

## **District seeks entries for 2012 for Reel Video contest**

Avenal Chimes, Thurs., April 5, 2012

The Valley Air District is now accepting entries for "Healthy Air, Healthy You," the fourth annual For Reel Video Contest, which encourages creative student videographers to showcase their commitment to healthier Valley air.

Students of all ages and their teachers are encouraged to submit a 30-second video, illustrating simple lifestyle changes they can make daily to work towards healthier air, and in turn a healthier life, for us all. In addition to having their video aired on TV, the grand prize winner will receive an iPad 2!

When we make a choice for clean air, we're choosing a healthier life for not only ourselves, but for our communities as well." said contest coordinator Ruth Crisp. "This is a fun way for participants to be proactive and inspire Valley residents to do the same."

Participants must be students or teachers at a school, college or university in the San Joaquin Valley. Videos must be submitted to the Valley Air District central region office by June 8, 2012. For complete details about the contest and to view the contest promotional video, visit [www.healthyliving.com](http://www.healthyliving.com), or call the District Outreach and Communications office at 559-230-6000.

For more information about the Valley Air District, call a regional office: in Fresno, 559-230-6000; in Bakersfield, 661-392-5500; and in Modesto, 209-557-6400.

[Fresno Bee commentary, Wed., April 4, 2012](#)

## **New plan requires change**

By Jaime Holt

The 100-plus page "2025 General Plan for the City of Fresno" is not really "cool," it is not bedside reading and it is not something most folks in Fresno even know about. However, it is important. This document, updated about every 10 years, guides how our city grows, and is a window into what we, as a community, value.

Over the past nine months, hundreds of Valley residents have been engaging in a robust public process to design the next update of this guiding document, the city of Fresno's 2035 General Plan. In school cafeterias, community centers and city hall conference rooms, committed volunteers have been mulling over whether Fresno continues with the status quo of resource-intensive sprawl development or strives to be better, innovative, excellent, even envied.

Conservative projections indicate that more than 780,000 people will live in Fresno by 2035. The fact that Fresno is growing is not in question; how Fresno grows, however, is something that all of us must decide.

A General Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee, appointed by the mayor and city council members, met 18 times. In addition, 13 public workshops were held.

The initial result of this development process is four growth "alternatives," each a snapshot of what Fresno will look like in 2035. Part of the analysis of these four alternatives looked at expected city income (from various fees and taxes) versus expected city costs (for police, fire, parks and other public services). This type of innovative analysis provides a better idea of the true fiscal sustainability of the city's growth.

The four alternatives are:

- A. The Boulevard Plan: Focuses on infill development, encourages higher density and stays well within the city's current sphere of influence (SOI).
- B. The Growth Areas Plan: Second-highest amount of additional land annexed but still within the current SOI, allows for medium density in growth areas.

- C. The Expanded Sphere of Influence Plan: The status quo plan with the lowest density and the greatest SOI boundary expansion.
- D. The Hybrid Plan: A combination of the first three alternatives, expansion of the SOI for medium density development and higher density development in infill areas.

A fifth alternative was developed independently, outside of the public process, by a stakeholder group. This "Alternative E" is very similar to "Alternative C."

On March 21, the city Planning Commission voted on the five alternatives and unanimously selected "Alternative A" as the best choice for the future of Fresno. This alternative recognizes the changing reality of our community. It gives more options to young families, single professionals and aging baby boomers by not relying solely on the large-scale suburban development model that Fresno has focused on for the last 20 years. It is the most cost-effective when considering the price of providing key quality-of-life elements such as public services, neighborhood parks and public utilities. And perhaps most importantly, it acknowledges and addresses some of the Valley's harsh environmental realities relative to water use, energy consumption and air quality.

I recognize that there is fear and apprehension. "Alternative A" is a change from business-as-usual. It will take effort and a change in the way we as a community operate. But we can no longer ignore the reality that the status quo is unsustainable.

I have heard the argument several times that the market won't support anything other than detached, single-family homes. We do love our single-family detached homes, but that is because this city has done a fantastic job of creating these types of neighborhoods. We are experts at it. Now we must become experts at developing beautiful, inviting townhouses, condominium complexes, mixed-use developments, and even apartments. The market will support the diversity if we design our new developments well and make them sustainable. It will take vision and hard work, but I believe Fresno has both in abundance.

I encourage everyone to attend the City Council hearing at 5 p.m. on April 5 to weigh in on this important issue and help create a strong and positive future for our city.

*Jaime Holt is the chair of the Fresno City Planning Commission and a board member of Creative Fresno.*

[Fresno Bee Earth Log Tues., April 3, 2012](#)

## **Is California's cap-and-trade actually pay-to-pollute?**

By Mark Grossi

Raise your hand if you have strong feelings about cap-and-trade for climate-warming carbon emissions. Now, raise your hand if you really don't understand what it is.

My hand went up both times.

I have strong feelings -- mostly anxiety about explaining cap-and-trade in stories. Bee reporter Tim Sheehan explained it on Sunday in a story about funding for high-speed rail. State authorities say cap-and-trade is a possible source of money for high-speed rail.

And it's quite a load of cash -- an estimated \$1 billion in the first year of a cap-and-trade program aimed at reducing climate-warming carbon emissions, such as carbon dioxide.

I can describe the program, but people ask me a lot of questions I just can't answer. Is it really possible to figure out how many tons of carbon dioxide are created by industries? Who counts it?

Who verifies the counts? Who will catch the cheaters? How will the state actually make money? Is this really just some kind of scam?

From listening to the pitch, cap-and-trade sounds so simple.

Step one: The state sets a cap or limit on carbon dioxide coming from power plants, oil refineries and other industries. The cap drops lower each year until 2020, when a 15% reduction should have been achieved.

Step two: If your company can't stay under the shrinking cap, you go to an auction and buy credits that other companies create by making larger carbon reductions ahead of schedule.

That's basically what state leaders say in public meetings. Outside of meetings, I've heard environmentalists call the approach a pay-to-pollute plan for industries. Across the aisle, industry insiders have called it a shell game designed to skim profits from companies they represent.

But I've also heard business owners and politicians defend cap-and-trade, saying it beats a carbon tax, which they say feels like a punishment or a fine. Of course, there's a lot more to it, but you get the picture. The debate raises even more questions that I can't answer.

Which brings us to a familiar question -- one that I can answer. Is the government going to come back and ask for more carbon dioxide reductions after 2020? I'd say it's a good bet.

It has happened over and over since the 1970s, when the Clean Air Act was passed, as scientists have learned more about the dangers of ozone and particle pollution. It probably will happen with climate-change gases, too.