

Kings gives extension to Corcoran hospital District gains extra year to repay \$500K loan to county

By Eiji Yamashita

Hanford Sentinel, Tuesday, July 13, 2010

When Corcoran District Hospital borrowed \$500,000 from Kings County last December, officials promised to pay it back by June.

With the deadline past, the interest-free loan is still outstanding.

County officials say they have reached an agreement giving the hospital one more year to repay the money, in exchange for 2 percent interest and an immediate taking of property tax withholding held in trust for the hospital.

But the agreement awaits approval by the Kings County Board of Supervisors slated for Tuesday. Details will be reviewed at the supervisors' meeting.

Supervisors will also hold a study session on the eTrip Rule - a new employer-based trip reduction program - being imposed by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Jessie Fierro, senior air quality specialist with the district, is scheduled to make a presentation on the program during the session.

In other business, the board will:

Consider authorizing an application for "safe route to school" funds through the state. County officials are proposing to submit the Home Garden safe route to school as first priority and the Kettleman City safe route to school as second priority.

Consider accepting the 2010 comprehensive economic development strategy annual report and forwarding the report to the Economic Development Administration.

Not everyone charged up about electric car Battery-powered vehicle poses problems; vehicle builder says he'll pay for inexpensive recharge, but his employers have other concerns.

By Jonah Owen Lamb, Merced Sun-Star

Also in the Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, July 13, 2010

In 2008, Mark Bush had grown tired of the internal combustion engine.

Air pollution, global climate change and a general concern for the environmental impact of the automobile motivated him to look for an electric car to buy.

Unfortunately he could only find one electric car manufacturer, Tesla Motors, and they were selling their cars for a price far above Bush's budget.

So this nurse from Delhi, once an airplane mechanic in the Air Force, decided to build his own electric car.

He started with the fiberglass body of a Bradley, a car made by a company no longer in business, and put 12 alternating current (AC) batteries under the hood and in the trunk. Then he put a 100-pound motor in the rear. After tweaking and testing and spending about \$20,000, he had his electric car.

"It's been a labor of love," he said.

The car, named EV1E (electric vehicle one, version five) can drive on the freeway, is street legal and has even been checked out by the California Highway Patrol, said Bush. It packs 144 volts and can get up to 60 miles per hour and takes him about 60 miles before it needs a recharge, he said.

There's only one problem.

He can't drive the 56 miles to and from work.

Well, he can drive there, but the management at the Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex and the John Latorraca Correctional Facility, where he works as a contract nurse, won't let him charge the car there, even though he's willing to pay for the nominal amount of electricity it takes to charge his vehicle during his shift.

He calculates it would cost about 10 cents a day for the less-than-a-kilowatt it takes to charge his car for eight hours.

"My mission was to drive it to work and drive home at night, which it will do," said Bush. "Today, I have to drive my gas vehicle to work."

After driving it to work and charging the car at both facilities, he was told he could no longer charge the car there with little explanation. Now he has no other option other than driving his gas guzzler. "It'd be a shame if I can't use it for what it was intended to be used for," said Bush.

Representatives from the Merced County Sheriff's Department and the Merced County Probation Department said that Bush cannot charge his personal car at either of their facilities because the car is not county owned, Bush is not an employee and it would cost the county money, among other things.

"Although we applaud him for his efforts in protecting our environment and maintaining an eco-friendly vehicle, it should be noted that it is his personal vehicle, not county owned, and would be inappropriate for him to charge his battery powered vehicle at a county facility, since we would then incur the cost," said Merced County sheriff's spokesman Tom MacKenzie. "If he is willing to pay for the amount of electricity, that is something he would have to set up with county administration."

The probation department's spokeswoman, Sarah Jimenez, said much the same. Jimenez said there's a couple problems with Bush wanting to park and charge his car at the Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex.

She said the secured area where Bush was parking is only available to probation department employees and judges. Also, she said, the outlet charging his car is used by their golf carts. She also said cost is a factor. The probation department would have to come up with some way to bill him, she said, and that would not be easy.

Additionally, she said, if Bush was allowed to park there the department would have to open it up to everyone.

Jimenez did say if Bush wants to work with the department, there may be a compromise they could reach. But she made no promises.

Bush, who said he's more than willing to pay any cost incurred, said, "the bill is 7 cents a day. I would pay 7 cents a day -- a whole 28 cents a week to charge my car. I would pay for that. I would pay for any and all electricity. I'd pay for a meter there and put quarters in the meter if they needed."