

this issue

Employee Cost Cutting Measures **P.1**
Wal-Mart Application **P.1**
Town/Butte County Ad-Hoc **P.1**
Acting Fire Chief Appointment **P.1**
Fire Department Transition Plan **P.2**

Wal-Mart Application Deemed Incomplete

The Town of Paradise has for the second time rejected Wal-Mart's application to develop what was known as the Skyway Plaza Shopping Center because the application is incomplete.

Wal-Mart is remedying those aspects of the application that were determined by the Town as incomplete. They plan to re-submit the application in the near future.

The actual studies, including an environmental impact report, independent fiscal and economic impact analysis, traffic studies, etc., that are required as part of the project review process will not begin until Wal-Mart's application has been deemed as complete.

The proposed Wal-Mart and shopping center site, which is owned by Wal-Mart, is located just outside of Town on roughly 60-acres south of the Crossroads.

Town Employee Groups Agree to "Shared Sacrifice" Cost Cutting Measures

So far six of the Town's seven employee groups have agreed through approved amendments to their current contracts, or through new contracts, to various "shared sacrifice" concessions to prevent further lay-offs of their fellow employees; and to help the Town as it deals with reduced revenues from the economic recession, and impacts from the State budget crisis.

These "shared sacrifice" concessions were different with each group, but in general ranged from employees agreeing to pay 50% of their PERS retirement contribution for this fiscal year, a permanent reduction in hours for many non-public safety employees, and giving up administrative leave compensation for management employees for this fiscal year.

One of the six employee units that has reached agreement with the Town, the Police Officers Association (POA), agreed to an actual multi-year contract that commits them to assuming 50% of their PERS retirement contribution this fiscal year, and 100% of their PERS retirement contribution on a permanent basis in lieu of equivalent COLA increases starting July 1, 2010. In addition, the POA has agreed to a vesting schedule for new hires for retiree health, which the Town estimates will reduce the Town's retiree health costs in the long term.

The only employee group that has not agreed to any "shared sacrifice" concessions at this point is the Paradise Firefighters Association (PFA). Negotiations between the Town and the PFA are still in progress.

Town of Paradise/Butte County Ad Hoc Committee Report Presented to Town Council

Town Manager Charles Rough presented to the Town Council (at their November 10 meeting) the final report (refer to the actual final report on this website) that he presented to the Town of Paradise/Butte County Ad Hoc Committee at their October 14 meeting. The Ad Hoc Committee had agreed to refer the report to their respective legislative bodies for further discussion and consideration.

The report provided three possible alternative plans to reduce the threat of fire, and to achieve much needed additional fire prevention, emergency preparedness and fire protection measures for our high risk fire area; and the formation of a Mello-Roos Community Facilities district (approved by the registered voters in the district) funded by a special tax.

The Town Council essentially supported the idea of exploring a larger fire protection approach (Plans A or B) in conjunction with the County, but expressed concern that the County might not be equally as supportive. The Butte County Board of Supervisors will be considering the report in late January or early February, 2010.

The Town Council further endorsed the Town exploring Alternative Plan C, but in the context of an overall, proposed public safety tax initiative to submit to Paradise voters on the November 2010 ballot, that included not only additional fire protection measures, but additional law enforcement improvements, as well.

Rough indicated that he would report back to the Town Council at their meeting, in January, with further information for them to consider a possible, more comprehensive public safety tax initiative, and to evaluate various possible tax initiative approaches.

It is important to note that the Town Council has not officially decided at this point whether they will put a tax initiative before the voters for their consideration for the November, 2010 ballot.

Town Council Approves Appointment of Fire Division Chief Chris Jensen as Acting Fire Chief

The Paradise Town Council, at their November 10 regular meeting, unanimously approved the recommendation of Town Manager Charles Rough to appoint Fire Division Chief/Fire Marshal/Building Official Chris Jensen as Acting Fire Chief effective December 31, 2009. He will serve in that capacity for one year, and based on his performance during the year, Rough will recommend his permanent appointment as fire chief.

The recommendation to appoint Jensen followed the announcement of Fire Chief Mark Haunschild that he plans to retire, effective December 30, 2009. Haunschild, who has served as fire chief for the last 3 years, has served for a total of 28 years in the Paradise Fire Department. During that time he has served as an Administrative Captain and Division Chief, as well as fire chief.

As Town Manager Rough commented, "Mark has served the Town of Paradise and the Paradise Fire Department with tremendous loyalty, dedication, and professionalism throughout his career. His love for the department and his commitment to what's in the best interests for the department has always been at the basis of his many years of exemplary service. He is an example of public service at its best. We are sorry to see him go."

Jensen's education includes a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Kaplan University, in Iowa. His experience includes an extensive background in a variety of professional fire service capacities for different fire agencies that includes firefighter/EMT, fire protection engineer, assistant fire marshal, fire marshal/battalion chief, and Fire Chief/Emergency Manager/Fire Marshal.

Town Council Approves Proposed Fire Department Transition Plan

The Paradise Town Council has unanimously approved the proposed transition plan developed by Fire Division Chief Chris Jensen. Based on his exhaustive research into the history and trends of the department's emergency responses, he proposed a plan to reallocate current personnel and equipment in a more cost-effective and operationally efficient manner.

This approved plan, which will be monitored with quarterly progress reports to the Council, includes battalion chiefs to head each shift, closing Fire Station #2 (except for Red Flag Days during the fire season & for periodic medical emergency response support), and increasing our present two-person engine crews to three-person engine crews.

The objective is to have the approved transition plan fully implemented by March 1, 2010.