to vote for Measure R on Nov. 7. We need these road improvements right now, but our grandchildren will also appreciate it.

BASIL PERCH, Visalia