

# Concord City News

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE CITY OF CONCORD

Summer 2012

## News Corner

### Spray Park Opens

The grand opening for the new Meadow Homes Spray Park, Detroit Avenue and Sunshine Drive, will be held Friday, June 15 at 10:30 a.m. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, the park will be open to the public. Admission is free.

### Graduations televised

Mt. Diablo School District high school graduations will be televised live from the Sleep Train Pavilion on the City's cable TV channels 28 (Comcast), 29 (Astound) and AT&T U-verse 99, and streamed live from the City's website at [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org).

### Commercial recycling

Beginning July 1, commercial businesses that generate four cubic yards or more of solid waste per week and multi-family complexes with five or more units are mandated to recycle. Concord Disposal Services will be assisting these customers with new or improved recycling programs to meet this new requirement.

### Sign up today

Receive monthly email newsletters and the Police Department's emergency notifications at [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org). Select "Subscribe to eNews" from the icons in the right column.



Four of Concord's new Park Stewards report for duty. Left to right, Carmen Estrada, Carol McKenna, Rodney Scheer and Gina Scheer

## New Park Stewards act as ambassadors and educators

Concord Police and Parks staff now have extra hands to help them manage the use of City parks. With 27 parks and playgrounds spread over almost 32 square miles, it's quite a task to oversee all the activities that take place. A new Park Steward Program, coordinated through Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS), was created to maintain a presence in Concord parks to improve the park experience for all Concord residents. The stewards, who will always work in teams of two, can be recognized by their uniforms, a blue VIPS shirt or vest with tan or dark blue pants.

The Park Steward role is that of ambassador, educator, and outreach worker, but not an enforcer. In many cases, park users may be unaware of the rules or

restrictions related to an activity. Park Stewards will be invaluable in educating the public about the rules. If a situation arises that requires assistance, a police officer or other City staff will be called in as appropriate.

Some of the common issues Park Stewards may be called upon to address or investigate include:

- Push cart vendors (not allowed to operate in parks)
- Unpermitted ice cream trucks, taco trucks or other vendors
- Unregistered sports teams using City playfields
- Complaints about transients

# Proposed balanced budget resolves \$3.5 million gap

For the first time in four years, the proposed General Fund Budget and 10 Year Financial Plan being presented to the City Council for consideration is a balanced budget. While the City made significant strides in past years in closing the General Fund structural budget deficit, which reached \$17 million at its high point, the problem has not been completely solved. After lay-offs, pay freezes, union concessions, reductions in City services, and the passage by voters of a half-cent sales tax, the gap has been reduced to \$3.5 million. The proposed fiscal year 2012-13 budget includes several measures to bridge this gap, although not without making some hard choices.

The City Council will hold Budget Hearings at its regularly scheduled meetings June 5 and June 26. Residents are encouraged to attend the hearings, which will be held in the City Council Chamber at Civic Center, 1950 Parkside Drive.

The City's budget picture this year has been impacted by very good news on one hand and very bad news on the other. The

good news is that the half-cent sales tax passed by voters in 2010 is on target to bring in over \$9 million this fiscal year. The bad news is that the California legislature eliminated Concord's Redevelopment Agency, along with all redevelopment agencies in the state. The agency provided many services to the community, and the City provided services to the agency. Approximately \$4 million in projects and programs (everything from affordable housing and façade improvement projects to music programs in Todos Santos Plaza) will either need to be eliminated, paid for through private partnerships or absorbed by the General Fund, adding to the challenge of balancing the General Fund Budget and 10 Year Financial Plan.

The proposed budget uses a combination of revenue enhancements, cost savings and expenditure reductions to bring the budget into balance and restore reserves to the 15 percent mark. Approximately \$1.2 million of the \$3.5 million will come from organizational efficiencies and economies

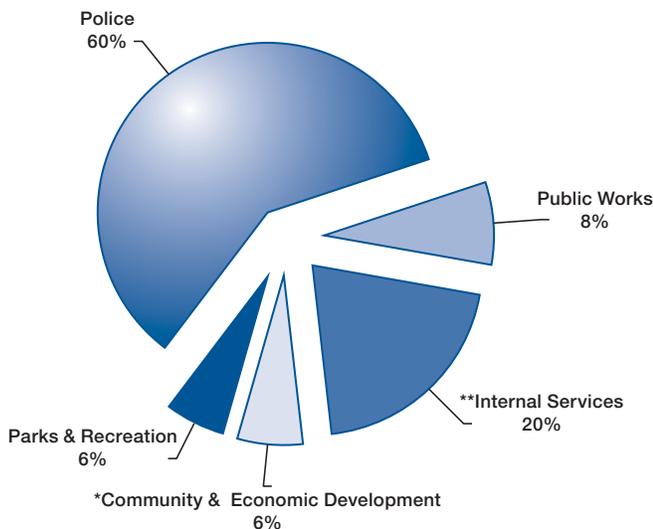
such as reductions in postage, printing, training, supplies, overtime, part-time hours, and increases in revenues through vendor charges and other administrative actions.

The remaining \$2.3 million is proposed to come from revenue enhancements that include new fees to be phased in over several years and expenditure reductions that include shifting the costs for services to the agencies that benefit from the services, elimination of some programs, and potential elimination of several full-time positions.

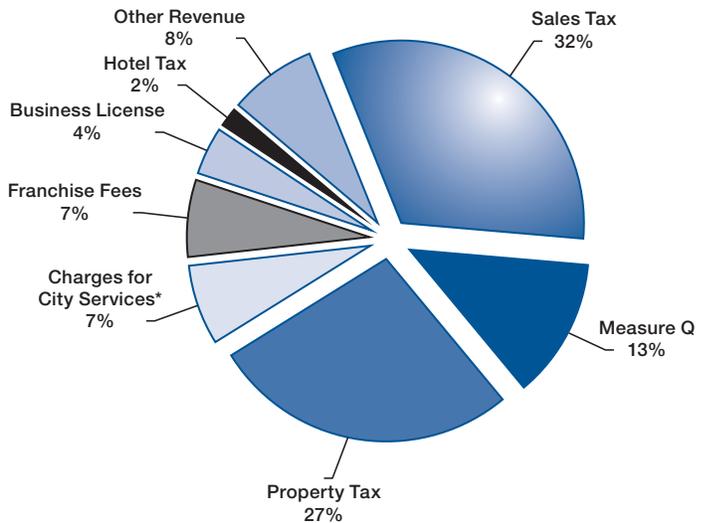
The proposed budget document is available on the homepage of the City's website, [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org), in the News and Events box. A reader's copy is available in the City Manager's office at Civic Center, 1950 Parkside Dr.

The Budget Hearings will be broadcast live on Concord cable TV channel 28 (Comcast), channel 29 (Astound) and AT&T U-verse channel 99 and will be streamed on the City's website at [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org). ♦

**General Fund Expenditures by Department**  
\$71.9 Million



**General Fund Revenue by Source**  
\$74.9 Million



\*Planning, Economic Development, Building, Engineering, Housing, Current Development  
\*\*Finance, Human Resources, City Attorney, Office of the City Manager

\*For example: Parks and Recreation programs, Planning fees, Inspections, etc

## Concord's summer music program and special events to continue thanks to community support

With the demise of California redevelopment agencies, Concord's much-loved summer concert series in Todos Santos Plaza lost its funding. City officials recognize the value of the series and want to continue to support the program. Thanks to fundraisers and sponsorships, the 'show will go on' this summer, although changes have been made due to the budget shortfall.

The Tuesday Music at Noon program has been cancelled, but the Thursday Music and Market Series opened May 31. Hours remain the same with music on the Todos Santos stage from 6:30 to 8 p.m., and the Farmers' Market in the plaza from 4 to 8 p.m. Highlights include the rockin' soul sound of The Fundamentals (June 28), Motown greats the Best Intensions (July 26) and the Michael Jackson tribute band Foreverland (Aug. 9). The series runs through Sept. 26.

The August movie nights after the Thursday night concerts are another casualty of the budget cuts. The California Symphony concert, typically scheduled for a Saturday, will take place this year on Thursday, Aug. 30 as part of the Music and Market series.

During the month of July, the Tuesday Night Blues series returns to the Plaza from 6:30 to 8 p.m. beginning July 3 with local blues diva Annie Sampson. The evening includes a vintage car show. The concerts continue through July 31.

### Special Events in Todos Santos Plaza

- DadDay salutes Father's Day on Sunday June 17 with the third annual Chili Cook-off, pitting firemen, Concord police officers and members of the Contra Costa County District Attorney's office in a hotly contested battle for the top prize. A beer garden, Corvette show,



*The very popular Motown group The Best Intentions performs July 26*

blues music and the monthly Todos Santos Antique Fair offer something for everyone.

- The July 4th Parade and Jubilee features a traditional pancake breakfast at 8 a.m., the Concord Police Association Stars and Stripes Run at 8:30 a.m., and the annual parade stepping off at 10 a.m.
- National Night Out on Tuesday, August 7 at 6:30 p.m. brings families together with police officers to highlight safe neighborhoods. Music for the event is by Stung, a Police/Sting tribute band.

Todos Santos Plaza is located in downtown Concord on Willow Pass Road between Mt. Diablo and Grant streets. Free parking is available in two municipal garages. For more information, call the downtown hotline at (925) 671-3464 or visit [www.concordfirst.org](http://www.concordfirst.org). ♦

### Can't make the concert?

Thursday concerts are broadcast live on Concord cable TV channel 28 (Comcast) channel 29 (Astound) and channel 99 (AT&T U-verse) and are streamed on the City's website [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org)

### Supporters make music possible

The Thursday Night Music and Market program as well as the events planned for this summer in Todos Santos Plaza could not go forward without the generous contributions of the following:

- \$50,000 community grant from Concord Disposal Service
- \$14,100 from a banner project with the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce
- \$12,000 in proceeds from the April 15 Save Our Series benefit
- \$10,000 in donations collected from audience members last summer
- \$10,000 sponsorship from Tesoro Refinery for the July 4th parade
- \$5,000 grants from both Sonoma Bank and Grocery Outlet
- \$4,000 grant from the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market
- \$1,000 grants from the Hot Dog Palace, Concord Police Officers Association and property owner Ed Andrews

# Reconsidering 50-year-old zoning regulations through Development Code Update

The City is in the process of updating its Development Code, which includes the City's zoning regulations. The existing zoning regulations are over 50 years old. Concord has grown and changed a lot in the last 50 years and it's time for the zoning rules to catch up. Zoning is an important tool for shaping new development, protecting property values and quality of life, and keeping Concord a great place to live and work.

Concord adopted a new General Plan in 2007, providing a long-term vision for the City's future. The plan described new types of development (such as downtown housing over retail shops) which would be difficult to achieve under current zoning regulations. The General Plan also includes policies which conserve and enhance Concord's neighborhoods, revitalize its downtown and shopping areas, and strategically direct new development to strengthen the community, create jobs, and make the City more pedestrian friendly. Updating the Development Code is an important part of making this vision a reality.

Zoning affects everyone who owns a home or business. Each property in the city is located in a particular zoning district. The districts divide the city into residential zones, commercial zones, and industrial zones, among others. Each district includes regulations that allow certain uses, require special permits for other uses, and prohibit some uses completely. Zoning also regulates the height of buildings, lot sizes and dimensions, required setbacks (the distance between structures and property lines), the required number of parking spaces, and other aspects of construction.

Over the last 50 years, Concord's zoning rules have been amended



*Zoning guides the use of property and establishes standards for building height, floor area, parking, open space, and other aspects of construction. Pictured: Salvio Pacheco Square in downtown Concord*

many times, making the existing code confusing and sometimes hard to follow. Outdated terms appear throughout the code, and some of the standards are based on technology and development practices from the 1950s and 1960s. An important goal of the Development Code Update is to incorporate standards which protect creeks, hillsides, and natural resources, and encourage more sustainable building practices. Another important goal is to streamline regulations and permit processes, and create a more user-friendly code.

In existing single family residential neighborhoods, the new zoning rules will not be substantially different from the current rules. In other areas, particularly in commercial and industrial districts, proposed changes could affect the types

of uses that will be allowed in the future, and the process for their approval. New rules may also affect the design of new construction, additions, and alterations.

The Planning Commission has been holding work sessions on the Development Code since November 2010, and a number of briefings have been presented to the City Council. For more information, visit [www.concordcode.org](http://www.concordcode.org) to review the proposed regulations and view the proposed Zoning Maps. The website also offers residents the opportunity to sign up for email updates with information about upcoming public hearing dates. The Development Code is scheduled for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council this summer. ♦

# Help City reduce costly wire theft

With the rising cost of metal, Concord and cities across the nation have had a significant increase in copper wire thefts. The City is asking residents to help stop these thefts by reporting suspicious activity and evidence that the thieves have been at work. Used widely in construction, copper wire is virtually everywhere and easily accessible. Over the last few years, these thefts have cost the City almost \$400,000 in repair and replacement costs.

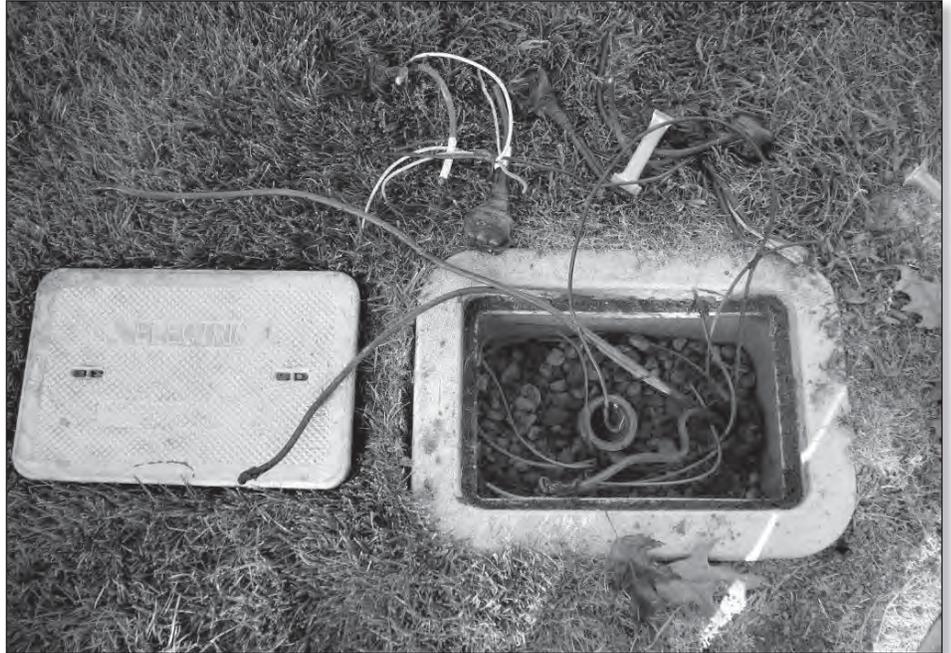
The biggest targets in Concord are the wires used for lighting the city. Copper has been taken from lights that illuminate city streets and city parks, as well as from traffic signals and from park irrigation control systems. Thieves are accessing the wire through in-ground access boxes and then pulling the wire out of the ground. Outlying city streets with little traffic as well as dark areas in city parks or along the path next to BART are prime targets.

The chief targets for local businesses are large electrical wires and air conditioning units on rooftops. Darkened businesses and businesses in areas that have little traffic at night are prime targets.

Thieves are also attracted to vacant residences and those under construction or remodel. With no one home on quiet residential streets, thieves have the time to carry out the thefts of electrical wiring without fear of being interrupted.

## What to look for

Copper thieves often take multiple days and many trips to the target site before actually stealing the wire. They may wear orange or green construction safety vests during the day so that they can appear to be part of a legitimate construction crew. However, if there are no officially marked trucks or other pieces of equipment nearby, residents



*Thieves access copper wire through in-ground electrical boxes*

should be aware that these individuals may be scoping out an area for wire theft later on.

These thieves like to operate at night, in dark or dimly lit areas in order to go undetected. Be alert for anything that looks out of place in neighborhoods or City parks, or for people conducting what looks like late-night construction projects. Report damaged in-ground electrical access boxes or streetlight outages.

## Who to call

- Call **911** if you see wire theft in progress.
- Call **671-3333 (Concord Police)** to report suspicious activity or evidence that wire thieves have been at work.
- Call **671-3448 (Public Works)** to report damaged in-ground electrical access boxes or streetlight outages.

Wire theft is one of the major contributing factors to the growing backlog of service requests to repair streetlights and park lights. Although

numerous efforts have been made to make it harder for the thieves to access the wire, many locations have been hit five to seven times, giving the public the impression that no repairs have been completed. Thank you for assisting the City in reducing these thefts. ♦



## Recycling thefts

Curbside recycle thefts are on the rise as a result of increased value of metals. The Concord Police Department encourages anyone who witnesses a theft of curbside recycling to call 671-3333.

# District Commanders and Community Policing

The Concord Police Department has long been committed to the Community Policing model, through which the public and other agencies are involved in finding long-term solutions to community problems. To facilitate this approach to the delivery of police services, the City is divided into two areas, the Southern District and the Valley District. The districts are identified in the map below. Sgt. Robert Brady has the Southern Command and Sgt. Russ Norris has the Valley Command.

District Commanders establish partnerships with formal neighborhood organizations and other groups in the community. They attend community meetings, acting as a resource, facilitator, and liaison between the department and the community while, at the same time,

enhancing public safety and quality of life in the City through the identification and direction of police, City, business and community resources.

The District Commanders also perform a variety of administrative duties such as

the review of zoning permits, policies, and the issuance of alcoholic beverage and entertainment permits.

For more information, contact Sgt. Brady at (925) 671-5067 or Sgt. Norris (925) 671-5041. ♦

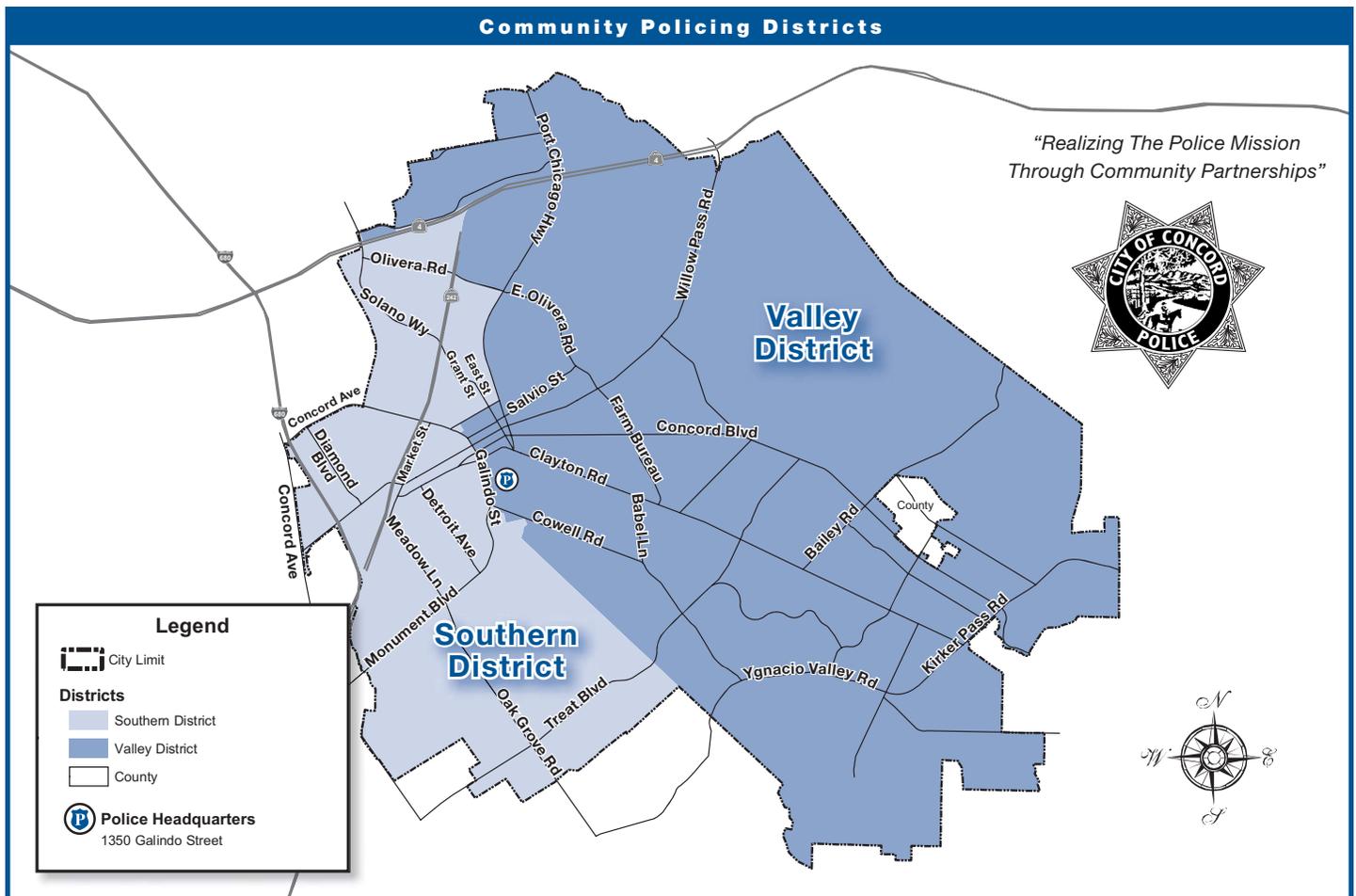
**Concord Police District Commanders**



*Sgt. Robert Brady*



*Sgt. Russ Norris*



## Sidewalk safety, tree trimming and weed control

Well-maintained trees, shrubs and hedges add to the beauty of Concord neighborhoods. In the interest of public safety, however, they should be maintained so that they do not block public right-of-ways. Here are a few tips:

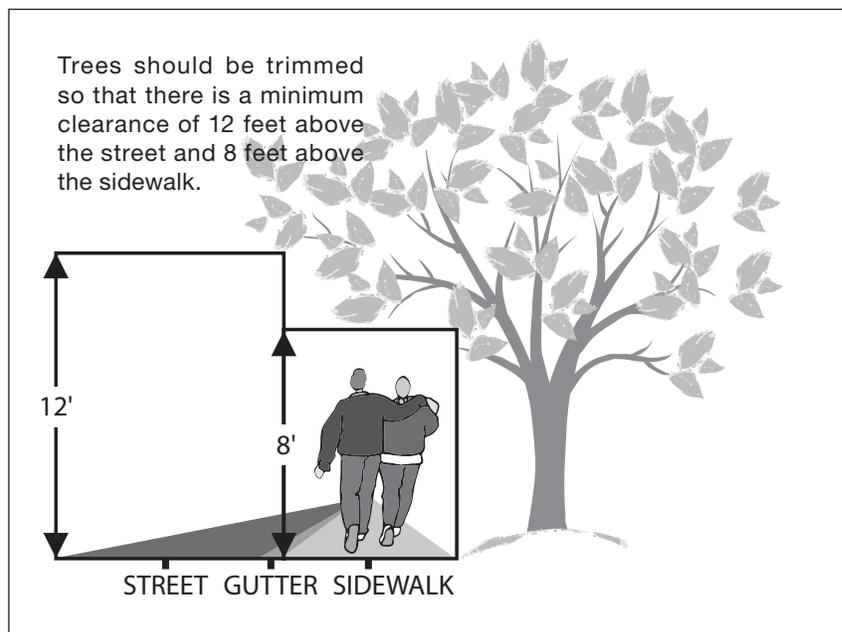
- Overhanging vegetation such as tree branches should be trimmed to a minimum height of 8 feet above the sidewalk and 12 feet above the street.
- Trim hedges or shrubs so they don't extend beyond a property line into a public right-of-way or interfere with people walking on a public sidewalk or street
- Foliage that obstructs the view, especially on a street corner, should be trimmed or removed to provide adequate visibility
- Treat or remove any tree, shrub, hedge, or plant that is diseased or insect-ridden and constitutes a hazard

Now is also time to pull the weeds that have sprouted up in the yard. The City's code sets a maximum height of eight inches for grass and weeds; any growth above eight inches is considered a nuisance. Here are some tips to help control or prevent weeds.

- Keeping grass cut to the right height helps to shade weeds out of existence. Mowing too low or too high can result in more weed growth.

- Mowing regularly helps to remove the flowering seed parts of many weeds and makes it harder for them to seed their next crop.
- Pulling or digging out weeds is better than cutting them, because cutting sometimes leaves roots that then spread out.
- Keeping a lawn healthy discourages weeds. Weeds love poor, under-fertilized soil. Good lawn maintenance is the best weed control policy.

Overgrown plant material can create a fire hazard, provide a breeding ground for rodents and insects, and can make a neighborhood look less attractive. Regular maintenance of existing landscaping and the removal of weeds will help to enrich the character of the neighborhood and enhance property value. For more information, contact the Concord Police Department Code Enforcement Unit at 671-3075. ♦



## Foreclosed properties a problem for City and neighborhoods

Foreclosed properties have become a nationwide problem as typically there is no one available to maintain the vacated properties. The City often receives calls from neighbors asking for foreclosed properties to be cleaned up.

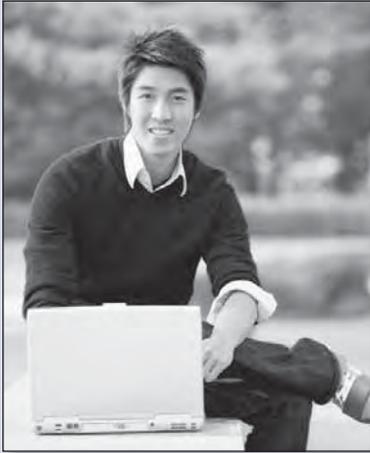
While the City has the authority to conduct the clean-up of the vacated properties, the courts require that the property owner be notified and given the opportunity to comply voluntarily. Most

foreclosed properties are owned by banks. Tracking down and communicating with out-of-town or out-of-state banks and persuading them to maintain their vacant properties may take many months.

Vacated properties that look abandoned (mail accumulating on the driveway, discarded items in the front yard, overgrown vegetation) often spawn criminal activity. Understanding the amount of time it takes for the legal owners to reply to the

City's demands to bring the property into compliance, several neighborhoods have been successful in deterring such activity by taking it upon themselves to keep vacated homes from looking abandoned by keeping the property exterior free of trash and overgrown vegetation.

Neighbors should report foreclosed properties that have become a nuisance to the Code Enforcement Unit of the Concord Police Department at (925) 671-3075. ♦



## Job applications available online

In April, the City's Human Resources department launched a new online application system. Human Resources opened ten recruitments on the day of the launch and received 29 applications and 699 views of the job postings in the first week of the system being available. By moving the process online, applicants are now able to create and save their applicant profiles, which allows for ease of use when applying for current and future jobs.

The new system also allows Human Resources to communicate with applicants through email notices, and allows applicants to self-schedule exams and interviews. Streamlining the recruiting and hiring process provides better customer service and makes the hiring process more efficient.

To apply for a job with the City of Concord, visit [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org) and select Employment Opportunities from the Human Resources section of the website.

## Hawaiian Fusion fundraiser benefits programs at Senior Center

Tickets are on sale for the 11th Annual Hawaiian Fusion fundraising event on Friday, Sept. 7 at Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Road. Early ticket purchase is suggested as the event is always a sellout.

This year's entertainment features Bruce Shimabukuro, a star ukulele performer and singer/songwriter of contemporary Hawaiian music. He has performed to sellout crowds in Japan, and in 2006 was nominated for a Na Hoku Hano Hano Award (Hawaii's version of the Grammys) as an "Upcoming Artist."

Tickets are \$48 per person or \$430 for table of ten. All seats are reserved. The ticket price includes a lavish Hawaiian buffet dinner of kalua pork, laulau, teriyaki chicken, lomi salmon and poi. At 4:30 p.m., the no-host bar opens as does the Hawaiian Boutique, offering an array of crafts, plants, flowers, baked goods and clothing. Dinner



*Bruce Shimabukuro*

will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the show scheduled to get underway at 7:30 p.m.

Funds generated by the Hawaiian Fusion event support Concord Senior Center program scholarships for disadvantaged seniors. For additional information, call (925) 671-3320 or visit the website: [www.cityofconcord.org/hawaiianfusion](http://www.cityofconcord.org/hawaiianfusion). ♦

## Civic Center recertified as a Green Business

The Concord Civic Center, a Bay Area Green Business Award winner, was recently recertified in the program. Several additional City divisions, including Fleet Management, Parks, and Printing Services, also have current certifications. The Bay Area Green Business Program is a partnership of environmental agencies and utilities that assists, recognizes and promotes businesses and government agencies that volunteer to operate in a more environmentally responsible way. To be certified "green," participants must be in compliance with all regulations and meet program standards for conserving resources, preventing pollution and minimizing waste. For more information about the program, visit <http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov/AboutUsCCC.html>. ♦



*Concord Civic Center*



Stewards from page 1

- ‘Bounce Houses’ in areas other than designated group picnic sites
- Smoking in parks, trails and open spaces
- Unpermitted amplified sound
- Group picnic reservation disputes
- Reporting graffiti
- Reports of drug use or drinking in City parks
- Dogs not on a leash, except in designated dog parks
- Reporting broken or damaged park equipment
- Monitoring of the Concord Skateboard Park for compliance with safety equipment rules

Residents interested in volunteering for the VIPS and the Park Steward program can get additional information by calling (925) 671-3184 or by visiting [www.cityofconcord.org/police/joinin/volunteers/](http://www.cityofconcord.org/police/joinin/volunteers/) ♦

## Help rid neighborhoods and streets of abandoned shopping carts

A new shopping cart recovery program will now make it easier for residents to rid neighborhoods of abandoned carts. Lost and abandoned shopping carts will be picked up from street corners, apartment complexes and residential neighborhoods by a private contractor and returned to the stores that own them. Many merchants already use this service. Those who don't will be encouraged to participate. The cost of running the program will be paid through a per-cart fee paid by the stores to California Shopping Cart Retrieval Company. The City will realize a significant cost savings compared to a similar service that previously was provided in-house.

It's easy to report an abandoned shopping cart to California Shopping Cart Retrieval Company. Choose from three different options:

- 1. Phone:** Call toll free, 800-252-4613 and leave a message 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The voicemail messages are picked up in the morning and forwarded to the drivers in Concord.
- 2. Email:** Go to [www.cartretrieval.net](http://www.cartretrieval.net) and follow the simple instructions.
- 3. Apple iPhone:** Download an app from the company's website that allows residents to take a photo of the lost cart and send it to CSCRC directly. The app identifies the cart's location by GPS coordinates and transmits the information to CSCRC along with the photo. The cart is then added to the driver's pick-up list the following morning.

**Parks  
Make  
Life  
Better!** <sup>SM</sup>



[www.cityofconcord.org/recreation](http://www.cityofconcord.org/recreation)



## Backyard Explorers Day Camp at Concord's Markham Nature Park

Youth entering grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>

Nestled in Markham Nature Park here's a unique opportunity for children to spend the summer in a wonderful park environment. Every week includes on-site creek side crawdad fishing, nature hikes, sports, exciting team building play, games, songs, arts and crafts, outdoor cooking projects and adventure trips.

Weeks starting June 18 to August 17

Regular Program Hours: 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Extended Care Program Hours: 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

To register and for more information visit [www.concordreg.org](http://www.concordreg.org) or call (925) 671-3404

# Neighborhood Preservation renamed Police Department Code Enforcement Unit

Last year, the City's Neighborhood Preservation Division joined the Concord Police Department. The division is now called the Concord Police Department Code Enforcement Unit. Its mission is to foster, maintain, and enhance the quality of life in the Concord community through the development and support of neighborhood partnerships, community education, community technical support, neighborhood clean ups and code enforcement services provided in a timely and efficient manner.

Enforcing residential ordinances remains a high priority for the unit, in order to protect and preserve the basic character and quality of life in Concord neighborhoods. The unit's goal is to maintain a high level of service to the public that results in a clean and safe community.

To contact the Code Enforcement Unit, call 671-3075. ♦



*The Concord Police Code Enforcement team includes, left to right, Administrative Clerk Gail Coddington, Code Enforcement Officers Curt Michael, Jay Lewis, Suzie Crowell, Arnel Jaime and Code Enforcement Unit Supervisor Cpl. Pat Murray*

# Concord in Top 10 for Best Music Scene



*Concordstock 2008*

As Concord fights to keep its Music and Market concert series alive in Todos Santos Plaza, the program received national recognition. Livability.com, a national website that highlights more than 500 of America's best places to live, has included Concord in its 2012 list of the Top 10 Cities With the Best Music Scenes (outside Nashville, New York City and Los Angeles), largely because of the series. Concord came in at number 10.

The list included:

1. Athens, GA, 2. Minneapolis, MN,
3. Portland, OR, 4. Chapel Hill, NC,
5. Omaha, NE, 6. Cambridge, MA,
7. Fort Worth, TX, 8. Madison, WI,
9. Tulsa, OK, 10. Concord, CA

Livability.com noted that the Music & Market Series has brought the community together for many special events including Concordstock in 2008 when 2,052 guitarists converged on Todos Santos Plaza to join Woodstock performer Country Joe McDonald in playing Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" to break what was then a Guinness Book World Record for the largest guitar ensemble. Livability.com also cited the Sleep Train Pavilion, originally built in 1975 to house the Concord Jazz Festival, and the world-renowned Concord Blue Devils Drum & Bugle Corps for their contributions to the Concord music scene. ♦

# Volunteerism and Policing

It has been 28 years since I entered this profession of policing. I have been fortunate in that time to witness some of the greatest changes in providing public safety to communities. And I was blessed early in my career to be able to visit, learn and provide training to so many cities and police departments in North America. I found the most successful police departments all shared a common theme, regardless of the location and size of the agency or city - the manner in which the police department and the city encouraged volunteers.

If we think back to our early childhood, we remember volunteers running our sports programs, the various extracurricular activities in school, and a myriad of community groups such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other youth activities. Youth is the key word. I was one of those volunteers, both for my children and even when I did not have children in the activity - coaching, serving in booster clubs, and even helping with the drama clubs. It was rewarding, fun, and exhausting. I often miss those times when I drive by a sports field and see all of those parents trying to make a difference. I loved coaching youth football and hope someday to return to it.

But there is another level of volunteerism that has a different but equally positive impact on the community; those citizens that belong to various civic groups or help with other community foundations, dedicating so much of their time and energy to a greater calling. I am so impressed with the incredible world-wide and local work of the Rotaries, Kiwanis, Lions, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Masons, and the hundreds of Concordians that make up their memberships. Their commitment and the positive changes they have made to our community are remarkable, especially given the fact that these groups of volunteers have been part of the neighborhood landscape for several decades.



By  
Police Chief  
Guy Swanger

Volunteerism and policing have a shorter history. While Community Policing was being tried in several police departments across the country in the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of integrating volunteers in a police department did not take hold until the 1990s. There were internship opportunities (I began my career as an unpaid intern in a Police Crime Analysis Unit). There were reserve officers and explorer programs that have been outstanding additions to the uniform profession. But no volunteer program has changed the operations in a police department to the degree that the Volunteer in Policing (VIP) effort has.

The idea of bringing volunteers into a police department to assist with operations was welcomed by some but questioned by others. Those first Volunteers in Policing were literally the trailblazers. What started as assisting police personnel filing forms and paperwork has now evolved into several independent community programs. The uniformed VIPs now patrol streets, assist with traffic control, and conduct a variety of assignments throughout their busy day. There is the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and its tremendous impact on preparing our neighborhoods for possible disasters. Volunteers are patrolling our parks, assisting vendors doing work in the police building, serving as police chaplains and there are volunteers even now conducting background reviews on potential volunteers.

I have watched the VIP program grow in my short time here at Concord. As a fellow Concord community member, I am in awe at what they dedicate themselves to in order to improve our community. Most of them spent their life working and getting paid at some job. Now, they show up, with a smile and a ton of energy, and perform any task put in front of them, without any financial gain. They do it because it is right.

I was at an awards luncheon in April for the police volunteers. VIPs were being recognized with achievement awards for the number of hours they have contributed since they have been assisting in the police department. And as they were recognizing some for giving 1,000 hours, I immediately thought of my sons in college. Both of them donate four to six hours per week for community service. It would take the boys over seven years to reach 1,000 hours. And then came volunteer Doug Schuster. 14,000 hours! I cannot even begin to describe how I felt when I handed him his certificate. I see him so often here at the police station. He smiles and waves and goes about improving police service here in Concord. As a volunteer.

I was in a school for police executives when the instructor asked how you know when you have a great police department. I said when other police departments come to you to see how and what you are doing in addressing crime and disorder. Ironically, I learned recently that other cities are seeking out our VIPs for assistance on how to operate their programs. ♦

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**Learn more about the VIPS**  
**Visit [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org) and**  
**type VIPS in the search window**  
**or call (925) 671-3184.**

# Concord City News

**City of Concord**  
 1950 Parkside Drive MS/01  
 Concord, CA 94519-2578

PRSR STD  
 ECRWSS  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 CONCORD, CA  
 PERMIT NO. 207

Ronald E. Leone	Mayor
William D. Shinn	Vice Mayor
Timothy S. Grayson	Councilmember
Daniel C. Helix	Councilmember
Laura M. Hoffmeister	Councilmember
Thomas J. Wentling	City Treasurer
Valerie Barone	Interim City Manager
Leslye Asera	Community Relations Manager and Editor

## Postal Customer

## City Meetings

All meetings are held at Civic Center, 1950 Parkside Dr., unless otherwise noted and are open to the public. Dates are subject to change. For information, visit the website at [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org) (see Civic Center Meetings on the home page), check the meeting notices in the Contra Costa Times or call 671-3000.

City Council	First, second, fourth Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.*
Commission on Aging	Third Wednesday, 1:30 p.m. Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle
Community Services Commission	Third Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Garden Conference Room
Design Review Board	Second, fourth Thursday, 5:30 p.m.
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission	Second Wednesday, 7 p.m.*
Planning Commission	First, third Wednesday, 7 p.m.*
Zoning Administrator	Second, fourth Wednesday, 9 a.m.

\* Broadcast live on Concord Cable TV channel 28 (Comcast), 29 (Astound), AT&T U-verse Channel 99 and online at [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org). Past City Council meetings are also available online.

## Boards & Commissions

For detailed information about the City's Boards and Commissions visit [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org) or call one of the contact numbers below.

Board of Appeals	671-3119
Commission on Aging	671-3419
Community Services Commission	671-3327
Design Review Board	671-3152
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission	671-3440
Personnel Board	671-3310
Planning Commission	671-3152



## Need an Answer?

**Web site:** ..... [www.cityofconcord.org](http://www.cityofconcord.org)  
**Events:** ..... [www.concordfirst.org](http://www.concordfirst.org)  
**Classes:** ..... [www.concordreg.org](http://www.concordreg.org)  
**E-mail:** ..... [cityinfo@ci.concord.ca.us](mailto:cityinfo@ci.concord.ca.us)

Adult Softball.....	671-3279*
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator .....	671-3031
Building .....	671-3107
Business Licenses.....	671-3307
Cable TV Astound Broadband .....	459-1000
Comcast.....	1-800-945-2288
Camp Concord .....	671-2267*
Centre Concord .....	671-3466*
City Council .....	671-3158
City Manager .....	671-3150
Code Enforcement Hotline.....	671-3282*
Concord Community Pool.....	671-3480
Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Project .....	671-3001
Downtown Hotline .....	671-3464*
Economic Development .....	671-3355
Engineering .....	671-3361
Flood Zone Inquiries.....	671-3425
Garbage Collection .....	682-9113
Graffiti Hotline.....	671-3080*
Housing.....	671-3370
Mayor .....	671-3158
Permit Center.....	671-3454*
Picnic Site Reservations .....	671-3404*
Planning .....	671-3152
Police and Fire Emergencies .....	911
Police/Information .....	671-3220
Pothole Hotline .....	671-3228*
Public Works.....	671-3448
Park Maintenance.....	671-3444
Recreation/Registration .....	671-3404*
Senior Center.....	671-3320
Sewer Problems .....	671-3099*
Shopping Cart Hotline.....	1-800-252-4613*
Sleep Train Pavilion Hotline.....	363-5701*
Information.....	676-8742*
Street Light Outages Hotline .....	671-3213*
Street Sweeping .....	671-3448
Street Trees.....	671-3445*
Traffic Safety and Signals .....	671-3132
Willow Pass Center.....	671-3423

\*Information Line