

Weather service offers link on air quality awareness

By Sentinel Staff

Hanford Sentinel, Friday, May 6, 2011

HANFORD - Air Quality Awareness Week is being observed this week. As part of this, the National Weather Service office in Hanford is partnering with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to provide local awareness messages each day of the week.

Click on the link below for more information about the annual campaign.

- [Related: Air quality](#)

Forest officials to burn 2,000 acres

Stockton Record, Thursday, May 5, 2011

ARNOLD - Residents of Calaveras and Tuolumne counties as well as visitors to the Stanislaus National Forest may see smoke and fire in the next two weeks as forest crews conduct a controlled burn at Sand Bar Flat.

The burn is intended to clear the forest of brush and other small vegetation that would pose a risk of triggering a catastrophic fire should it ignite during late summer.

Forest officials note that burning is a much less expensive way than a mechanical harvest.

Forest officials ask that residents be aware of the controlled burn and not report it as a wildfire.

The burn, about 2,000 acres, will take place on the south-facing slope over the Middle Fork Stanislaus River about a half-mile downstream from the Spring Gap Powerhouse. Ignition could continue until May 14.

Burning will be coordinated with Air Pollution Control District officials.

Tulare County Board of Supervisors may cut 9 positions Tuesday

By David Castellon

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Monday May 9, 2011

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors could vote Tuesday to cut nine positions from the Resource Management Agency.

All nine are in the Development and Redevelopment Division. Four of those positions are vacant, but five community development specialists could get pink slips.

Those jobs are being cut regardless of whether California legislators vote to eliminate funding for all redevelopment agencies in the state, said Lori Mercer, community development manager for the county.

The Redevelopment Agency's job is to fight blight in communities, which includes providing funds to renovate and build affordable housing as well as pay for infrastructure improvements.

While cities have their own redevelopment agencies, the county focuses on eight zones: Earlimart, Ivanhoe, Goshen, Cutler-Orosi, Pixley, Traver, Richgrove and Poplar-Cotton Center.

A portion of property tax collected in those areas pays for their redevelopment projects.

In January, Gov. Jerry Brown announced his intent to eliminate redevelopment agencies and redirect about \$1.7 billion in the various agencies' community improvement funds to the state to help pay down its deficit.

Tulare County supervisors in March voted to move \$2.3 million in the county's community improvement fund into the low- to moderate-income housing fund, where the state couldn't touch it.

The rest, \$807,774, will be used to pay for redevelopment projects already in the works.

Supervisors took the action at the suggestion of RMA because it appeared legislators were on the verge of voting to eliminate redevelopment agencies.

But the Assembly didn't pass the cut. Nearly two months later, it appears legislators are shifting away from the notion of eliminating redevelopment agencies entirely.

Newer bills in both the Assembly and Senate seek to overhaul redevelopment by requiring more extensive reporting and scrutiny on their spending and goals, as well as shifting some of the property tax dollars they now get to schools.

"It's still up in the air. We still do not know what's going to happen with it," Mercer said.

And the possibility of eliminating the agencies still isn't off the table.

If redevelopment agencies were eliminated, the county would continue work on improving housing and infrastructure in communities that need it, with the county Development Division — minus "Redevelopment" in its name — doing the work.

It would just be a smaller division, regardless of whether the state funding comes through, from the current 18 allocated positions (13 of which are filled) it now has.

"We are making every effort to simplify and streamline, to cut costs everywhere possible and do things as effectively and efficiently as possible," Mercer said.

Part of that involves reducing administration costs from 38 percent of Community Development's budget to 20 percent, the report to the supervisors states.

If the supervisors approve the cuts Tuesday, the five occupied jobs would end June 18.

RMA officials estimate the savings in salaries and benefits paid by the county would total about \$12,000 by the end of the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, and about \$636,000 the following fiscal year.

Regardless of whether redevelopment funding is eliminated by the legislators, the county's plan for development is to focus more on affordable housing and to try to get more grants for community improvement projects, according to the report.

Other business

In other matters Tuesday, the supervisors will:

- [Hear an update from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District on air quality.](#)
- Hold a public hearing on proposed changes to RMA planning and development fees.
- Hold a public hearing on a request to rezone more than 18 acres west of Cutler from agricultural to light manufacturing use, so Peña's Disposal Inc. can expand its waste-hauling and recycling business. The property is at the northeast corner of Avenue 408 and Road 120.