

## **Parlier homemaker battles air pollution**

By JUAN ESPARZA LOERA

Vida en el Valle Wed., Aug. 2, 2006

PARLIER - Yolanda Zapata, who moved here six years ago because apartment rent was cheaper than in Kingsburg where she lived for 15 years, isn't about to take chances on getting affected by the air ranked as among the dirtiest in the country.

The 45-year-old homemaker vacuums up to three times a day. She tosses out the trash at least twice a day. Her bathrooms get scrubbed twice a day. She spurns her dishwasher and hand washes her dishes because "they get cleaner that way."

Zapata even vacuums her bed to pick up any dust. If she finds mold in her refrigerator, which she did recently, it serves as a reminder that she must remain vigilant.

"Everything has to be clean," she said.

Despite all those measures, she is fighting a losing battle against air pollution. Her youngest daughter, 6-year-old Samantha, developed asthma. Her other children, who range in age from 13 to 24, have experienced headaches and breathing difficulties at time.

"I have noticed a lot of different things since we moved here," said Zapata, who would like to move back to Kingsburg but is kept out by higher rent. Her husband, Tony Zapata Jr., is a disabled farmworker.

When she walks to the grocery store on a hot day, Zapata finds herself gasping for air at times. She also suffers from allergies, something as common to Valley residents as winter fog and summer heat.

Zapata is worried because other neighbors are experiencing the same illnesses from the dirty air, which is being blamed for the high number of asthma cases. A few years ago, a pharmacist at a health fair held at Parlier Junior High School complained he had run out of inhalers and medication for asthma sufferers.

Families up and down the San Joaquín Valley have complained about the dirty air and its connection to asthma and other respiratory illnesses their children suffer, but Parlier seems to be the epicenter because it is downwind from Fresno and the air movement parks most pollutants in the city of 10,000.

Last year, Ben Benavidez Elementary School trumpeted a program where different colored flags were displayed to alert parents about the air quality. A green flag means the air quality is healthy; a red one means keep the children indoors; and, an orange-colored flag means the air is not healthy for children who suffer from respiratory problems.

This year, the state Department of Pesticide Regulation is monitoring pesticide use to identify risks to the city's children. Until now, residents and organizations in Parlier have not done much to come up with answers to the air pollution. State Sen. Dean Flórez, D-Shafter, who represents the area, believes Parlier residents are not that engaged with elected officials.

Zapata, through the non-profit organization La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), wants to change that.

If Fresno residents like Mario Talavera, a member of Latinos Unidos Conscientes al Ambiente (LUCA, or United Latinos Aware of the Environment); or, Margarita Guzmán of Comité Asma (Asthma Committee) can get involved in community efforts to get public officials to understand

the impact the area's dirty air is having on the community, Zapata figures she can do her own work.

LUCA and Comité Asma were started because residents felt specific concerns among the predominantly Spanish-speaking community were not being addressed. Guzmán - who, like Zapata, makes sure her house is clean of dust and dirt - is circulating petitions asking city officials for drainage and sidewalks in southwest Fresno in hopes it will cut down on dirt and dust.

Talavera works with other parents in LUCA, a group associated with Cornerstone Church, to educate parents about how to pressure elected officials for help.

Parlier is a community where residents feel closer to the school system and community-based organizations like LUPE, a non-profit arm of the United Farm Workers. (Flórez is thinking about launching programs that pair parents with the school to provide information on the impact of air pollution).

First, Zapata wants to make sure people are educated about what causes asthma. One friend told her she wants to keep her children away from those with asthma because it is contagious. "They won't let their children drink from the same cup," she said.

"Most people probably don't understand what is going on," said Zapata, who plans to lobby LUPE to hold community meetings and to pressure the San Joaquín Valley Air Control District to listen to Parlier residents.

"A lot of people don't know what is wrong with their children," said Zapata. "I tell them to get their children checked. I try to talk to as many people as possible."

Air pollution, said Talavera, impacts the working poor more.

"All four of my children have asthma. When it's not one who has to go to the hospital, it's another one," he said.

"I lose work and that makes it difficult for one to achieve the American dream. It's an economic impact."

Zapata plans to meet shortly with LUPE officials to draft a battle plan.

## **Fighting smog with smog: UC-Riverside to upgrade air research facility**

North County Times

Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2006

RIVERSIDE -- To help eliminate air pollution, UC Riverside officials are buying \$1.5 million worth of equipment designed to create it.

Officials say that making the unsavory smog is necessary to understand and eventually reduce air pollution, and the new equipment will make Riverside's facility one of only three in the world. Similar labs are in Spain and Germany.

"This research is going to improve our understanding of what happens in the atmosphere," said Joseph Norbeck, founding director of the university's College of Engineering's Center for Environmental Research and Technology, commonly known as CE-CERT. "Eventually, I believe, it will allow us to better clean up our air quality here and around the world."

The money came in grant form from Los Angeles-based W.M. Keck Foundation, which was created in 1954 by William Myron Keck, the founder of The Superior Oil Co. The foundation has assets of more than \$1 billion and donates to medicine, liberal arts, and science and engineering programs, according to its Web site.

Norbeck said six university researchers worked together to apply for the Keck grant, which was awarded earlier this summer. Norbeck said the new equipment will vastly upgrade the current technology. He has already ordered most of the \$1.5 million of equipment, which he expects to receive in two months.

It will be installed at the university's environmental research and technology center, which was founded in 1995 with a \$10 million grant from Ford Motor Co. The atmospheric chamber used to study air pollution was built four years later. It is routinely used to study smog and other air pollutants to understand how harmful they are and how to control them.

The federal Clean Air Act, which was last amended in 1990, has standards for a variety of air pollutants. It is designed to first protect those sensitive to air quality such as asthmatics, children and senior citizens before protecting animals, crops, vegetation and other property from the hazards of bad air, according to the Environmental Protection Agency's Web site.

At the center's facility on a hot and humid Monday, Bethany Warren sat in a humidity-controlled laboratory amid a tangle of beeping electronic equipment and an unending collection of electric wires. The graduate student said she is earning her doctorate degree in engineering by studying secondary organic aerosol, which she calls SOA. The particulate matter is found in smog and blamed for a variety of cardiopulmonary health problems, she said.

As she spoke, Warren studied a computer that tracked the particle levels before wheeling her desk chair back to watch a video image of the inside of the center's 20-foot-long atmospheric chamber.

The chamber, which is covered in wall-to-wall aluminum and uses what Norbeck calls a "very expensive little lamp" to simulate the sun, is located on the second floor of the building. Inside, there is a sedan-size sandwich bag suspended in the middle, with pipes attached to the bottom.

Warren used the bag and pipes to re-create SOA particulates and then study how they react to different temperatures and other environmental factors.

While she is making progress now, Warren's face lights up at a mention of the Keck grant, which she said will make her findings even more complete.

"The Keck equipment will allow us to produce computer models that are more accurate than what we have now," she said. "These are very important models because they'll offer insight into how the particulates really work."

The closer look at air pollution will allow scientists to tell air quality regulators what chemicals need to be reduced to improve air quality, she added.

"Reducing everything in the air does not result in better air quality. It can make the air more toxic," Warren explained. "By having better insight into the particles, we can determine the effects on human health."

Warren and Norbeck are specifically interested in secondary pollutants such as SOA, which they say can make up to 70 percent of the air pollution in urban locations.

While the main objective of the new equipment is to help clean up the air, it will improve the university's quality as well.

"This will lead to new collaboration with other scientists from around the world, and will enable us to attract the best students," Norbeck said after the tour. "It will open the doors to new funding because of our enhanced reputation."

For more information, visit [www.cert.ucr.edu](http://www.cert.ucr.edu).

## **Looking for alternatives to gasoline**

**With gas prices going up, other fuels are looking good**

By Greg Ubbelohde, Staff writer

Visalia Times-Delta, Wednesday, Aug. 9, 2006

Rising gas prices have caused some Visalia-area residents to look for alternatives to paying more than \$3 a gallon at the pump. And there are some out there, but they all require a new car or a modification to the fuel system of your existing car.

One alternative is compressed natural gas, or CNG, which is measured in a unit called gasoline gallon equivalency (GGE), said Lew Nelson, public works director for the city of Tulare. Nelson is in charge of the CNG filling station at the city yard, that is primarily used for the city of Visalia's garbage trucks that use CNG.

Right now CNG, is \$2.75 per GGE, but it's 30 percent less efficient than gas. Even so, CNG seems to be the best alternative out there, said Ron Smith, owner of Adrianus Resources, Inc., an alternative-fuel consulting company.

"It's the fuel of choice for customers, it's the cheapest, it's the cleanest, it's the easiest to get right through the pipeline," Smith said.

Currently, Honda's compact Civic sedan is the only CNG-fueled car made for personal use, but Nelson said there are a lot of used fleet vehicles sold to private citizens by local governments.

Another alternative fuel is propane. According to the National Propane Gas Association, propane-fueled cars are cleaner for the environment than CNG. Currently, propane is about \$3 a gallon.

There are other fuels out there that aren't as readily available in Tulare County. One is biodiesel, or fuel made from used fast-food grease and other oils, said Steven Worthley, a San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District governing board member, but he said he doesn't think it will take off.

"It maybe works for 10 people but it's not going to work for 10,000 people," Worthley said, because even though there are many restaurants, used fry grease is not readily available to the masses.

But probably the fuel most people have heard about is ethanol. Ethanol is alcohol made from plants like corn, Worthley said. Most California gasoline contains 6 percent ethanol, according to the California Energy Commission. There are blends of gas containing more, but those are primarily found in the Midwest where most of the corn to make ethanol is grown.

Worthley doesn't think E-85, a blend containing 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, will take off because high concentrations are corrosive, and vehicles need to be resistant to corrosion before they can run high concentrations of it. There are some vehicles out there, called flex fuel vehicles, that can run on high concentrations. Currently, General Motors is one of the main producer of flex fuel vehicles, which can be ordered at Tulare County dealerships.

And ethanol isn't as efficient as gasoline. It takes about 33 percent more ethanol to travel the same distance as an equal amount of gasoline, according to the California Energy Commission.

There is an electrical recharging station at the Southern California Edison Agricultural Technology Application Center in Tulare. Ken Rebensdorf, manager of the AgTAC, said the bulk of business comes from commercial vehicles, but some private citizens come to charge up.

"We might have two or three people a month that will come off the highway," Rebensdorf said.

But he explained the main trend has been toward hybrid vehicles like Toyota's Prius sedan or Ford's Escape hybrid sport utility vehicle.

Rebensdorf said hybrids use both a gasoline engine and a battery. The vehicle uses electric power to get going, and when more power is needed, like when the car is going up a hill or traveling at high speeds, the engine will start to keep the car running, and charge up the battery, he said. That way, there is no need to ever plug them in.

Currently, there are about seven hybrid vehicles on the market, and more are on the way. One of the most popular is the Toyota Prius sedan. The base price of the Prius is around \$21,000, but it's estimated to get around 60 mpg in the city, and 50 mpg on the highway, said Vincent Marquez, sales manager for Toyota Of Visalia.

"If gas prices spike, you'll see anywhere from a one-to three-month waiting period," said Marquez, but right now the wait is at most two weeks. Other hybrid sedans include Toyota's Camry, and Honda's Civic and Accord.

If consumers want a hybrid, but don't want a small or mid-sized sedan, there are some hybrid SUVs to choose from. One is Ford's Escape hybrid which gets 36 mpg in the city, 13 mpg better than the regular Escape, according to Ford's Web site.

Another is the Toyota Highlander, also a mid-sized SUV. The Highlander gets about 34 mpg in the city and 27 mpg on the highway, which is better than the regular gas-only Highlander's 21 mpg-city and 24-highway.

There is more technology on the way. Saturn is launching a hybrid version of its Vue, said Eddie Perez, general manager for Saturn Of Visalia. He said, it should be ready and able to be delivered to Visalia in about two months.

For those who want to stick with gasoline, there are many fuel-efficient options available. Every car manufacturer with a dealership in Visalia has some version of a five-passenger sedan. Most get more than 30 mpg.

If people need to haul more, Jeff Parlier, service manager at Surroz Motors said not to overlook the mileage that bigger cars and SUVs get.

"The strides that have been made for the big cars have been tremendous, but they've gone unnoticed," Parlier said because they came gradually. Several years ago, it was common for a pickup truck to get eight or nine miles per gallon, said Parlier. Now, he said, a lot of them get 12-15 mpg.

#### **Alternative fueling stations in Tulare County**

- Compressed Natural Gas

Visalia Unified School District, 3435 W. Houston Ave., Visalia, 730-7856

SoCalGas Base, 320 N. Tipton St., Visalia, 355-5679

Tulare City Yard, 3989 S. K St., Tulare, 634-4318

- Propane

Suburban Propane, 15243 Avenue 296, Visalia, 732-8804

Don Rose Oil Company, 205 N. Ben Maddox Way, Visalia, 733-4717

- Electronic Inductive, Large

Edison Agriculture Technology Application Center, 4175 S. Laspina St., Tulare, (800) 772-4822

#### **Peddling pedals**

##### **Bike Bakersfield promotes local cycling culture**

By Lauren Helper, Southwest Voice Editor

Southwest Voice, Wednesday, Aug. 9, 2006

We're the fastest-growing city in a state where status is often determined by what you drive. But Southwest resident and Bike Bakersfield Executive Director Lauren Franconi suggests we shift gears - by switching to two wheels - in order to keep traffic moving.

Franconi and the other locals behind Bike Bakersfield - a not-for-profit organization founded in January that works to promote the virtues of bicycling - aren't suggesting we abandon cars completely, just that we consider bicycles as an alternate and safe mode of transportation. Bicycling, they say, decreases traffic congestion, improves air quality, has numerous health benefits and is a strong weapon in the fight against child obesity.

"It's a way to see things - even to smell things - without whizzing by," said Franconi, who recently returned home to Bakersfield after working for decades in Washington, D.C., as an aeronautical engineer.

Bike Bakersfield, located on Chester Avenue, currently has about 60 members and sees a lot of traffic Wednesday through Saturday at their Bike Kitchen, where community members who

cannot afford a bike can come in and work on donated bikes the staff repairs and donates to organizations like the Jamison Center. After putting in five hours of work, the individual can earn his or her own bike.

Community member Mike Owens, whose bike is his only means of transportation, was one of the first recipients.

"When we heard about his last bike being stolen, we jumped at the opportunity to give him one of ours," said Mat Barton, Bike Bakersfield's communications director.

Barton, 34, grew up in Bakersfield and commuted 20 miles a day while living in Irvine. "I'd always had car problems - my car was stolen three times and made weird noises - so I finally sold it to my brother for \$500," said Barton, who commutes every day to Bike Bakersfield. When he has to go to L.A., he rides the bus - Bike Bakersfield also promotes the use of public transportation.

"It's fun; it's a great form of exercise; it's good for the environment; and it's better for you psychologically than being cramped inside a box," said Barton, who is happy to provide routes for those interested in biking through wayfaring.com. He creates maps for interested parties, complete with helpful notes about lane positioning and tips like "watch out for pothole."

Barton said there are improvements that could make urban cycling in Bakersfield a little safer, like fixing areas where there are changing bike-lane widths, especially in new housing developments, and wider bike lanes in places like Coffee Road between Brimhall Road and Rosedale Highway. Eric Vick, 15, was crossing Ming Avenue on his bike from the parking lot of Valley Plaza the night of July 30, when he was struck by a pickup driven by a 17-year-old boy. Vick, 15, who was not wearing a helmet, died of his injuries at 6:35 a.m. the next day at Kern Medical Center. The driver was not cited.

Barton said the accident is a horrible example of what happens when bicyclists are not acting like operators of a vehicle, noting that Vick was crossing illegally and not wearing a helmet. "Once you know the rules, you have the confidence," said Barton, who said educated riders are 80 percent less likely to get in an accident.

He said almost anybody can pull off a crosstown commute using existing bike paths and roadside bike lanes, and that most people's hesitation to ride a bike on Gosford, Oak or California comes from fear - which is understandable. Barton suggests starting small, which means sticking to residential streets when possible, and learning the safety tips for riding on the road.

Barton and Franconi, who said currently only about 1.5 percent of the local population bikes, hope to increase the commuter base to 1,000. They plan to make presentations to companies this fall encouraging workers to commute and engage in group rides.

Franconi is currently involved in backing the Bicycle Commuter Act, which would extend the transportation fringe benefit, currently available to transit users and car drivers, to bicycle commuters. The legislation would provide a tax benefit to employers who offer cash reimbursements to an employee who commutes by bicycle, while helping defray the costs of commuting for the bicyclist. Congress would have to amend the tax code to allow this benefit.

"Healthier employees are happier employees. And they're also more awake when they get to work!" said Franconi, who has an answer to every protest - Don't want to ride alone? Find a buddy! Afraid you'll be late? Bikes often actually beat traffic. Your business doesn't offer shower facilities? Find a nearby gym.

Southwest resident Jim Pappé, a network engineer at Lightspeed Systems, bikes to work two or three times a week, as do several of his co-workers. He doesn't like to ride on the major Southwest access roads (Gosford, California, Stockdale and Ming) because people drive fast and get distracted, he said, so he chose his current house based on its proximity to the bike path. It takes him less than a minute to get to the path and start his commute from Buena Vista and Stockdale.

Pappe transitioned from mountain biking to road cycling and racing, but now spends more time riding with his kids. He enjoys the exercise and saving money on gas, and enjoys the camaraderie he shares with other riders.

"I see cycling as continuing to expand in the area," said Pappe. "I've moved away a couple of times in the past few years and have to say that the cycling in Bakersfield is quite extraordinary. We're very lucky to have the bike path and parks like River Walk where families and kids can park and ride safely."

Southwest resident Mike Noel has loved bikes since he was a child and is a mountain biking fanatic. He either rides on a single or tandem with his wife. Most of his vacations involve cycling trips, whether it be to the Santa Barbara coastal mountains, Lake Isabella, Lake Tahoe, Colorado or British Columbia.

"I am able to get out and enjoy nature in the mountains with my wife and go where few people are willing to go," said Noel, who said that while there is a strong cycling community in Bakersfield, improvements could be made to accommodate cyclists.

"It's difficult just going to the store with your bicycle. Most stores don't even have bike racks where you can lock your bike," said Noel, who added that while bicycling might not be as convenient as it is sitting in the car or in front of the television, the payoff is worth the effort. "Most people involved in cycling lead a very healthy lifestyle, while the general population does not," said Noel.

Southwest resident Robin Ablin, an independent real estate broker, helped with the Bike Bakersfield bike race held recently during the street fair. He started biking as a child with a Sting-Ray and never stopped, currently riding three to five times a week and 100 to 175 miles a week on the road and bikepath.

"Cycling will continue to grow as the publicity of the sport grows, as the population ages since it is a low impact exercise, and as gasoline prices continue to rise," said Ablin. "Most potential is in recreational cycling for exercise, then next as an alternative vehicle for short errands/commutes when gas gets too expensive. Young people need to embrace an active lifestyle, cycling being one option."

Franconi said while there are miles to go before Bike Bakersfield reaches all of its goals, the first step in expanding the local cycling culture is for residents - armed with air in their tires, brakes that work, a crank set that's not wobbly, a comfortable seat and a helmet - to embrace their motto and: "Get on your bike and ride!"

### **Bike Bakersfield Programs**

**Safe Routes Program:** If you are interested in commuting by bike but are unsure on the best route to work, we can help. Email: [info@bikebakersfield.org](mailto:info@bikebakersfield.org)

• **Recycle-a-Bicycle:** Bike Bakersfield takes in donated bikes and puts them back on the street where they belong. If you would like a bike but can't afford one, you are eligible for a free bike. We are also in need of bikes. If you have a bike that's sitting in your garage collecting dust, you can donate it to Bike Bakersfield. All donations are tax deductible. Email:

[info@bikebakersfield.org](mailto:info@bikebakersfield.org)

• **John Lotze** is a league-certified instructor who hosts "Street Skills" classes at the Bike Bakersfield office. Enroll today if you are interested in building your confidence while riding on the street. Email: [barton@bikebakersfield.org](mailto:barton@bikebakersfield.org)

• **Bike to Work:** We are currently working on a Bike to Work guide for employees throughout Bakersfield. We are going to be giving presentations at major employers throughout Bakersfield to discuss the benefits of riding to work. This book will be free and available through our Web site or your workplace. This is all part of goal of encouraging more residents to ride their bikes for transportation.

• **Bike to School:** Bike to Bakersfield representatives will be speaking at schools this fall.

• **Become a Monthly Sustainer:** Sign up to make an automatic monthly donation of \$10 to \$1,000. The sustainer program makes it easy for you to support the work of Bike Bakersfield on

an ongoing basis by spreading your donation out over an entire year. Contact Lauren Franconi, executive director, at 321-9247 to set up your monthly gift.

## **Cleanup will cost Tracy \$143K**

Stockton Record, Wednesday, Aug. 9, 2006

TRACY - With the controversial purchase of land known as the Antenna Farm for a massive youth sports park, city officials must set about cleaning it up.

Before building a series of football, soccer, softball and baseball fields on the 200-acre property formerly owned by the federal government, the land must be cleaned of lead, asbestos, an underground fuel tank and the 40 antenna poles still sticking out of the ground.

The city will pay Tracy-based Wright Environmental \$143,000 to perform the work. An additional \$110,000 will be held in reserve in case other environmentally toxic substances are discovered when the poles, which the Federal Aviation Administration used for radio transmission until 1981, are removed.

Soil around the poles will be tested for creosote, chromium, copper and other hazardous materials that might have washed off them during several years of rain. They were planted in 1952.

"It would be hard to think that something didn't seep into the ground while those poles have been there," City Councilman Brent Ives said.

The purchase agreement calls for the U.S. Department of Justice to reimburse Tracy for much of the environmental cleanup costs.

An 11,000-square-foot building remains on the property, and city officials expect to use it for storage, a snack shack and office space. But it is known to contain lead-based paint, asbestos and possibly polychlorinated biphenyl, a known carcinogen. Previous studies identified the environmental issues, but more work is needed to examine the full extent of the contamination and develop a removal plan, City Engineer Kuldeep Sharma said.

City Council members approved spending \$950,000 to purchase the site in July after working for nearly 10 years with the federal government to secure rights to it.

Through a bill by Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Tracy, the Bureau of Prisons sold the city 50 acres at market value, then gave it the adjoining 150 acres for educational or recreational purposes.

The youth sports complex will cover three-fourths of the acreage, while the final 50 acres will be available for future economic and industrial development.

The site has been controversial among some residents who believe air quality around the Antenna Farm suffers because of its proximity to other industrial manufacturers.

A health-risk assessment performed on the site concluded the acreage was safe for sports usage. But Councilwoman Irene Sundberg, who long has opposed building the complex on the site, said she would like full environmental testing to be done before any fields are built.

## **What's in it for Lodi residents?**

### **Reynolds Ranch project would help city services**

By Jake Armstrong, News-Sentinel Staff Writer

Lodi News-Sentinel, Wednesday, Aug. 9, 2006

A developer wants to build a 20-acre office campus, more than 1,000 homes and 40 acres of retail space in the proposed Reynolds Ranch project.

So what's in it for Lodi residents?



Rehabilitation of Eastside homes, an acre of land and \$2.5 million for a fire station in the new development, and \$60,000 toward the city's public art program - all of which are part of the first-ever agreement struck between the city and a developer seeking to build in Lodi.

While a number of cities reach similar agreements with developers, the agreement with the San Joaquin Valley Land Co. represents a new tack for Lodi to cover the cost of delivering municipal services to new homes and businesses, Vice Mayor Bob Johnson said.

"We haven't gone down this path before, but it is apparently the way things are being processed throughout the state," Johnson said. "We'll see if it's a good deal by the time this whole thing gets unwound."

The agreement, as well as the project's environmental impact report, General Plan amendment, annexation and zone change, is being taken up by the Lodi Planning Commission at its Wednesday night meeting. City staff recommends the commission certify the environmental report and forward the remaining documents to the City Council for approval.

The project includes 1,084 homes of various densities that will be built in phases lasting several years each. The agreement allows the developer to secure growth allocations for residential units to be built in future years, and excludes the project from any future moratoriums on growth. Mayor Susan Hitchcock last week called for talks on a growth moratorium, though it is unclear when those discussions will occur.

The agreement also requires the developer to rehabilitate 50 homes - including landscaping, roof and broken window repair, sidewalk repairs and demolition - on the Eastside, or pay the city \$1.25 million, and agree to a community facilities district to fund municipal services, donate parkland and improvements and pay for maintenance for two years. The developer will also put \$50,000 toward the Lodi Animal Shelter rehabilitation and programs.

The developer would also have to pay a total of \$21.5 million, excluding an undetermined amount in credits, in developer impact fees for the entire project, according to city Engineer Wally Sandelin.

In addition, the developer must pay a downtown impact fee of 60 cents per square foot of commercial space, or \$4.50 a square foot for a superstore-type retail use. The agreement allows the developer to cover impact fees via improvements to buildings the company owns or rents in downtown.

The developer would not be required to pay any impact fees beyond those currently charged by the city, City Manager Blair King said.

Dale Gillespie, a partner with San Joaquin Valley Land Co., did not return a call requesting comment.

Pending approvals, the first portion of Reynolds Ranch is the Blue Shield office site and 150 homes, according to a staff report to the commission. The office complex is expected to be completed by June 2008.

King said the agreement may be a bellwether for the city to extract concessions for city services in future developments.

"This is the tool that is used to get it, and it does set the standard for the next that come," he said.

## **Concerns rise for '08 Olympics**

### **Beijing faces traffic, pollution problems**

By Alexa Olesen, Associated Press

Published in the LA Daily News, Aug. 9, 2006

BEIJING - Two years to the day before the 2008 Beijing Olympics are set to begin, organizers heralded a smooth construction program and shared concerns about potential traffic and pollution problems.

Construction on 12 new Olympic venues and renovation of nine sites is expected to be completed by the end of 2007, said Wang Wei, executive vice president of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games.

Hein Verbruggen, chairman of the International Olympic Committee's coordination commission for Beijing, said China has shown "flawless planning until now."

"I am very confident in China's ability to pull off a great games," he said Tuesday during a Web cast on the Internet site of Around the Rings, an Atlanta-based news organization devoted to the Olympics.

China, however, will face a series of challenges in the coming two years as it prepares for the Aug. 8-24 games.

An investigation into possible corruption by a former Beijing deputy mayor, who oversaw billions of dollars worth of Olympic related construction, is continuing, Beijing organizers said Tuesday.

Liu Zhihua, dismissed in early June, has not been charged but is under investigation, Wang said. More than a dozen government officials and businessmen have been detained or questioned in the investigation. The government has said it is intent on staging a graft-free Olympics, but bribe-taking is rampant, especially in the booming construction industry.

Traffic and pollution concerns also demand immediate attention.

With soaring car ownership, the city of more than 15 million residents regularly is choked with traffic and haze.

"We recognize that people are worried about the traffic issues," said Jiang Xiaoyu, another executive vice president of the Beijing organizing committee, at a news conference. "Smooth and convenient transport services are part and parcel of the success of the Olympic Games."

Beijing has promised to try to clear the air by enforcing tougher emissions standards for cars, moving polluting industries out of the city and reducing reliance on coal in favor of natural gas.

Gunilla Lindberg, secretary general of the Swedish Olympic Committee and the Association of National Olympic Committees, said Tuesday that Beijing's air pollution was "still a problem" and that athletes were very concerned about it.

Olympic planners are stepping up subway and airport construction, Jiang said, and will encourage the use of public transport instead of private cars during the Olympics.

Dedicated Olympic traffic lanes are planned, but other measures to reduce traffic, such as a proposed city holiday during the games, are still under consideration, Jiang said.

Also Tuesday, the organization Reporters Without Borders issued a statement criticizing Beijing for its "crackdown on the press," saying Chinese restrictions threatened to prevent journalists from doing their jobs during the games.

[Sacramento Bee, Editorial, Wednesday, Aug. 9, 2006:](#)

## **Pass AB 32**

### **State could lead the clean energy market**

California has more to lose than many states with a superheated climate. Scientists expect our snowpack to decrease dramatically, our air quality to suffer, our Delta water supplies to degrade and our coastlines to become increasingly eroded as temperatures spike and sea level rises.

California alone can't reduce the greenhouse gases that cause global warming. But by phasing in emissions reductions and creating incentives for new environmental technologies, it can create a model for the nation to emulate and put California at the forefront of the clean-energy market.

Assembly Bill 32, crafted by Speaker Fabian Núñez and Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, is the vehicle for achieving this goal. It has a strong chance of passing this session. AB 32 would make California the first state to set caps on greenhouse emissions from industry and automobiles. It effectively would put into law the emissions reduction goals that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger approved last year.

Currently, California emits nearly 500 million metric tons of greenhouse emissions yearly, which makes us the world's 12th largest emitter. Without any controls, statewide emissions are projected to increase 20 percent by 2020.

If AB 32 passes, California would be required to decrease its emissions to 2000 levels in four years. In 14 years, emissions would be brought down to 1990 levels, eliminating about 174 million metric tons of greenhouse gases.

Can California's industries achieve such reductions? A report by the governor's Climate Action Team suggests it is feasible. A transition to cleaner cars and improved energy efficiency could achieve nearly half the cuts. Renewable fuels and energy and changes in forestry practices could get us over the goal line.

The key is to set firm mandates and fairly distribute them, yet give industries flexibility in meeting the requirements. Some might want to invest in pollution controls. Some might find it cheaper to pay other industries to achieve the corresponding reductions. The current version of AB 32 envisions such trading programs, although some details need to be worked out. (Some advocates for the poor fear they will bear the brunt of any trading programs, since older industries -- often surrounded by poor neighborhoods -- will choose to purchase reduction credits instead of upgrading their plants.)

Several other technical issues could also upset AB 32. Schwarzenegger wants the Cabinet-level Climate Action Team to oversee the program; Democrats want the Air Resources Board to be the taskmaster.

While the Climate Action Team might be the appropriate entity to deal with industries the ARB doesn't typically regulate, there must be clear lines of responsibility with AB 32. The ARB has many years of experience enforcing clean air laws. It needs to play a leading role in ensuring that all sectors of the economy meet the law's mandates.

Schwarzenegger also wants a "safety valve" to extend the pollution-reduction deadlines in case of an earthquake, energy crisis or other emergency. Such a provision is reasonable, but the language must be carefully crafted. If industries foresee loopholes in the law, they won't make the necessary investments to meet the deadlines.

All this work is doable, but there isn't much time. We'll know more in a week or so, when the bill is expected to come off the Senate's suspense file for a vote, with amendments.

[Sacramento Bee, Editorial, Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2006:](#)

### **Bring on the bonnet**

#### **Smog fighting tool can save lives**

If the anti-smog bonnet tested recently on locomotives at Union Pacific's Roseville railyard works as advertised, one of the last remaining major sources of pollution in this region could be brought under control. That's very good news for public health and for the environment.

Locomotives idling and passing through the railyard are the single biggest source of diesel pollution in the six-county Sacramento region. According to its manufacturer, Advanced Clean Up Technologies Inc., the bonnet, or Advanced Locomotive Emission Control System as it is formally known, can scrub away 99 percent of the sulfur dioxide and soot from diesel exhaust, along with most of the smog-forming nitrogen oxides.

Union Pacific railroad is waiting for test results before committing to installing the system permanently. Air pollution officials worry that a chief concern for the railroad may be whether

the system will slow the movement of freight trains through the yard. The railroad's interest in expediting the servicing of its locomotives is understandable. Congestion at the railyard is a major impediment to the efficient movement of passenger and freight trains through this region.

But those concerns do not outweigh the need to protect public health and the environment. According to a 2004 California Air Resources Board study of pollution at the railyard, the plume of locomotive soot from the Roseville yards covers 100 square miles, including most of Roseville and all of Citrus Heights and Antelope.

Pollution generated at the yards increases cancer risk for 165,000 residents. If the anti-smog bonnet shows that it works as well as expected, the railroad must find ways to put it to use. If the railroad balks, state and federal air regulators must act to protect the public health.

[S.F. Chronicle commentary, Wednesday, August 9, 2006:](#)

## **OPEN FORUM**

### **Time to put climate change on the national agenda**

By John Kerry

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger met with more than a dozen top business officials to discuss climate change -- executives who have gathered in support of mandatory limits on greenhouse-gas emissions. Imagine that: Big Business stepping up to the plate, but the Bush administration refusing to take a seat at the table.

That's a conspicuous absence for a president who says that climate change "is a challenge that requires a 100-percent effort; ours and the rest of the world's." But it's not surprising for a president whose preferred policy is to rewrite science to protect oil-company profits at the expense of the general public.

Washington's climate policy is as real as its claim of "mission accomplished" in Iraq. But it is also the story of both major political parties at their worst -- ducking difficult choices, giving in to big donors, postponing reckoning until the day after tomorrow. If you offend no one, you change nothing. The world is changing, and now the reckoning is real.

Within the next decade, if we don't take meaningful action to address global warming, our children and grandchildren will deal with global catastrophe.

It's time to put Washington to the test. No more bite-sized ideas that tinker at the edges of outdated policy. It's time to put global-climate change at the top of the national agenda.

There are three big steps that are imperative to addressing global warming.

- First, we must establish a mandatory program to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Second, we must provide the incentives and resources to transition to a low-carbon economy.
- Third, we must recognize that climate change is a global problem requiring a global solution.

Under President Bush, efforts to reduce U.S. emissions have been limited almost exclusively to voluntary activities. It's clear that the voluntary efforts are not getting the job done. The proof is in the numbers -- over the past several years, overall U.S. emissions have been on the rise. While voluntary programs can contribute to a domestic-climate change program, they cannot stimulate the global action that we know is necessary. Each year since 1992, the science has become more certain and Al Gore's summer movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," has brought the science home to Americans in a persuasive way.

So, what are we going to do about it? We need a plan that does what the science tells us we have to do. That's why I am introducing legislation to stop and reverse U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases. My bill establishes a mandatory cap-and-trade program to reverse emissions growth, starting in 2010. After that, we will progress to more rapid reductions and end at 65

percent below 2000 emissions by the year 2050. We have lost too much time for voluntary measures to be put to the test. We can't just set a mandate -- we have to provide incentives to businesses and industry to make the mandate achievable.

My bill also encourages the development, deployment and diffusion of new climate-friendly technologies. We know that we cannot solve the problem of global-climate change without new technologies, but new technologies don't just happen -- the market needs a signal and that signal needs to come from government.

Our gasoline-burning cars, for example, are the second-largest source of U.S. global-warming pollution. Americans will put more than 300 million new cars on the road during the next 20 years. If we give Detroit tax credits to retool their factories to build the best, most-efficient vehicles and give consumers tax credits to buy them, we'll take a big step toward solving global warming.

We know that clean-burning biofuels, made from plants, show great promise as a replacement for gasoline. A real federal commitment to renewable fuels would help reduce emissions and meet 30 percent of our fuel demands by 2020. Believe me, if we're spending \$2 billion in Iraq in one week, we can commit \$2 billion in funding for cellulosic biofuels during the next 10 years.

Finally, the United States is the world's single-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, but the United States alone cannot solve the challenge of climate change. It is going to take action from other countries -- both developed and developing. We must re-engage in discussions with the international community and work together to plan a path forward. We must do it now.

Carbon-dioxide levels in the atmosphere today are well beyond anything in the geological record - going back 400,000 years. It is clear that the outdated policies that still drive our 21st-century economies have resulted in a dangerous interference with the global climate.

This is a time to take a stand. It's time to give our people back the truth, and give the world back its future.

*U.S. Sen. John Kerry is the junior senator from Massachusetts and was the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee.*