

Feed Your Head...!

"Neighborhood Speak"-----by Steve Patterson—Federation of SR Neighborhoods

In November, Measure G failed to get a two-thirds vote which would have enabled many of SR's Critical Facilities to be seismically upgraded and modernized. But in these economic times an \$88 million dollar bond measure seemed totally out of scale with the economic realities, in spite of the need. The November 2009 election was really the best opportunity to try and pass something of this scale. Future elections will likely have competing tax measures and it is clear that massive tax initiatives have little appeal to voter appetite.

But in June of 2010 a more modest, targeted and focused parcel tax measure will appear on the ballot to provide operational funds for the Library. It should also allow the Library to begin setting aside small amounts of monies to create a building fund that can serve for capital improvements. What will likely show up on the ballot will be a very modest \$49 annual parcel tax. Most importantly, it will enable the Library to acquire new materials—print/technology, maintain and possibly expand their hours of operations, and keep key staff who serves as valuable learning resources. Put bluntly, it will enable the Library to remain a fully functional Library.

The San Rafael Library parcel tax will occur at the same time that San Anselmo and the County of Marin will have similar ballot measures of \$49 for their Library stakeholders. It is also clear that San Rafael's Library services will be even more dramatically cut down the road, if this ballot measure fails. At some point, if more significant cuts occur, the Library can no longer continue to serve as a community resource and maintain its critical mass. That would be a sad outcome to these dire economic times that the City finds itself immersed.

A Library says so much about a community and how it views its role of having a literate population. A public Library is a gathering place where many types of different learning can occur. Libraries get used by a variety of people, young and old alike. For many children, they learn to love books, reading, and become exposed to new ideas that can expand their minds and pay dividends to a society when they become adults. A community Library can enable real learning and informational synergies to occur so that the sum is greater than the parts and the citizens are the beneficiaries.

Great skill and care has been taken to acknowledge different voter groups so that no one is unfairly penalized by this \$49 parcel tax. Special financial acknowledgments have been developed for senior citizens, low-income residents and residential income property as well as commercial property owners. Great care has been taken to not alienate any voter class or segment. With a two-thirds vote required for passage, it is critical to not alienate any voter group.

Many high profile community, business and political leaders are lining up to support this Library initiative. I urge all SR voters to consider the benefits of such a nominal amount and truly engage in a simple cost/benefit analysis to more clearly see the logic of this effort.

A Virtual Hiring Hall

Within the last year, Marin Legal Aid along with some other Non Profits have worked to take the labor market for immigrant laborers off the street and into a virtual hiring hall environment, so that worker job skills can be better matched to job needs.

Currently over 700 workers are registered, so someone needing labor work can access a labor pool without having to randomly drive down the street to then assess whether someone curbside may or may not be a good match for their job needs.

The details are a bit more complex than this brief description describes, but eventually the number of day laborers on the street should diminish as this program grows and word spreads. There is also an Opportunity Center in Marin Square, that is not a hiring hall but where additional skill sets can be developed for immigrant workers

For additional information and to get answers to your questions go to www.marinhelpers.com

MMWD is at it again

Hang on to your hats, but MMWD is planning to raise water rates for the third year in a row. The MMWD directors live on a different planet and are clueless to our current economic environment. Petitions are now circulating that will ultimately put Desalinization to a vote of the people. We strongly encourage you to sign this ballot measure since nearly 15,000 signatures will be required for placement on the ballot.

Comments or suggestions—Steve Patterson, 453-6541, stephenpatterson.1@comcast.net Federation of SR Neighborhoods, www.fsrn.info