



City Administrator's Report

January 2006

Dear Reader,

Happy New Year! 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:

January 10, 24, 31 ▪ City Council

Holidays:

January 16 ▪ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – City Hall closed

Community Events:

January 7 ▪ Electronics Recycling Event, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., CompUSA Electronic Collection Event, 7090 Marketplace Drive, Goleta.

January 15 ▪ Annual rose pruning at the A. C. Postel Memorial Rose Garden across from the Santa Barbara Mission, 8:30 a.m. All are welcome to help.

January 26 ▪ Annual Luncheon: Downtown Citizen of the Year Award, Harriet Miller Youth Leadership Award, and the George Gerth Volunteer of the Year Award, 11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Hotel Andalucia (Riviera Ballroom), 31 West Carrillo Street, RSVP by January 23, (805) 962-2098, ext. 22, cost: \$40.

- February 2 - 12
- 21st Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival, (805) 963-0023; http://www.sbfilmfestival.org/html/contact_us_sbiff.html

Flags on State Street:

- January 2 - 16
- SEE International
- January 16 - 30
- Planned Parenthood
- January 30 – Feb. 13
- Santa Barbara International Film Festival

City Administrator

New fire chief appointed: The City Council has approved the appointment by City Administrator Jim Armstrong of Ron Prince as Santa Barbara's new fire chief. With 31 years in the fire service including 20 years as fire chief, Chief Price bested a field of 25 applicants from a nationwide search. He will assume his new post on January 30, 2006.

"Inside Santa Barbara" on City-TV Channel 18: The January edition airs January 7 through February 4. Feature segments include: Staff Hearing Officer Process Improvements; Ortega Street Bridge Artwork; Graffiti Hotline; Tour of the City's Website; Skater's Point Skate Clinic; and the Parade of Lights. "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.

Airport

November passenger traffic shows slight increase: There was a .3% increase in passenger usage at the airport over the same month in 2004. Close to 69,000 passengers arrived and departed in November, bringing the year-to-date increase to 3.9%. The most heavily traveled routes from Santa Barbara Airport (SBA) in November 2005 were *United Express* to Denver and *America West Express* to Las Vegas. The current forecast for the total passenger count indicates that 2005 will be the highest year in SBA history.

New fee for rental car companies at SBA: Effective January 1, 2006, the on-airport rental car companies will be imposing a Customer Facility Charge (CFC) of \$10 per contract on rental car transactions. The funds generated from the CFC will be used for financing, designing, and constructing a consolidated rental car maintenance and storage facility at SBA.

Due to the site constraints of the Airline Terminal Improvement Area, the rental car companies will have office and counter space as well as 170 ready/return parking spaces, but no on-site maintenance facilities or storage area at the Airline Terminal. The current location for these facilities will be demolished as part of the Airline Terminal Project.

Airport staff has identified a site in SBA's commercial industrial area for the design and construction of a joint-use consolidated maintenance and storage facility for the rental car companies. This facility would include fueling, washing, light maintenance and storage of up to 500 vehicles. The facility will cost approximately \$3.5 million and be fully operational by July 2009.

Tracking on-time arrivals and departures: Of the top 100 U.S. airports, Santa Barbara ranked #7 for the percent of on-time arrivals (87.8%) and #18 for departures (88.1%) during October. SBA had 2,094 total commercial flight operations during the month. Other national airports with a comparable number of flights were Akron, Des Moines, Fresno, Huntsville, Islip (New York), Kahului (Maui), Long Beach, Pensacola, and Spokane.

Community Development Department

New building application requirement: To expedite the Zoning Plan Check portion of building permit applications, Planning staff has developed a [Zoning Plan Check Basic Compliance Checklist](#). The checklist will help applicants determine potential problem areas, and serve as a reminder for including certain informational items on the plans. This checklist will become a mandatory building permit plan check submittal requirement for most projects, starting January 17, 2006.

To view the checklist, please visit www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Resident/Home/Forms/Planning.htm. For questions regarding this checklist or the submittal requirement, please go to the Planning and Zoning counter at 630 Garden Street between 8:30 a.m. and noon, or 1 - 4:30 p.m., or call (805) 564-5578.

Shake-up in seismic regulations: The Santa Barbara City Council has adopted new seismic regulations recommended by the State of California. This ordinance will be in effect for plans submitted for a building permit on or after January 13, 2006. These new regulations are mostly technical in nature and deal with the calculations and engineering requirements for new structures and for seismically upgrading existing buildings. The full text of this ordinance is available at <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Resident/Home/Forms/building.htm>. For questions, please call Mark Wilde, senior plan check engineer at (805) 564-5485, or email him at mwilde@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Planning Commission personnel changes: Appointed in December by the City Council, Addison Thompson – who previously served on the Airport Commission – has joined the Planning Commission. Harwood "Bendy" White has been re-appointed, and Jonathan Maguire resigned from the Commission at the end of his term due to conflicts with work hours.

Planning Commission meetings will be held on January 5, 12, and 19. Highlights include:

- January 5: Report and discussion on Views and View Corridors.
- January 12: Consideration of proposed utility undergrounding projects around the city.
- January 19: Workshop on how traffic analysis is conducted.

Staff Hearing Officer program begins in February: On December 13, 2005, the City Council adopted a number of discretionary process amendments in order to delegate certain discretionary projects to a Staff Hearing Officer (SHO). What this means is that approximately 25% of projects that would have been reviewed by the Planning Commission will now be reviewed administratively by this new officer.

The main goal of the SHO program is to improve and simplify the discretionary planning process for projects that are generally non-controversial and do not involve major land use policy considerations. The benefits include freeing up Planning Commission time to spend on projects with broader community and policy issues. This also will enable staff to put their resources into the larger projects, while streamlining the smaller, less controversial ones.

The program will continue to afford the public full access and ability to comment, as the meetings will be televised. The first meeting of the SHO is expected to take place on Wednesday, February 13, in the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room. City Planner Bettie Weiss will act as the Staff Hearing Officer to get this program off the ground. For more information, contact Bea Ramirez at (805) 564-5470.

Fire Department

Wildland Fire Plan funding: In January 2006, City of Santa Barbara property owners living in the high fire hazard area will be receiving a survey questionnaire regarding the Fire Department's Wildland Fire Plan. This plan and its companion Environmental Impact Report were adopted by the City Council in May 2004. The Wildland Fire Plan details a proactive, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to reduce the impact of wildland fire in our community. The city is looking at possible funding for full implementation of the plan through a Benefit Assessment District. The survey will determine the feasibility of community support for such a funding measure. The Wildland Fire Plan can be viewed on the web at http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Resident/Safety/Wildland_Fire/Wildland_Fire.htm.

Finance Department

Sales tax revenue shows impressive gain: Sales tax for the quarter ended September 30, 2005 was up 14.5% from the same quarter a year ago. This is good news for the city. Strong growth for the quarter was projected, but certainly not at this level. We have no information yet regarding the performance of the various sectors. Therefore, how much of the growth is attributable to general retail sales, how much is due to sales tax on gasoline as a result of higher gas prices, and the impact of increased auto sales because of the "employee-pricing" discounts during the quarter, etc. are unknown at this time. Whether this represents an anomaly or is indicative of stronger growth across several sectors has yet to be determined.

Quarter Ended	FY 2003	Change from Prior Year	FY 2004	Change from Prior Year	FY 2005	Change from Prior Year	FY 2006	Change from Prior Year
Sept 30	4,556,500	3.4%	4,536,571	-0.4%	4,512,083	-0.5%	5,164,138	14.5%
Dec 31	4,548,826	-2.1%	4,765,855	4.8%	4,946,706	3.8%		
Mar 31	4,016,831	2.6%	4,289,056	6.8%	4,367,907	1.8%		
June 30	4,373,358	0.5%	4,621,598	5.7%	4,793,216	3.7%		
Totals	\$ 17,495,515	1.0%	\$ 18,213,080	4.1%	\$ 18,619,912	2.2%		

Transient occupancy tax (TOT) Up 12.1%: The city had another very strong month for TOT. Revenues for November 2005 were up 12.1% from November 2004. Fiscal year-to-date growth is now 12.2%.

Month	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%	\$ 1,477,789	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%	1,109,428	19.1%
Oct	790,919	-5.8%	830,054	4.9%	863,919	4.1%	914,718	5.9%	963,261	5.3%
Nov	653,829	-5.4%	684,776	4.7%	696,742	1.7%	721,982	3.6%	809,684	12.1%
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
FY Total	\$ 9,837,862	-3.3%	\$ 9,864,403	0.3%	\$ 10,365,683	5.1%	\$ 11,081,490	6.9%	\$ 5,864,751	12.2%
Budget	\$ 9,779,115		\$ 9,974,700		\$ 10,273,900		\$ 10,684,900		\$ 11,504,200	

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).

Library Department

“Yankee Barbareños” published: Using a manuscript written by her husband, the late Walker A. Tompkins, and owned by the Santa Barbara Public Library, Barbara Tompkins has edited and published “Yankee Barbareños: A History of Santa Barbara County 1796 - 1925.” In 1964, the Samuel Mosher Foundation awarded a grant to Mr. Tompkins for the purpose of writing this history, with the manuscript to be given to the public library. A draft manuscript was finished but never prepared for publication. Now, Mrs. Tompkins has done a thorough job of fact-checking, adding photographs and drawings, and editing the work for publication. This is a fascinating overview of the Americanization of Santa Barbara County and is now available at local bookstores and local public library branches.

Bequest to benefit Library Department: The Santa Barbara Public Library is one of nine local non-profit organizations to benefit from a bequest from the Fenton Davison Trust. Mr. Davison was a patron of the public library, but gave no indication that he would be contributing to Library services. The Library received \$450,000 from his estate, which will be used over time to enhance the materials collection budget, and to replace selected furnishings at the Central Library.

Parks and Recreation Department

Los Baños Pool to re-open on January 14: All surface expansion lines have been repaired and the pool is currently being cleaned, filled, and heated to prepare for the Saturday re-opening. The city’s popular swimming pool was closed on December 17, 2005 to make warranty repairs on the surface expansion line along the floor of the pool. For further information, please call the Aquatics office at (805) 897-2680.

Community Gardens renovation wins CPRS Award: The California Park and Recreation Society (CPRS) has selected the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation's Community Gardens renovation project as the Award of Excellence winner in the category "Community Services: Neighborhood and Community Life." Community Services spearheaded the project to renovate the city's three community organic gardens – Rancheria, Pilgrim Terrace, and Yanonali – resulting in a thriving and vibrant community resource for predominantly lower income neighborhoods. The award will be presented at the CPRS Banquet on Saturday, March 18 in Ontario, California.

IPM Advisory Committee work session scheduled on PHAER Zone model and green parks: The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Advisory Committee will hold a work session on Saturday, January 7, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Casa Las Palmas. The committee will review a draft of the proposed Pesticide Hazard and Exposure Reduction (PHAER) Zone model which will go to the Park and Recreation Commission on January 25, and to the City Council on February 14. The work session will include liaisons from the Park and Recreation Commission, the Creeks Advisory Committee, and City Council members Das Williams and Iya Falcone as City Council liaisons to the two committees. Preliminary PHAER maps indicate that over 95% of city park land could be maintained "green," which is exceptional progress for the city's IPM program. The work session will focus on specific implementation challenges including sustainable park landscaping, vegetative fuels management, threats to habitat and human safety, and funding priorities.

Police Department

Roll-over kills driver: A 25-year-old man drove his 1991 Toyota Pathfinder off the roadway at 400 Loma Alta, and down the steep hillside. The vehicle rolled over an unknown number of times before resting upside down against a thick oak tree. Two passengers fled the scene, abandoning the mortally wounded driver on the ground. He was taken to Cottage Hospital and pronounced dead. The passengers reluctantly gave accounts of reckless driving and alcohol consumption. The deceased man was determined to have been driving under the influence of alcohol.

Road-rage claims a life: While a 43-year-old man was minding his own business on the sidewalk in front of his residence at 400 East Haley Street, the drivers of two vehicles became embroiled in a road-rage fit brought on by a minor traffic violation. The offended driver 'flipped off' the other man and a three-block battle of speeding, braking, swerving, and reckless driving led to one man losing control of his Ford Mustang. Completely out of control, his vehicle smashed into a parked pickup truck, sending both vehicles onto the sidewalk. The residential victim became enmeshed in the steel wreckage, suffering mortal wounds to his hip, leg, and torso. This driver was unlicensed and arrested for voluntary manslaughter. The other driver fled, but was later located and arrested for driving on a suspended license and voluntary manslaughter.

Gang member arrested: Officers patrolling the lower Eastside spotted a known gang member in a stolen vehicle. As they moved in to make a traffic stop, the suspect sped away. A short pursuit ended only when the gang member crashed head-on into another motorist. A foot chase ensued before the 21-year-old suspect was arrested and charged with auto theft, reckless driving, and for his participation in a criminal street gang. A female juvenile attacked the officers, and was arrested for battery on the officers. The driver of the vehicle, which the “G-Ride” (stolen vehicle) crashed into, was treated and released with minor injuries.

Public Works Department

News from El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant: Wastewater staff is working with the city's Ordinance Committee to investigate opportunities to improve wastewater infrastructure by requiring property owners to inspect and maintain their private sewer pipeline laterals. An Ordinance Committee work session will be held on this subject on January 31.

El Estero is undertaking several significant construction projects. During that time, staff continues to operate the plant in full compliance within permit limits.

Aging sewer lift station to be replaced: In 2003, the City Council authorized the Public Works Department to explore alternatives to construction to abandon an aging sewage lift station in San Marcos Gardens. The least costly alternative was determined to be to connect to a new gravity sewer system being installed as part of the adjacent St. Vincent's Mercy Housing Project. The City Council on December 13, 2005 approved a connection to the new sewer main. The city was able to obtain the same prices from the contractor installing the sewer system at St. Vincent's, which was a publicly bid project that saves mobilizing and overhead costs. The contractor will use micro-tunneling, which precludes disruptive trenching in the San Marcos sub-division. Construction is anticipated to begin in February 2006.

Punta Gorda-Voluntario Street improvements project: Construction is scheduled to begin January 9 and continue for 2½ months, weather permitting. The project is located along Punta Gorda-Voluntario Street between Indio Muerto Street and the Sycamore Creek Bridge. This project includes the installation of new sidewalks, curbs, and gutters, four access ramps, conduit, and pull boxes for future street lighting, seven new street trees, and resurfacing of Punta Gorda and Voluntario Streets within the project limits. Contact Anna Bosin, project engineer, at (805) 564-5383 with questions.

Waterfront Department

Harbor Patrol rescue boat re-powered by new grant: Harbor Patrol recently refurbished its 1983 fire response vessel with twin 350hp diesel engines manufactured by Volvo Marine, an industry-recognized environmental leader producing low emission engines. The increase in vessel power and reliability maintains the ability for rapid emergency response, as well as improved vessel towing. The retrofit was funded by a grant from Department of Boating and Waterways for \$60,000.

Storm damage recovery: During recent storms, the Waterfront area fared well, with the exception of three vessels washing ashore on city beach property and one vessel on county property. An additional vessel sank on its mooring in the anchorage. The sunken vessel was recovered with the efforts of Harbor Patrol and maintenance divers. Regarding the beached vessels on city property, one vessel was demolished and removed by the owner, another vessel was floated by an outside contractor AIS Construction, and the last vessel remains on the beach pending owner's actions. If the city takes on the tasks of demolition and removal, the estimated cost is between \$2,000 and \$3,000. In past years, the city – really the local taxpayers – have often borne the expense of vessels washed ashore and abandoned. This year, a \$75,000 grant from the Department of Boating and Waterways will reimburse costs associated with vessels washed ashore and abandoned, up to ninety percent of the actual costs, in fiscal year 2006.

Sea otters: The City Council on December 13, 2005 sent a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as part of the 90-day comment period on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Translocation of the Southern Sea Otter. The letter supports the efforts of USFWS to change zonal management practices and end translocation, citing ecological benefits afforded by the presence of otters in coastal waters. In addition, the letter encourages Congress to remedy the inconsistency that will occur with the abolition of the translocation policy. Staff will return to the City Council with a resolution that rescinds Resolution No. 99-091 in the near future.