

First Quarter 2010 Winter Newsletter



City of Biggs-465 C Street—P.O. Box 307 Biggs, CA 95917
Where the People Own the Water and Power

Council Contact Information

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See It, Report It



If you are aware a crime is being or has been committed in Biggs, please notify the Gridley-Biggs Police. If it is not a 9-1-1 emergency, you can call 868-5590 to make a report 24 hours a day. The eyes of local citizens can make the difference in effectively preventing and responding to law enforcement problems.

If you would like to

bring attention to a code enforcement issue, please contact City Hall at 868-5447. You can remain anonymous, or you can identify yourself and receive follow-up communication from the city code enforcement officer.

Code enforcement includes neighborhood health and safety problems like, outdoor marijuana cultivation, abandoned large appliances, and household garbage not contained within the waste bins. Code enforcement also includes visual blight like broken windows, debris on front lawns, excessive weeds, and broken down vehicles.

Good News on Flood Insurance

Biggs was recently removed from FEMA's "high hazard flood zone." New draft maps published by FEMA in May would have required most local homeowners to purchase expensive flood insurance starting 2010. The insurance requirement will be reviewed again in a few years when additional data is available, but for now Biggs residents can save their insurance money.

Biggs won the change in mapping from FEMA after the city engineer challenged the FEMA map. City engineers worked with the county flood plain manager

to prove that in the unlikely event Biggs floods it will be brief and less than one foot.

The levees still need to be repaired. All property owners in the Feather River west side flood zone from Thermalito to Yuba City will be asked in 2010 to agree to help fund levee repairs through a new property tax assessment. Most of the project is to be funded by a state grant. The goal is to rebuild the levees to meet "200-year flood event" standards — a point where flood insurance will be not be required at all.

Biggs Under Construction

The flurry of road paving and sidewalk installation projects in 2009 is now coming to a close. We appreciate your patience with the inconveniences of many months of road work.

Plans for 2010 include repair of damaged wastewater collection lines, and the beginning of a 12-month project for repairs to sidewalks.

Underground: Some wastewater collection pipes (also known as sewer main lines)



were damaged by contract construction equipment during installation of the new water service lines installed in 2007. Repairs will involve relatively small trenching operations in several locations around town with minimal disruption to service and traffic. We expect this to start in January and be completed within two months.

Sidewalks: The city public works crew will be removing and replacing the least serviceable sections of public sidewalks in a

planned, paced project 12-month. Many sections citywide have suffered lifting or sinking damage over the years. Sidewalk conditions were surveyed and catalogued by a team of volunteer citizens. The City Council authorized funding for the repairs in November and directed city staff to begin the work right away.

Bridge: We also expect to begin and complete replacement of the Sixth Street bridge in 2010. This much-needed project has been awaiting funding assistance from CalTrans. The new bridge will be wider, stronger and safer for vehicles and pedestrians.

Marijuana Restricted In Biggs

Despite the common perception that state law may allow cultivation and use of marijuana under certain circumstances, the City of Biggs has strict local ordinances regulating it. The sight and smell of marijuana—in any form—is considered a public nuisance here.

Biggs recently made it completely illegal to grow marijuana outdoors, no matter how many plants. Cultivation of marijuana outdoors in Biggs is punishable by fines of \$1,000/day and active abatement (removal or destruction of the plants).

BINTF (Butte County Interagency Narcotics Task Force) officers and the city code enforcement team look for local marijuana violations and take assertive action.

Biggs has also outlawed any form of marijuana dispensary from operating in the city limits.

If you would like to report possible marijuana cultivation, sale or use outdoors in your neighborhood, please call 868-5447. A law enforcement or code enforcement officer will follow up your concern.



Support Your Local Street Sweeper

Biggs' streets are power swept on Wednesdays. Every week the sweeper has to go around parked cars. This results in streets that are not as clean as they should be, and storm drains more likely to clog with leaves.

As required by Biggs Municipal Code 8.15.130, please avoid parking on streets on Wednesdays between 7am and 3pm.



Utility Fees: Under Review

Many residents have been understandably concerned with the high cost of metered water and electricity in Biggs this past year. The city staff and council are working hard to control costs and avoid fee increases.



Electricity reward programs.

Biggs' rate structure is different than PG&E's, but Biggs customers generally pay less for the same amount of electricity used. Pending state and federal legislation — like Cap & Trade and Renewable Portfolio Standards—is expected to significantly increase power costs for all customers nationwide in the years ahead.

The city is also closely reviewing the first year's experience with metered water rates. Water rate fees are designed to cover the city's cost of current services and begin building a reserve for future water improvement

projects. Staff will be reporting to council in coming months whether rates are set too high, too low, or just right. The city also will be developing a plan to install water meters for customers who do not yet have meters, as required by state law.

The city is planning a 2010/2011 project to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant with new equipment technologies, as required by state regulations. We are seeking state and federal funding assistance to minimize the impact on Biggs customers. Any financing balance for which the city is responsible will require a review of sewer fee rates.

City Making Major Change in Police Services

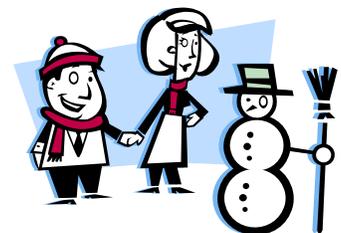
After months of researching and negotiating, the City is expected to arrive at a decision in January as to how to reduce the cost of providing law enforcement services in Biggs. The choice is between a new contract proposal with Gridley and a new proposal from the Butte



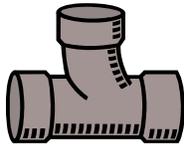
County Sheriff.

While continuing to provide excellent public safety in Biggs, either way the change will save Biggs about 1/2 of a million dollars per year in local tax revenue funds. This will help the city's general fund and reduce pressure on the electric fund, and will enable the city to accomplish other priority projects while protecting its financial reserves.

Stay tuned for the date and time for this important Public Safety decision making.



Sewer Problems?



Call the City first at 868-5493!

As a customer, you pay a monthly utility fee for sewer service. Let us help you first when you have a sewer problem. We will check our portion of the sewer line for problems at no charge to you.

8th Annual Giving Tree



Thanks to the generosity of people near and far Santa was able to bring gifts to local children. The "Giving Tree" is a success, because of the support from the community and Santa is very grateful to everyone who participated.

From the Fire Department

This time of year the Fire Department responds to many structure fires due to chimneys not being cleaned. We are advising homeowners to give your chimneys a good cleaning. The reason for this residue buildup is the lack of chimney use through the year. During this time homeowners start using their fire places again and are not aware of the potential hazard this build up of residue can cause.

Even though the "time change" occurred over a month ago, the Fire Department is also asking you to check your smoke detectors. One to make sure they are operable, and make sure to change the batteries in them. A good rule to go by is when the time changes in spring and fall to try to remember to change your smoke detector batteries.

Informal Meetings with Council

Do you have concerns, questions or suggestions and would like to speak to a Council member about them? Mayor Roger Frith will be holding informal meetings in the Council Chambers located at 3016 Sixth Street on the first Wednesday of each month from 3:30-4:30 pm.

Mayor Frith would like to create a place in which he and his fellow citizens of Biggs can privately discuss their input regarding the city in a comfortable surroundings. If you wish to join Mayor Frith to discuss any concerns, questions or suggestions you have, his first meeting will be on January 6, 2010. If you are unable to meet in person you can email him at rogerf@biggs-ca.gov.



Highlights from 2009

- Achieved removal from FEMA flood insurance map, at least for now.
- Repaved railroad crossings and many streets.
- Added storm drains and sidewalks to neighborhood west of the schools.
- Renovated fresh water wells and provided emergency backup generator.
- 57 unit all-underground utility subdivision constructed north end of Second and Fourth Streets.
- Started using water meters.
- Stability: no utility rate increases, no layoffs, no furloughs.
- Adopted development land use map for future growth.
- Added drinking fountain and can recycling collection stations at parks.

Highlights Planned for 2010:

- Complete police service cost reduction.
- Repair sidewalks City wide.
- Replace Sixth Street Bridge.
- Obtain financing for wastewater treatment plant upgrade.
- Offer free energy efficiency home audits and update rebates.

Upcoming Dates	
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. –Offices Closed
January 25	City Council Meeting— 6 pm
February 15	Presidents Day—Office Closed
February 15	City Council Meeting 6 pm
March 15	City Council Meeting 6 pm