

# West County Newsletter

DECEMBER 2010

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

John's Message	1
Banning Menthol in Tobacco	2
Fighting Air Pollution Starts at Home	2
PG&E Gas Line Locations	3
Planning El Sobrante's Future	3
Getting Ready for Flu Season	4
Breakfasts with John	4
Collaborative Services for Seniors	5
PICTURE THIS!	5
Back Page: Staff Contacts Meeting Schedules Commission Openings	6

## A message from Supervisor John Gioia



2010 has been a challenging year in many ways.

Henry Kaiser (father of the Richmond Kaiser Shipyards and Kaiser Permanente Healthcare) got it right when he said "Trouble is only opportunity in work clothes."

That's my philosophy during this difficult period in our history.

County leadership is particularly challenging during times of economic hardship.

While I'm proud that Contra Costa County has found ways to operate more efficiently and has forged new cost-saving partnerships, we will need to aggressively continue these efforts if we are going to maintain our ability to provide the vital services desired by the public.

In light of this, here are some of my top priorities for 2011:

- Construction of the new state-of-the-art West County Public Health Center in San Pablo (near Doctors Medical Center), slated to break ground this Spring.
- Keeping Doctors Medical Center a fiscally healthy, vibrant hospital that provides high-quality care for West County residents.
- Enhancing youth services in North Richmond, with the goal of building a new youth center.
- Working closely with the newly elected County Sheriff David Livingston, and District Attorney Mark Peterson to insure strong public safety in West Contra Costa.
- Working with County employee unions to achieve cost savings through reasonable and fair compensation and benefits packages that respect the work of employees, without unduly burdening the county budget and taxpayers.

- Developing new air pollution control laws through my service on the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and developing a new "sea-level rise" climate change policy through my role on the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

Of course, this is only a partial list of my goals for next year.

I will be working on many other issues that you'll hear about. As always, I'd like to hear from you about your ideas and concerns.

Feel free to contact my office or attend one of our monthly coffees.

I wish you a happy and healthy New Year!

- John

# Supervisor Gioia Initiates Resolution on Banning Menthol in Tobacco

*“Menthol, which is made from mint extracts, is added to tobacco to make it taste better — a lure for smoking.”*

Contra Costa County has a long history of protecting its residents from tobacco related influences, including reducing tobacco sales to minors and limiting secondhand smoke exposure. Continuing with this tradition, the Board of Supervisors recently passed a resolution, introduced by Supervisor Gioia, urging the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban menthol in cigarettes.

Menthol, which is made from mint extracts, is added to tobacco to make it taste better -- a lure for smoking.

Mentholated cigarettes are preferred by children, young adults, and people of color, due in large part to targeted advertising. For example, 83% of African American smokers choose mentholated cigarettes compared to 24% of white smokers.

The FDA now has the power to regulate tobacco, a relatively new authority.

The Board of Supervisors urges the FDA to use its regulatory power to ban menthol to protect vulnerable populations from the dangers of tobacco.

Contra Costa’s resolution is serving as the model for cities, counties and tobacco control advocates around the United States.

To see a copy of the resolution check Supervisor Gioia’s website [www.cocobos.org/gioia](http://www.cocobos.org/gioia) under Contra Costa Health Disparities.

For more information contact Luz Gomez in Supervisor Gioia’s office at 510-374-3231.

## Fighting Air Pollution Starts at Home

This time of year, when nights can get cold, many people crave the warmth and light of a fireplace or woodstove. There are approximately 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves in the Bay Area. During the winter, wood smoke is a significant source of harmful air pollution.

Wood smoke contains tiny particles, or soot, as well as toxic gases, such as dioxin. These microscopic pollutants can penetrate deeply in the lungs, and are linked to numerous health problems including asthma, chronic bronchitis, and even heart attack. These particles are especially harmful to the 1 in 7 Bay Area residents who suffer a respiratory illness.

As a board member of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (the Air District), Supervisor Gioia supported the development of wood smoke regulations, which now cover the Bay Area’s nine counties.

The regulations cover two areas: woodstoves and fire places in new or remodeled homes, and the burning of wood on days of high pollution.

New homes or significantly remodeled older homes can only install EPA-certified woodstoves, fireplace inserts, pellet stoves, or natural gas devices.

From November through February, the Air District can call a “Winter Spare the Air Alert” when air pollution is expected to reach unhealthy levels. On these days, residents may not use any wood-burning device including a fireplace, woodstove, pellet stove, or outdoor fire pit. Alerts are publicized in a number of ways including through TV, radio, news publications, websites, and email.

There is no doubt that wood fires are appealing. But the appeal is lost when the smoke they produce leads to serious health problems. As an alternative, the Air District encourages residents to convert their fireplaces to natural gas, which is hundreds of times cleaner-burning.

For more information check the Air District’s website [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or call its Communications and Outreach Office at 415-749-4900 or Kate Rauch in Supervisor Gioia’s Office at 510-374-3231.

## Success Pushing PG&E for Gas Line Locations

In the aftermath of the tragic San Bruno gas explosion, Supervisor Gioia sought greater transparency of the location of PG&E's high pressure gas transmission lines. Knowing the location of these gas lines helps first responders prepare and quickly react to gas leak emergencies.

These lines also have strategically placed shut-off valves. Effective, life-saving emergency response depends on knowing in advance where these valves are located, so they can be quickly shut off.

Supervisor Gioia asked PG&E to reverse its long-standing policy of not releasing maps of its gas transmission lines.

PG&E agreed to change its policy and make these maps available to first responders, such as fire agencies and hazardous materials personnel.

Emergency planners will manage the information as they do homeland security documents.

Currently, the State Fire Marshall makes maps available to first responders showing the location of flammable liquid pipelines (such as gasoline and other fuels).

Now, emergency responders are far better prepared to protect the public from dangerous gas leaks.

PG&E is also sharing some pipeline information with the general public, including maps. To learn more, go to [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com) (you'll need to create an online account), or call 1-888-743-7431.

*"Knowing the location of these gas lines helps first responders prepare and quickly react to gas leak emergencies"*

## Planning for El Sobrante's Future

It's a busy time in El Sobrante as residents work with county officials on shaping the community's future — a new community center and an updated general plan amendment to guide future development.

### Visions of a Community Center Take Shape

Supervisor Gioia is supporting citizen led efforts for a new El Sobrante community center. Two plans are being discussed. One would create a center at the vacant El Sobrante Elementary School, with artists' studios, a range of services, and rental spaces for private events such as weddings. The other is to build a new center at the El Sobrante Boys & Girls Club site to expand activities for youth and the general public.

Both visions are in the planning stage, as groups prepare their plans. County park funds can be used to help pay for some of the capital costs of these new facilities.

### A Revised Zoning Plan is Nearing Approval

County planners have been working with the community for years on a revised El Sobrante general plan, a zoning blueprint for future development. The amended plan, which focuses on the San Pablo Dam Road and Appian Way corridors creates more mixed-use space for multi-use housing, office and commercial projects. This area is currently zoned predominantly for commercial use.

An environmental review of the plan was circulated for public comment, which led to revisions. The County Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the plan at its meeting on **January 11, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.** at the County Building, 651 Pine Street, Martinez. This is an opportunity for more community input.

The final step is adoption of the plan by the Board of Supervisors, where public comment is again welcomed. The date of this meeting will be posted on Supervisor Gioia's website. [www.cocobos.org/gioia](http://www.cocobos.org/gioia)

For more information on both of these issues contact Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231.

## It's Not Too Late for a Flu Shot

Flu vaccines are an important way to prevent the spread of the disease and to protect yourself from getting sick.

If you or your family haven't been vaccinated yet, it's not too late.

Vaccines are available through most healthcare providers, including Contra Costa County clinics, community clinics, pharmacies, Kaiser, Doctors Hospital, and private doctors.

Contact your provider for information on getting a vaccine.

You can also check the American Lung Association's online flu clinic locator at [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

The flu is easily spread by sneezing, coughing or casual touching such as shaking hands or sharing a telephone. Research shows that the more people vaccinated in a community, the fewer who get sick.

This year's vaccine is available as an injection or a nasal spray. The spray is available only to healthy people 2 to 49 years old who aren't pregnant.

Some children may need to get two doses of the vaccination, one month apart.

For more information, including more flu prevention tips, check the Contra Costa Health Services' (CCHS) website, [www.cchealth.org](http://www.cchealth.org), or call the CCHS Health Emergency Information Line at 1-888-959-9911 for information in both English and Spanish.

## Breakfasts with John

Supervisor Gioia is continuing his popular community breakfasts, held at rotating cafes and community locations throughout West County.

These breakfasts are a great opportunity to ask questions or talk with Supervisor Gioia about county issues in an informal setting in your neighborhood.

Breakfasts are held on Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

No purchase is necessary and free coffee is provided.

Check Supervisor Gioia's website [www.cocobos.org/gioia](http://www.cocobos.org/gioia) for dates and locations of future breakfasts, which are currently being planned.

You can also call 510-374-3231 and ask to be added to the District One email list to receive breakfast notifications.

We hope to see you for breakfast soon!

For more information contact Joan Carpenter at 510-374-3231.

# Collaborations Help Seniors Thrive

Painful state and local budget cuts have impacted programs for seniors.

Despite these cuts, Supervisor Gioia is committed to maintaining a safety net to ensure seniors receive the assistance they need for safe, healthy living.

The Supervisor's office works closely with many community organizations and agencies assisting seniors. Supervisor Gioia believes that strong partnerships among service providers are key to providing for seniors in times of budget uncertainty.

If you're a senior looking for help, or know someone who is, the County's Office of Aging & Adult Services has excellent information on its website. <http://www.ehsd.org/adult000.html>

Seniors are also encouraged to attend the West County Senior Coalition's monthly meetings held in Supervisor Gioia's office on the second Thursday of every month from 3:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The Coalition, a volunteer group, advocates for seniors in numerous ways.

Some other key resources for seniors include:

**Adult Protective Services**  
(24 hour line to report abuse)  
877-839-4347

**Aging and Adult Services**  
(County services)  
1-800-510-2020

**Contra Costa Crisis Center Hotline**  
(for all concerns)  
1-800-833-2900

**Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano**  
925-676-7543

**Meals on Wheels**  
( home delivered warm lunches)  
510-412-0166

**Nursing Home Ombudsman**  
(for concerns about care)  
925-685-2070

**Senior Lunch Sites**  
1-800-510-2020

For more information (including help getting a copy of the Aging and Adult Services handy resource guide) contact Joan Carpenter in Supervisor Gioia's Office at 510-374-3231.

## Picture This!



Supervisor Gioia in a compost pile at Richmond's 10/10/10 event celebrating "A Day for Climate Change"

Supervisor Gioia on a recent visit to the County's George Miller III Head Start Center in Richmond



Supervisor Gioia and Linda Hunter (The Watershed Project) speaking at this year's Coastal Clean-up on 9/25 at Richmond's Shimada Friendship Park.



Supervisor Gioia and Richmond Mayor McLaughlin distributing toys at the Verde Elementary School Toy and Coat Give-Away on 12/17.



## Office Staff

### Terrance Cheung

*Chief of Staff*

Terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us

El Sobrante Liaison

East Richmond Heights Liaison

### Cynthia Patton

*Office Manager/Scheduler*

cynthia.patton@bos.cccounty.us

### Luz Gomez

*Deputy Chief of Staff*

luz.gomez@bos.cccounty.us

North Richmond Liaison

Montalvin Manor/Bayview Liaison

### Kate Rauch

*District Coordinator*

kate.rauch@bos.cccounty.us

Kensington Liaison

### Joan Carpenter

*District Coordinator*

joan.carpenter@bos.cccounty.us

Rollingwood Liaison

*Contact Us:*

11780 San Pablo Avenue, #D

El Cerrito, CA 94530

(510) 374-3231

(510) 374-3429 Fax

e-mail: John\_Gioia@bos.cccounty.us

Office Hours: Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

*Our Website:*

www.cocobos.org/gioia

## Other Elected Officials

### House of Representatives:

Congressman George Miller, III

(District 7)

(510) 262-6500 - Richmond Office

(925) 602-1880 - District Office

Congressman John Garamendi

(District 10)

(925) 932-8899 or

(925) 757-7187 - District Offices

### State Senate & Assembly:

Senator Mark DeSalunier

(District 7)

(925) 602-6593 – District Office

Senator Loni Hancock

(District 9)

(510) 286-1333 - District Office

Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner

(District 14)

(510) 559-1406 - District Office

Assemblyman Tom Torlakson

(District 11)

(925) 372-7990 - District Office

## Commission & Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in community issues? Want to get involved? The County has numerous citizen boards that advise the Supervisors on a range of issues. For a complete list of openings check the county's website at [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us). Click on Board Advisory Body Information. Applications are available on-line, or through our office. There are current openings on:

### Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board

Fatima Matal Sol - 925-313-6311

### Family & Children's Trust Committee

Anne Struthers—925-521-5062

### Montalvin Manor Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

### Mental Health Commission—consumer seat

Nancy Schott - 925-957-5140

### North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

## Regular Public Meetings

### CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Meets at 9:30 a. m. every Tuesday at the County Administration Building, 651 Pine St, in Martinez

### El Cerrito City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month at the El Cerrito City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

### El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way, off San Pablo Dam Road

### Kensington Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m. the last Tuesday of every month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington, in Kensington

### Montalvin Manor Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at the Montalvin Elementary School on Christine Drive

### North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 5 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month at 515 Silver Avenue in North Richmond

### Richmond City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. every first and third Tuesday at Richmond City Hall, 440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond.

### San Pablo City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month at City Hall, 13831 San Pablo Avenue, Maple Hall, Building Two, San Pablo