



# City Administrator's Report

October 2005

Dear Reader,

*This monthly report from the City Administrator's Office provides a brief summary and update of major activities, events, projects, and programs that impact the Santa Barbara community. Feel free to share your comments and suggestions with us.*

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## Key Meetings:

- October 4, 11, 18, 25
- City Council meets at 2 p.m. Depending on duration, an evening session at 6 p.m. may follow.

## Community Events:

- October 7, 8, 9
- Santa Barbara Festival of Art & Jazz, Santa Barbara County Courthouse Sunken Gardens, (805) 695-8686  
<http://www.santabarbarafestival.com>,
- October 8
- Mental Health Arts Festival, De la Guerra Plaza, 12-5 p.m.,  
<http://www.mhainsb.org>, (805) 898-0129
- October 9
- Cancer Center Walk/Run, Montecito Union School, 8 a.m., (805) 682-7300, [http://www.ccsb.org/events\\_walk\\_run.html](http://www.ccsb.org/events_walk_run.html)
- October 15
- Santa Barbara Harbor and Seafood Festival, Santa Barbara Harbor, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., (805) 897-1962  
[http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Visitor/Things/Waterfront/Harbor And Seafood Festival.org](http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Visitor/Things/Waterfront/Harbor_And_Seafood_Festival.org)
- October 30
- PEP Children's Costume Parade, Anapamu Street to De la Guerra Plaza, 11 a.m., <http://www.sbpep.org>, (805) 687-8785

- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Teaming up for Safety Fair, De la Guerra Plaza, 12-3 p.m., (805) 564-5703

Flags on State Street:

- October 1-6                   ▪ Ensemble Theatre
- October 7-21               ▪ Community Arts Music Association of Santa Barbara, Inc. (CAMA)
- October 21-31             ▪ Fighting Back

**City Administrator**

***Santa Barbara adopts Biloxi as Sister City:*** Ever since the human need became apparent following Hurricane Katrina, many in our city came forward with creative offers of help, including packing suitcases of items that were delivered directly to people in need. Some of our coworkers are on the Gulf Coast now assisting the American Red Cross, and some of us are getting ready for a City Employee Rummage Sale to benefit our adopted city of Biloxi, Mississippi on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The U.S. Conference of Mayors matched Biloxi (pop. 50,644) with Santa Barbara, as well as other cities so as not to burden any one adopting city.

The public is invited to support the Rummage Sale that will be held at MacKenzie Park from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Contact Robin Hamlin from Streets Division (560-7504) and Lorraine Cruz Carpenter from Looking Good Santa Barbara (386-2361) if you need more information about the sale.

***City employees provide Katrina and Rita hurricane relief support:*** Proceeds from a rummage sale planned for October 22<sup>nd</sup> will benefit the victims in Santa Barbara's adopted city of Biloxi, Mississippi – population 50,644. Organized by City of Santa Barbara employees, the event is open to the public and will be held at MacKenzie Park from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Funds raised will be donated to the American Red Cross, and any unsold items will be donated to local shelters. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, gently used clothing and household items can be taken to 3101 State Street from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, please contact Lorraine Cruz Carpenter, Looking Good Santa Barbara, at (805) 386-2361, or Robin Hamlin, Streets Division at (805) 560-7504

***"Inside Santa Barbara" on City-TV Channel 18:*** The October edition airs October 8<sup>th</sup> through November 9<sup>th</sup>. Feature segments include the city's Solid Waste Program, United Way Day of Caring, Highway 225 Relinquishment, the city's internal recycling efforts, and Santa Barbara's response to Hurricane Katrina. "Inside Santa Barbara" weekly air times are Mondays at 8 p.m., Tuesdays at 5 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., Saturdays at 9 p.m., and Sundays at 10:30 p.m.

**SBA employees volunteer at New Orleans Airport:** This month, two Airport Maintenance Division staff members will spend two weeks at New Orleans International Airport (MSY), helping to repair damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. The American Association of Airport Executives sent a message to airports in the national air transportation system seeking aid for MSY. Some of the needs include: heavy equipment operators to mow the airfield where foot-high grass is obscuring signage, carpenters, and maintenance people with airfield experience. Due to the positive response, airport workers are being scheduled by an outside agency to fill the shifts. Since there are no hotel/motel rooms available anywhere near MSY, the Santa Barbara Airport staff members and other volunteers will sleep on cots at the airline terminal.

**Passenger survey indicates convenience factor is a high priority:** Earlier this year, a survey of SBA enplaning passengers was conducted over a six-day period at various travel times. More than 700 questionnaires were completed, providing an extraordinary 95% response rate. Tri-county residents constituted more than half of the survey respondents while 35% lived out-of-state, and 3% were from outside of the country. Survey results showed that 29% of passengers comprise 71% of the yearly trips taken from SBA; and 63% of those trips are for business. The SBA frequent flyer demographic profile is: male, 35-54 years old, a Santa Barbara County resident traveling on business. Travelers' key reason for using SBA was convenience, and the average number of business trips taken per year was 14; with 11 of those from SBA. Based on both a detailed statistical analysis as well as qualitative comments, passengers clearly appreciate the small-town charm, friendly/intimate ambiance, beauty, and ease of use of SBA.

## Community Development Department

**Planning Commission update:** The next Planning Commission regular meeting is October 20th; the regular meeting on October 13th has been canceled.

October 6th – Among other items, the Planning Commission considered a proposal for 1568-1576 La Vista del Oceano Drive, to connect the upper and lower portions of the drive and allow construction of up to four new homes. This project, along with others in the area, will result in resolution of most of the remaining parcels in and around the Rogers Tract, an old subdivision that does not meet today's standards.

October 20th – The Planning Commission is tentatively scheduled to review a revised project at Veronica Meadows (900-1100 Las Positas Road) that responds to concerns expressed by the Planning Commission at the July 21st hearing. That hearing would start at 9 a.m. In the afternoon, the Commission will consider a 10-unit project at 210 Meigs Road that also will require a zone change and General and Local Coastal Plan amendments. The Commission will also consider 3885-3887 State Street, replacing an existing motel (12 rooms and manager's apartment) and offices (22,000 square feet) with a mixed-use project that includes 55 one-bedroom condominiums (including 17 affordable units) and 9200 square feet of commercial area.

**HUD escrow has closed for the 95-unit Villa Caridad senior affordable rental development at St. Vincent's:** Financing closed on September 28th for Villa Caridad. The project will provide 95 new units of affordable rental housing for low and very low income seniors on the St. Vincent's site near the intersection of Highways 101 and 154. The developer, Mercy Housing California, brings nearly \$11 million in federal senior housing funds to Santa Barbara to build the long-anticipated project, and the Redevelopment Agency has contributed nearly \$9 million. Construction is expected to start immediately at the site where 75 units of family housing are already under construction. Extensive work by city and agency staff, and the City Attorney's Office was involved in completing the negotiations and documents.

**Lower Eastside Infrastructure Project:** The city recently advertised for bids on the Punta Gorda – Voluntario Street Improvements Project. The project consists of sidewalk, curb, gutter, paving, and conduit for future street lights on Punta Gorda Street from Voluntario Street to the sidewalk just beyond Sycamore Creek; and on Voluntario Street from Punta Gorda Street to Indio Muerto Street. Also included is a new bus stop with provision for wheelchair access. This project will complement a new 20-unit Housing Authority project recently constructed on Voluntario Street.

The design of this project was funded by a Community Development Block Grant. Construction is being funded by a combination of Streets Division funds, including Measure D funds, and grant funds from a Workforce Housing Reward Grant program. Construction is scheduled to start before the end of 2005.

Begin this year.

## Finance Department

**Sales Tax Grows 3.7%:** For the quarter ended June 30th, the city's sales tax revenue was up 3.7% over the same quarter in the prior year. Although sales tax revenue growth continues to be well below the growth rates of transient occupancy tax (TOT) and property tax, the city did post a modest 2.2% growth in fiscal year 2005. Because of the way in which the state pays the sales tax, the table below reflects revenue on an economic basis for fiscal year 2005, not on an accounting basis.

Quarter Ended	FY 2002	Change from Prior Year	FY 2003	Change from Prior Year	FY 2004	Change from Prior Year	FY 2005	Change from Prior Year
Sept 30	4,407,462	-3.7%	4,556,500	3.4%	4,536,571	-0.4%	4,512,083	-0.5%
Dec 31	4,646,788	-0.2%	4,548,826	-2.1%	4,765,855	4.8%	4,946,706	3.8%
Mar 31	3,915,141	-2.6%	4,016,831	2.6%	4,289,056	6.8%	4,367,907	1.8%
June 30	4,349,512	-3.9%	4,373,358	0.5%	4,621,598	5.7%	4,793,216	3.7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 17,318,903</b>	<b>-2.6%</b>	<b>\$ 17,495,515</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>\$ 18,213,080</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>\$ 18,619,912</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

**August Transient Occupancy Tax Grows 10.8%:** August continued the recent strong growth in TOT revenue, making it the fourth consecutive month of double-digit growth. After two months of the fiscal year, TOT is up 12.2% over the same two month period of the prior fiscal year.

	FY 2002	Change from Prior Year	FY 2003	Change from Prior Year	FY 2004	Change from Prior Year	FY 2005	Change from Prior Year	FY 2006	Change from Prior Year
July	\$ 1,171,041	-2.8%	\$ 1,183,951	1.1%	\$ 1,198,952	1.3%	\$ 1,301,652	8.6%	\$ 1,477,898	13.5%
Aug	1,276,212	2.3%	1,328,278	4.1%	1,349,990	1.6%	1,357,717	0.6%	1,504,589	10.8%
Sept	808,657	-15.1%	849,174	5.0%	887,095	4.5%	931,244	5.0%		
Oct	790,919	-5.8%	830,054	4.9%	863,919	4.1%	914,718	5.9%		
Nov	653,829	-5.4%	684,776	4.7%	696,742	1.7%	721,982	3.6%		
Dec	539,598	-9.2%	529,694	-1.8%	553,094	4.4%	575,075	4.0%		
Jan	511,090	-11.7%	583,413	14.2%	584,653	0.2%	606,484	3.7%		
Feb	611,322	-2.8%	616,824	0.9%	703,493	14.1%	699,349	-0.6%		
Mar	783,829	1.9%	704,942	-10.1%	782,652	11.0%	872,554	11.5%		
April	822,209	1.5%	793,352	-3.5%	875,760	10.4%	941,281	7.5%		
May	856,251	1.7%	817,047	-4.6%	895,378	9.6%	1,001,450	11.8%		
June	1,012,905	0.0%	942,897	-6.9%	973,955	3.3%	1,157,985	18.9%		YTD
<b>FY Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,837,862</b>	<b>-3.3%</b>	<b>\$ 9,864,403</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>\$ 10,365,683</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>\$ 11,081,490</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>\$ 2,982,487</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$ 9,779,115</b>		<b>\$ 9,974,700</b>		<b>\$ 10,273,900</b>		<b>\$ 10,684,900</b>		<b>\$ 11,504,200</b>	

Note: This report includes only the 10% unrestricted TOT revenues. Beginning in January 2001, an additional 2% is credited to Creek Restoration and Water Quality Improvement (Measure B).

## Fire Department

**Red Flag Alert declared for Santa Barbara County:** The decision to apply this alert was based on the countywide fire risk conditions. The city’s Fire Department is not adding any additional manpower at this time, but the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has assigned one additional “Strike Team” to our front country area. A strike team is comprised of five fire engines, and one of those engines is assigned to station seven of the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department. Currently, we have two air tankers assigned at Santa Barbara Airport. Additional air resources are also available.

**Santa Barbara firefighters sent to the Topanga Canyon area fires:** The 14 firefighters returned home on October 1st after spending three days defending properties from the fires. Only two homes were lost. Authorities are crediting the building and landscape rules adopted after the massive 2003 fires for protecting structures.

**Katrina response:** Five Fire Department employees responded via the mutual aid system to aid in Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. Two of the employees have now returned, and the remaining three will be returning within days. Other firefighters also went with their churches or other organizations to help in the area.

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual “Teaming up for Safety” fair on October 30<sup>th</sup>:** Many city departments and Emergency Service Providers in our community will gather for a day of family fun from noon to 3 p.m. at De La Guerra Plaza. Santa Barbara’s Fire, Police, Harbor, Airport Police, and Animal Control are among the participating city departments and divisions. Everyone is invited to this fun-filled and family-oriented day to learn valuable safety tips.

**Wildland Benefit Assessment District (WBAD):** During a presentation to the City Council last month, Fire Department staff recommended formation of a Benefit Assessment District to fund fire prevention and mitigation programs that would specifically benefit properties in high fire risk areas of the city. Next steps include securing engineering services to analyze potential assessment district rates, boundaries, benefits, and feasibility. The process entails community outreach and surveys after the first of the year, with a possible vote by the affected property owners.

## Library Department

**Santa Barbara Reads with community spirit:** The program enjoyed a successful kickoff at last month's Santa Barbara Book & Author Festival. Julie Otsuka, author of "When the Emperor Was Divine," had a lively discussion with attendees about her novel, her family's experience in the U.S. internment camps of World War II, and about the craft of writing. On October 1st, the Library hosted a special Read-Aloud of Otsuka's book at the Faulkner Gallery of the Central Library. Twenty readers including Congresswoman Lois Capps, Mayor Marty Blum, Councilmembers Roger Horton, Helene Schneider, and Dan Secord, Barney Brantingham of the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, Marianne Partridge of *The Santa Barbara Independent*, and Steve Cushman, executive director of the Santa Barbara Region Chamber of Commerce, enthralled the audience with their creative interpretations.

## Parks and Recreation Department

**City employees lend helpful hands for United Way's Day of Caring 2005:** On September 17th, more than 72 city employees, family members and friends volunteered their time, energy, and enthusiasm for this annual event. Assigned to three different sites – St. Vincent's, Art from Scrap, and Ortega Park – participants painted, cleaned, did yard work and sorted art materials. Employees from the Parks and Recreation, Police, and Public Works Departments plus family members and friends, helped beautify Ortega Park. The group spent the day painting Ortega Welcome House, a rental facility and community building in the park, and replacing more than 145 feet of benches – including cutting, priming and painting the lumber. The seven youth who participated stained more than 40 of the park's picnic tables and benches. Special thanks to Frazee Paints for donating much of the paint.

**Hundreds attend free classes at Carrillo Recreation Center:** Last month's week-long Open House attracted 368 participants. The promotion was designed to introduce the public to the many youth and adult classes offered at this downtown location. September's attendance was more than double the turnout from last January's free-week event. Salsa dancing was by far the most popular class, drawing 105 people for the two classes. More than half of the attendees completed evaluation surveys required to enter a raffle worth \$100 towards Parks and Recreation Department programs. The department will track results following the first six-week sessions of these classes to see how many new students consequently enrolled.

**Ortega Park Improvement Project receives \$100,000 grant:** The State Urban Parks and Healthy Communities Grant Program awarded the funds to the Parks and Recreation Department for the sports field improvement project currently underway at Ortega Park. The field is 75% complete and will be ready for use in January 2006. The grant program helps to

fund projects that focus on active recreational facilities for youth. Components of the Ortega Park Improvement Project include the removal of street paving from the previously abandoned Quarantina Street right-of-way, expansion of the grass playing field, and the removal of outfield lights to create a large, uninterrupted area for soccer and other field sports. Field improvements include regrading, new grass and irrigation, and resurfacing of the clay infield.

**Older athletes compete at 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Masters & Open Track & Field Meet:** Club West and the Parks and Recreation Department co-sponsored this event at UCSB. Eighty-five athletes over the age of 50 competed against their own best personal record and some of the nation's best athletes in 25 different events. Congratulations to the So Cal team for setting a new American record in the 4 x 800 meter relay. *Santa Barbara News-Press*, Northern Trust, and the Santa Barbara Athletic Association also sponsored this year's meet.

**Creeks Division Completes Sycamore Creek Restoration Projects:** Two clean-up and restoration projects completed this summer were part of the Neighborhood Creeks Stewards Program. The success can be attributed to the many volunteers who lined up to participate in two planting days: in July at Cacique Street, and in August at Liberty Street. The Creeks Division provided hand tools, gloves and watering cans to volunteers. Families and children of all ages assisted in this community effort. Restoration of the sites will help prevent erosion of the creek banks, mitigate flooding and improve the quality of community spaces and trails.

## Police Department

**Death threats lead to pursuit and arrest:** A former husband with a history of tormenting his former wife had scrawled nasty notes on her vehicle with a black marking pen. When she went out to investigate, he slowly drove past. He threatened to kill her and commit suicide. Officers checked the area and found him driving a few blocks away. Instead of yielding, he led police on a mile-long pursuit, abandoned his vehicle in a condominium complex on Las Positas Road, and fled into Arroyo Burro Creek. A squad of officers cordoned off the area and arrested the suspect in a nearby residential area. He was booked for making criminal threats, vandalism, violation of a restraining order, evading arrest, and possession of marijuana.

**Car thief arrested:** When officers responded to Hughes Pontiac last month at 400 Hitchcock Avenue, a disgruntled former employee confronted his former boss, knocked everything from his desk and caused minor damage. The man had been fired for fighting with other employees and for being a 'hot-head.' He made death threats to an employee and left. Minutes later he appeared at nearby Graham Chevrolet where he jumped into a brand new vehicle and tried to take off. The owner's son tried to stop him, but backed off when the suspect said, "I've got a gun." The suspect fled in the stolen vehicle and was followed by a witness. Sheriff's deputies assisted by arresting the suspect as he parked at an apartment complex off Storke Road. The man was booked for car-jacking, criminal threats, battery, vandalism, and resisting arrest.

**Rapist sentenced:** On September 22nd, Charles David Venzor, age 44, was sentenced to 108 years-to-life in prison. The sentence followed his conviction for the rape of a 27-year-old woman that occurred in 2002. Venzor had stalked the woman from a west beach convenience store to a darkened apartment driveway, where he choked, battered, and assaulted her for 30-minutes. A massive investigation led to the identity and arrest of Venzor three days later. The

heavy sentence was pursuant to the Three Strikes law, and followed two prior convictions for violent sexual assaults.

**Continuing gang problems:** Daytime gang activity has been a frequent problem since school opened this fall. Groups of gang members and their rivals often cross paths on public streets. The results have been mostly minor fist-fights, but the potential for increased violence is ever present. Officers and detectives have prevented several such skirmishes by their presence and knowledge of individual gang members. In an example of effective enforcement, detectives stopped a Cadillac driving in a problem area because some occupants had warrants. One passenger was arrested for a felony assault charge, another for a recent fight incident, a third for traffic warrants, and a fourth for possession of marijuana. In another incident, two gang members were arrested following a fight between rival gangs at an upper State Street restaurant.

## Public Works Department

**City property at 404 Garden Street auctioned:** The highest bidder for the M-1 zoned parcel was local architect Pete Ehlen, who bid \$242,000 for the 2,546 square-foot parcel. The purchase offer is subject to the approval by the City Council and slated for the October 25th City Council Meeting.

**New traffic signal at Santa Barbara and Ortega Streets intersection:** These lights will help maintain the flow of traffic on Santa Barbara Street and assist with the street crossings near the new school. The work will also include updated access ramps and is expected to be completed by Lash Construction during December 2005.

**Local roads rehabilitation project will resurface two arterial city streets with rubberized asphalt:** Recycled rubber will be incorporated into the roadway asphalt to provide a longer-lasting and quieter surface. The rubberized asphalt mix as required in the specifications for this project will recycle roughly 7,500 used tires.

The project locations are Hollister Road between Aero Camino and the bridge over San Pedro Creek near Fairview Avenue, and Chapala Street between Mission Street and East Constance Avenue. In addition, five new access ramps will be constructed along Hollister Road, and 16 new access ramps will be constructed along Chapala Street. The work is expected to begin in mid-October and continue for approximately three months, weather permitting.

Granite Construction Company was awarded the \$1,694,289 contract. Penfield and Smith will be responsible for the daily inspections and construction management. Please contact Anna Bosin, project engineer, at (805) 564-5383 with any questions regarding this project.

**League designates City of Santa Barbara a Bicycle Friendly Community:** Santa Barbara was recognized in May by the League of American Bicyclists as one of 16 United States cities improving conditions for bicyclists and bicycling safety. The Silver level designation is the city's second. In this round of applications, the League indicated that Santa Barbara came very close to moving up a level to Gold.

A few of the bicycle friendly features recognized as unique to Santa Barbara included: the city's bicycle fleet and street skills instruction; participation in school-age and adult bicycle safety instruction; the large number of licensed and certified instructors; our street sweeping program; high levels of city staff participation in Bike to Work Day and the Team Bike Challenge; and the bicycle parking facility in the Granada Garage. Points to work on included: reducing the number of bicycle collisions; increasing bicycle safety education in the schools; and increasing the mileage of bicycle facilities.

For information about the Bicycle Friendly Community Program, visit [www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org](http://www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org).

## Waterfront Department

**Harbor and Seafood Festival set for October 15th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.:** Timed to celebrate the opening of commercial lobster season (October 5th), this annual autumn festival benefits the Ben Page Youth Center and showcases a plethora of delectable regional seafood specialties. The festival includes an all-day fishermen's market, crab boil, albacore barbeque, 15 agency informational booths, free sailing lessons, free boat rides, deep sea diving demonstrations by Santa Barbara City College, 40+ arts and crafts booths, kids' activities, and live music. New this year, Chuck's Waterfront Grill will offer seafood cooking demonstrations throughout the day. Boat tours include *The Spirit of Dana Point* tall-ship, NOAA/CINMS *Shearwater* research vessel, and Coast Guard Cutter *Blackfin*.

**Sapphire Princess visits Santa Barbara:** The 943-foot cruise ship made a one-day port visit in Santa Barbara last month, anchoring about one mile outside Santa Barbara harbor at 7:15 a.m. and departing just after 6 p.m. This member of the "grand class" of Princess Cruise Line ships disembarked a total of 2,600 passengers during the day at Sea Landing via six, 149-passenger transport vessels, working in rotation. The ship's captain allowed no crew liberty during the visit. This is the first cruise ship visit of 2005, and no other such visits are anticipated before year's end. As with the last cruise ship visit, hospitality was coordinated between the Santa Barbara Conference and Visitors Bureau, Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce, and the Santa Barbara Downtown Organization. Primary security was coordinated between the ship, the Coast Guard, city Police, and Sea Landing. Garbage and sewage were self contained. There was no dumping within 12 miles of the Santa Barbara coast – nine miles in excess of the legal limit. No water service was necessary.