

West County Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2010



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

John's Message 1

County receives \$12 million to build new West County Health Center 2

Quick response to heart attacks saves lives 2

County collaborations focus on services to adults released from prison and chronically truant youth 3

Enhanced law enforcement in El Sobrante and North Richmond 4

PICTURE THIS! 4

Urban Agriculture takes root 5

Back Page: Staff Contacts Meeting Schedules Commission Openings 6

A message from Supervisor John Gioia



As the Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2010, I'm looking forward to the County continuing to

meet the needs of our residents despite financial challenges. I'm proud of the great team on our Board.

We've been honest with the public about our challenges and made difficult decisions without letting personal issues get in the way. We're committed to preserving public safety and our critical safety net for vulnerable County residents, even in trying times.

The economic downturn and real estate decline have substantially decreased County revenues. After years of 8% to 10% growth in property tax revenues, we've experienced two years of decline. This hasn't occurred since the Great Depression.

The unprecedented state deficit and cuts to counties add to this downturn. Plus, substantial stock market losses will result in the County needing to set aside more money to meet pension obligations.

That's the bad news.

There is hope.

I draw inspiration from a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope."

We understand the pain that is caused by being forced to cut vital County services. But we're not sitting back; we're confronting our challenges.

Our Board recently voted to support a constitutional convention to overhaul our broken state fiscal system, recognizing the budget crisis won't substantially improve without structural change. Last year, I participated in a statewide summit of 500 local elected officials working to develop principles for state reform.

We're continuing the important work of County government, strengthening relationships with community organizations, and even embarking on new initiatives.

In my District, partnerships have created two new youth centers — RYSE in Richmond, and the Young Empowerment Center in North Richmond.

The County's unique partnership with the West Contra Costa Healthcare District is responsible for saving Doctors Hospital. The County recently received \$12 million in federal funds to rebuild the Richmond Health Center at Doctors Medical Center.

These are proof that even in difficult times "infinite hope" brings positive results.

This is the momentum I'll strive to continue as Chair.

We know we're facing another year of a tight budget, and probable cuts. I believe that the talent, creativity and diversity of our residents and employees will get us through these times.

- John Gioia

County Receives \$12 Million in Federal Funding to Build New West County Health Center

“Supervisor Gioia has worked for many to improve the Richmond Health Center...”

Efforts to rebuild the County's 45-year old Richmond Health Center received a major boost in December as the project received \$12 million in federal funding.

Supervisor Gioia went to Washington DC with County Health Director Dr. William Walker to accept the funds at a White House ceremony.

The County is working with the West Contra Costa

Healthcare District to build a new state of the art health center on the site of the Doctors Hospital campus.

Doctors Hospital is governed by a joint board composed of representatives from the County and the healthcare district with Supervisor Gioia serving as the Chair.

Supervisor Gioia has worked for many years to improve the Richmond Health Center which is crowded and has chronic maintenance problems.

Various options have been discussed at community meetings.

Locating the new health center next to Doctors Hospital will help both facilities share resources and provide more comprehensive services to the community.

For more information contact Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231.

Quicker Emergency Heart Attack Response in Contra Costa

Contra Costa County emergency service providers' treatment of one of the most deadly kind of heart attacks is faster than the national average – resulting in saved lives.

Supervisor Gioia, and the rest of the Board of Supervisors, heard a recent report from Contra Costa County's Emergency Medical Services Agency on the treatment of STEMI (ST-elevation Myocardial Infarction) heart attacks, which are often fatal. Since the County implemented a special STEMI response plan in 2008, Contra Costa County's intervention time for STEMI heart attacks was reduced to 74 minutes, compared to a national average of 90 minutes. This is the time from when a patient arrives at the hospital to medical intervention. This 16 minute difference is significant with heart attack treatment, as time is of the essence.

The STEMI response system is a collaboration between local hospitals and emergency responders (fire agencies and ambulance), who notify emergency room staff that a STEMI patient is en route. Participating hospitals are prepared to treat a STEMI attack from the second the patient arrives, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In West County, Doctors Hospital in San Pablo is a STEMI facility.

Supervisor Gioia is especially pleased by the County's intervention times because his father died of cardiac arrest at age 58.

Supervisor Gioia was a leader in a collaborative effort in 2005 to place heart defibrillators in community locations throughout the county.

For more information contact Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231.

Everyone Deserves a Second Chance...

Two Projects in the Works

Supervisor Gioia has been working closely with two new projects aimed at helping at-risk youth and adults build positive futures.

Contra Costa County Reentry Initiative

The Contra Costa Reentry Initiative, launched last year, is a Countywide project to improve services for people released from prisons and jails.

A collaboration of the offices of Supervisors Gioia and Federal Glover; the City of Richmond; and Urban Strategies (a nonprofit organization), the Initiative looks at ways to strengthen support for the County's reentry population to prevent recidivism, or a return to jail.

The Initiative received start-up funding from the California Endowment, a private health foundation that provides grants to community-based organizations throughout

California.

Research shows that reentry success depends on the availability of housing, employment, job training, education, healthcare, and advocacy.

The Initiative's goal is to work with community organizations and government agencies to streamline and strengthen reentry services in all of these areas. It will focus on the West and East parts of the County, where most of the re-entry population lives.

At RYSE Youth Center: A Pilot Program to Keep Chronic Truants in School

The Richmond Police Department and the Contra Costa County Probation Department are working with the RYSE Youth Center on a pilot program to help chronic truants stay in school.

Instead of sending youth into the juvenile justice system, they would be

referred to a "diversion program" at the Youth Center.

The program will focus on providing educational, job training, and other support to help chronic truants succeed in school, and beyond.

Chronic truants often end up committing other crimes, and struggle to develop positive lives with promising employment.

Program supporters hope to help turn around this negative cycle.

Students who are successful in the program could get their criminal records wiped clean, giving them a fresh start.

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

"Research shows that reentry success depends on the availability of housing, employment, job training, education, healthcare, and advocacy."

Enhancing Law Enforcement for West County Communities

Supervisor Gioia is spearheading several efforts to improve public safety in West County communities even in tough budget times.

Board of Supervisors: Budget Cuts Won't End Misdemeanor Prosecutions

All County Departments have tightened their belts to adjust to recent budget cuts, including the District Attorney's Office. But when facing the possibility that the DA's office couldn't afford to prosecute misdemeanors, the Board of Supervisors, with Supervisor Gioia's strong support, voted to make sure this didn't happen. The Board voted last November to transfer \$700,000 from the County's reserves to insure misdemeanors will be prosecuted through the budget year. The funds will pay for the continued salary of prosecutors.

El Sobrante Considers Assessment for a Resident Sheriff Deputy

El Sobrante residents (including the Municipal Advisory Council and Chamber of Commerce), with the support of Supervisor Gioia, are working on a June ballot measure that would ask voters if they support a property assessment to fund a resident Deputy Sheriff devoted just to El Sobrante issues. If adopted, residents would pay about \$37 per year to fund a fulltime deputy sheriff who would cover unincorporated El Sobrante.

This "resident" Deputy would be in addition to the existing sheriff patrols, not a replacement. The new Deputy would focus on quality of life issues, working closely with the community. The measure requires a two-thirds majority for approval.

For more information contact Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231.

Increased Law Enforcement in North Richmond

Supervisor Gioia and Sheriff Warren Rupf worked together last year to increase Deputy Sheriff patrols in North Richmond. The increased law enforcement presence was achieved by redirecting funding from other county departments (Redevelopment, Housing Authority, Health, and Employment & Human Services) and re-deploying deputies. As a result, Deputy Sheriffs are now deployed in teams of two and patrol North Richmond almost around the clock.

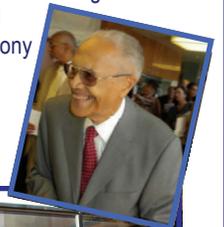
For more information contact Luz Gomez at 510-374-3231.

Picture This!

(right) West County Healthcare District Director Eric Zell, Congressman George Miller, and Supervisor Gioia at a news conference on 1/25/2010 announcing \$12 million federal grant to build a new West County Health Center



(below) Congressman George Miller, Retired Judge George Carroll, and Supervisor Gioia at the Judge George D. Carroll Renaming Ceremony in Richmond 10/16/2009



(above) The Ed Fund Director Jennifer Henry, Supervisor Susan Bonilla, Deputy Chief of Staff Luz Gomez, and Supervisor Gioia presenting at the 2010 Board Reorganization Luncheon in Richmond.



Daughter Emilia stealing the show!



Urban Agriculture Taking Root in West County

From thriving home gardens, to school gardens, to fresh garden produce delivered to a pick-up place near you, Supervisor Gioia is supporting efforts to promote urban agriculture in West County. This includes forming the new West County Urban Agriculture Steering Committee in collaboration with the City of Richmond and community groups. One of the committee's main goals is to help make healthy, fresh locally-grown produce accessible and affordable to West County residents.

Richmond Farm 2 Table Growing to New Pick-Up Sites

Richmond Farm 2 Table, a non-profit community farm box program, co-founded by Supervisor Gioia, is adding pick-up spots in 2010. The program delivers a variety of locally-grown fresh produce to sites around West County twice monthly. Members pay \$50 a month, with discounted boxes available for low-income families.

Current pick-up sites include the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center on Harbour Way in Richmond, Supervisor Gioia's office on San Pablo Ave. in El Cerrito, and the Richmond Children's Foundation office in Pt. Richmond. City employees can pick up their boxes at City Hall. **New sites in the works include at Contra Costa College and in Kensington.**

For more information or an application, contact the Richmond Children's Foundation at 510-234-1200, or on their website at www.richmondchildren.org.

Applications are also available on Supervisor Gioia's website at www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/dis1.

For more information contact Luz Gomez at 510-374-3231.

Office Staff

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Office Hours: Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Our Website:

www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/dis

Other Elected Officials

House of Representatives:

Congressman George Miller, III

(District 7)

(510) 262-6500 - Richmond Office

(925) 602-1880 - District Office

Congresswoman 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. Click on Board Advisory Body Information. Applications are available online, or through our office. There are current openings on:

Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board,

Fatima Matal Sol - 925-313-6311

El Sobrante R-9 Committee

Terrance Cheung - 510-374-3231

Montalvin Manor Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

Mental Health Commission

Karen Shuler - 925-313-4310

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

Youth Commission

Joan Tomasini - 925-646-5940.

Regular Public Meetings

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

El Cerrito City Council

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

Montalvin Manor Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Meet at 6:30 pm on the second Thursday of every month at the Montalvin Elementary School on Christine Drive.

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 5 pm the second Tuesday of every month at 515 Silver Avenue in North Richmond

Richmond City Council

Meets at 7 pm every first and third Tuesday at Richmond City Hall, 1401 Marina Way South, Richmond

San Pablo City Council

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