CITY OF EL CENTRO COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING IS HERE!
SPRING EDITION
Message from the Mayor

The powerful earthquake that violently shook Mexicali and the Imperial Valley on Easter will long be remembered. It joins our list of defining moments – the list that starts with “I remember where I was when…”

The 7.2 magnitude earthquake devastated homes, buildings, roads and schools. The earthquake and the continuing strong aftershocks have left us unsettled, anxious and uneasy.

In the weeks since the earthquake, I have talked with many, many people – people who have lost their homes and are living in the Red Cross shelter, those whose businesses have been closed, others who have relocated to rented space to continue to make a living, families struggling to find child care because of schools being closed.

It has been an incredible blessing – or reality check – take your pick. Through this challenging time of adversity, people have reminded me of these things:

• Plates, glasses and ceramic roosters are stuff that – pretty much – can be replaced.
• As much as we want to think we are in control, there are so many, many things beyond our control.
• The safety and well being of family, friends and pets mean more than still having a set of matching glasses.
• Advance disaster planning and earthquake preparedness are essential.
• Our community comes together to help, calm and support one another like no other.

As we enter the recovery process, be assured that the City of El Centro is doing all we can in working with local, state and federal agencies to get you assistance so we can replace, rebuild and restore our community.

Local Assistance Center: 760-482-4968
Emergency Operations Center Public Information: 760-482-2478
United States Small Business Administration: 1-800-659-2955
Red Cross: 760-352-4541
El Centro Building Division (for permits & inspections): 760-337-4508
El Centro Redevelopment Agency (for home rehabilitation & business façade improvement programs): 760-337-4543
County Assessor’s Tax Relief: 760-482-4244

Mayor Cheryl Viegas-Walker
ARRA Funded Projects

- Economic Development Projects
  - Sidewalk Improvement Project
- Renewable Energy
  - City Hall Solar Project
- Public Safety
  - Police Officers
  - Police Equipment
- Youth Programs
  - 12 Workforce Training Students

Transportation Projects:
- Build America Bonds
- Adams Avenue rehabilitation from Imperial Avenue to LaBrucherie
- Dogwood Road rehabilitation Phase I from I-8 to State Street
- El Centro Transfer Terminal Enhancements

Applied for $38,241,393
Funded to Date $14,079,965

Economic Development
Renewable Energy
Public Safety
Transportation
Youth Programs

Shade Structure

On December 2, 2009, City Council approved the donation of the used shade structure at the Plunge to McCabe Union Elementary School District. The shade structure was scheduled to be demolished in preparation for the construction of the Indoor Sports Pavilion. McCabe School District requested the donation and coordinated the transportation of the shade with the demolition contractor, Whillock Contracting Inc. On March 22, 2010, the shade was transported to McCabe School. The donation of the shade structure to the school is in-line with the City’s Strategic Plan Goal #4, Objective #1, Strengthen Regional Partnerships.

Shade Structure from Plunge approaching the intersection of Ross/Austin Roads on March 22, 2010, on the way to McCabe School.
The overhaul of Bucklin Park is nearly complete with new lights for the pond and improved sprinkler system, new barrier blocks, upgraded electrical service for the aerators, decorative rocks and fencing around the pond. The only remaining work to be done is the construction of a new walking path.

El Centro Water Tower 1924-2010

El Centro Water Tower 1924-2010, Destroyed in the Baja/Imperial County 7.2 Earthquake 04-04-10

Water Treatment Plant Expansion

$32,000,000 in Water Bonds
Completed January 2010

Current Condition

After Construction (Scheduled Winter 2010)
City Attorney
• 454 legal service requests from the City
• Prepared 147 resolutions
• Prepared 12 ordinances that were adopted by City Council
• Code enforcement, nuisance abatement and violations of the City’s code.
• Referred 25 building citations to outside counsel for prosecution.
• Added a new Associate City Attorney to our staff
• Implemented new software program
• Assisted the City, the Redevelopment Agency and ECRMC with many projects including Fire Station 3, Fire Station park, Adult Center, Outpatient Clinic, new Water Treatment Plant, wastewater treatment plant improvements, affordable housing, and millions of dollars for street improvements
• Provided continuing legal services on pending developments including the Miller/Burson and Las Aldeas projects
• Developed numerous documents related to the City Charter and its adoption at the November, 2009 municipal election

City Clerk
• 23 council agendas
• 1 financing authority agenda
• 374 council records
• 68 Redevelopment Agency records
• 6 Redevelopment Agency agreements
• 34 City agreements
• 28 City claims
• 6 ECRMC claims
• 25 ECRMC Board agendas
• 588 public records requests
• 166 - 700 forms
• 8 ethics trainings files
• 16 campaign statements
• 4922 inquiries
• 17 Imperial County processing documents
• 7000 ECRMC minutes scanned

City Council
• 147 City resolutions
• 7 RDA resolutions
• 12 ordinances
• 105 certificates of recognition
• 18 proclamations
• Adopted updated Circulation Element
• Adopted Housing Element
• Adopted a balanced budget with reserves
• Award for Financial Reporting Achievement from Government Finance Officers Association
• Initiated collaboration discussions between ECRMC & PMH
• Adopted signature event for the City of El Centro “Mardi Gras Light Parade & Street Festival”

City Manager
• Facilitated in applying for $27,866,799 in American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (stimulus) funds and obtaining $3,954,965 in funding
• City’s Website Upgrade & Redesign Project www.cityofelcentro.org
• Coordination of city transportation projects through the Imperial Valley Association of Governments and other funding sources
• President to the Imperial Valley Emergency Communications Authority
• Fundraised over $188,000 in media sponsorships for the Special Events Program 2009/2010
• Coordinated promotion and marketing efforts for Special Events Program 2009/2010
• Quarterly Community Newsletters
• Bi-Weekly Employee Newsletters
• Managed city’s public relations and outreach efforts
• Coordinated El Centro Day @ Petco Park, 700 tickets sold
• Public Works Citizen Satisfaction Survey
• Sponsored Downtown El Centro events, El Centro Chamber of Commerce events, IV Young Professionals events, Blue Angel’s Air Show, Blue Angel’s Golf Tournament, Children’s Fair, Freedom Festival, Blood Drive and CUHS Veteran’s Appreciation event.
• Voter outreach program
• Department technical reviews

Finance
• Went LIVE with MUNIS Financials, Property Revenue and General Billing/Accts. Rec. software
• Obtained the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting for the City’s FY 2008 CAAFR
• Completed the FY 2009 audit
• Submitted the FY 2009 audit to GFOA
• Prepared the FY2010 balanced budget of $122 million
• Maintained funding of reserve/designation
• Reviewed, monitored and performed procedures to safeguard the City’s investment portfolio of $113 million
• Issued bonds in the amount of $14.7 million for road and transportation projects
• Improved City’s Bond rating to A+

Fire
• New 3rd Fire Station will be located at 1910 N. Waterman Avenue
• New Rescue Truck
• New Air Compressor
• Haz Mat Training Grant
• Search and Rescue Trailer from the State Homeland Security Grant
• Engineer Javier Soto is Firefighter of the Year

Human Resources
• Conducted employee satisfaction survey
• Open enrollment with 97% participation
• Reduced workers’ compensation premiums by 10%
• Completed vacation/annual leave Buy Back Program
• Completed and distributed employee compensation statements
• Conducted various employee trainings
• 28 new hires
• 7 Retirees

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I.V. Resource Management Agency
• Used Oil Block Grant
• Tire Cleanup & Amnesty Event
• 55,000 illegally dumped tires picked up and recycled
• Installed GPS tracking system in tire trucks for better management and state reporting
• Household Hazardous Waste program
• Department of Conservation grant
• 218 recycling school presentations conducted valley wide
• Participated in information booths at community events
• Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Sites collections:
  - 6,817 gallons of used oil
  - 1,300 gallons of used paints
  - 10,900 lbs of used batteries
  - 188,660 lbs of universal waste
  - 250 gallons of flammable solids/liquids/poison
  - A total of 278,453 lbs of hazardous waste material collected
• Recondition HHW facilities (El Centro & Brawley)
• Revised web page at www.ivrma.org
• Recycling Guide put in AT&T yellow pages and web site
• Diversion rate now 67.7% one of the highest in California

Parks & Recreation
• Splash Pad Project
• Parks & Recreation Master Plan
• Special Events Program
• City Hall Courtyard Landscaping
• Downtown Landscaping Phase I
• Community Partnership Programs
• Over 30,000 participants in recreational programs

Planning & Zoning
• Adoption of Housing Element
• Adoption of Circulation Element Update
• Updated Planning and Environmental Consultant’s list
• Processed six (6) General Plan Amendments
• Processed three (3) Tentative Subdivision Maps
• Processed one (1) Tentative Parcel Maps

Police Department
• Grants Awarded: COPS Hiring Recovery Program, Stonegarden, Stonegarden Supplemental, OTS DUI Enforcement, Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Supplemental, Citizens Option for Police Service
• Improved SWAT unit and firearms tactical training
• Conducted one DUI checkpoint
• El Centro PAL organized 14 programs for youth and currently has 600 enrolled
• PAL organized 2 successful fundraising boxing events and several other fundraisers
• Front counter upgrade
• Passed annual Juvenile Justice audit
• 47,237 calls for service
• 8,174 reports
• 2,384 citations
• 5,243 arrests
• Increased staffing in Narcotics Task Force
• Developed identity theft kit
• Increased crime prevention and outreach efforts

Public Works
• Water Treatment Plant Expansion / Rehabilitation Project
• Maintained and installed bus shelters
• Acquired additional work crew agreement with Centinela Prison
• Aquatics Center Master Plan Phase I
• Broadway overlay
• Sustainable building practices and green building
• Enhanced Accela Permits Plus capabilities
• Partnered with Enalasys Inc., to ensure that the City of El Centro is the first government agency to utilize the State of California approved third party home energy rating system and automated permitting system
• Provided input in to the mural policy and guidelines
• Exceeded code enforcement, 469 new code cases, 938 code case letters sent, 40 citations issued
• New Businesses Opened/Remodeled: EW Corporations, Lucky’s Chinese Food Restaurant, IV Screen and Awning, Tropicana Restaurant, Mexican Chicken and Salads, The Big Swirl, Assembly of God Church, Home Therapies, Home Depot, Barcelona Event Center, Dr. Parks Dental Office, Winfield Apartments, Imperial Gardens Family Apartments
• 21 permits issued for additions
• 152 permits issued for alterations
• 5308 inspections conducted
• Project permit valuation 2009 $14,357,000
• 3rd/Commercial pump station rehabilitation
• Main / Eastside pump station rehabilitation

Redevelopment Agency
• Façade Improvement Program
• El Dorado Colonia Phase III
• First Time Home Buyers Program
• Imperial Gardens Family Apartments
• El Centro Senior Villas II

Library
• Library 100th Anniversary celebration
• Summer reading program, 500 children
• Teen summer reading program, 40 teens
• 10% increase in circulation of library materials
• Increased diversity of collection, over 5,000 items added to Library collection
• Santa gift program for children

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Finance
- Finalize the implementation and conversion to the new financial software system (MUNIS)
- Continue to complete the budget and comprehensive annual financial report in a timely manner
- Earthquake recovery

Fire
- Fire Station 3 Construction
- Technology upgrade
- Develop Capital Improvement Program
- Improve fire prevention/investigation program
- Emergency Operations Center and Rescue Team

Human Resources
- Conversion to the HRIS portion of MUNIS
- Develop a formal New Employee Orientation
- Continue employee trainings

I.V. Resource Management Agency
- Open Calexico Household Hazardous Waste Facility
- Continue grant writing on behalf of IVRMA to fulfill the State's requirements on diversion rates for Imperial County
- Tire cleanup grants to recycle 40,000 to 60,000 illegally dumped tires and amnesty event cleanups
- Used Oil Block Grants that provide used oil hauling/collection/recycling and public education outreach
- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) grants to provide convenient HHW services for proper disposal options available to the public
- Continue to provide technical assistance and management to member agencies to meet source reduction and recycling objectives in Imperial Valley
- Continue to offer recycling presentations to schools and organizations in Imperial Valley.
- Develop ordinance to establish mandatory recycling
- Develop ordinance to establish regulated paint management program (take back)

Information Technology
- Build network infrastructure for Public Works Wireless Traffic Light project
- Build network infrastructure for new Water Plant
- Complete technology upgrades for new Transfer Terminal
- Build network infrastructure for Fire Station # 3
- Build network infrastructure for new Aquatics Center
- Build network infrastructure for Adult/Senior Center
- Build network infrastructure for new RDA Office expansion

Library
- Reach underserved populations
- Create cutting edge programs
- Develop Library outreach program
- Increase collaboration with parents and volunteers
- Remodel Main Library
- Consider additional Library branch
- Extend hours of operation
- Evaluate the need for a Library Café

Future Fire Station #3

Future Transfer Terminal

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Parks & Recreation
- Indoor Sports Complex construction
- Adult Center construction
- Aquatics Center construction
- Sunflower Restrooms & Concession Stand construction
- Sunflower Park Lot Paving Project
- Sunflower Curb/Gutter/Sidewalk Project
- Bucklin Park Path Rehabilitation
- Frazier Park parking lot paving project
- Increase programs for Adults & Seniors
- Increase programs for Youth & Special Needs
- Increase Performing Arts & Cultural Programs
- Upgrade existing parks & facilities

Planning & Zoning
- Continue to implement and maintain the General Plan in accordance with State law
- Update Sign Ordinance to address banners and off-premise signage
- Amend General Plan to include Project SHAPE
- Amend Zoning Ordinance to include Project SHAPE recommendations and Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan recommendations (i.e., “Embrace The Desert” Policies)

Public Works
- Waterman Avenue Extension
- Transfer Terminal construction
- LTA Bond Street Maintenance & paving projects
- City Hall Shade Structures
- City Hall Solar Panel Project
- City Hall Restroom Facility Upgrade
- Sidewalk improvement project
- Imperial Avenue Overlay
- Update Master Bicycle Plan
- Develop reversion process for Highway 86 as a City street
- Dogwood / I8 Signalization & Ramp Widening
- Dogwood Road Rehabilitation Phase 1
- Traffic Signal Synchronization
- Adams Avenue Rehabilitation Project
- Sewer system infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement projects
- West Main Waterline

Redevelopment Agency
- ECRMC Outpatient Clinic
- El Centro Family Apartments
- Improve visual aesthetics of the City
- RDA office expansion project
- Façade Improvement Program
- El Centro Industrial Project
- E.W. Corporation redevelopment site
- Sidewalk improvement project
- First time homebuyers program
- Remodel front of police station
- Continue to explore the goal of creating a paperless environment
- Improve Animal Control services
- Creation of a joint facility with the County for sheltering of animals
- Decrease traffic congestion around schools
- Improve staffing levels
- Establish Citizen’s Academy

Police Department
- Police Facility Upgrade
- Apply for Countywide DUI Enforcement Grant-Office of Traffic Safety
- El Centro PAL will concentrate on recruiting more youth from the community, offer more programs, organize “Fun Bus” trips as fundraisers, look into additional fundraising avenues, and focus on utilizing the Ryerson Youth Center as a training facility
- Spillman upgrade and State Link upgrade, Geobase solution in order to become 911 Phase II wireless compliant
- Continue to explore the goal of creating a paperless environment
- Improve Animal Control services
- Creation of a joint facility with the County for sheltering of animals
- Decrease traffic congestion around schools
- Improve staffing levels
- Establish Citizen’s Academy

Future Sports Complex
Mardi Gras Light Parade & Street Festival

The winners were:
1st El Centro City Hall –“Alice in Wonderland”
   (Sponsored by Haven’s Trucking & Home Depot)
2nd Imperial County Planning & Development Services
3rd Slender Woman, Café 101,
   CA United Homecare Workers Union.

1st place float

Mardi Gras King & Queen 2010
Bill Caldwell & Cherisse Alford

Carlos Aguilar Park
Playground Equipment $111,554
Completed February 2010
Despite the difficult economic climate, ECRMC experienced a steady growth rate of 12% in net revenue during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, offset by the increased expenses of 11%.

The ECRMC Foundation began its quest to raise funds for the pediatric renovation two years ago. The goal was to raise $180,000 for a complete refresh of the pediatric unit at ECRMC. Just 10 months after the launch of the first fundraising event the foundation raised the full amount and began work on the renovation.

ECRMC Pediatrics Renovation

Future ECRMC Outpatient Center

View From Drop Off and Parking

4th/Main Streets - $3,200,000 TOTAL
($1,600,000 Funded by City of El Centro via Redevelopment Agency Funds + $1,600,000 Funded by ECRMC)

ECRMC Financial Performance

Imperial Valley’s only 64-Slice CT Scanner
ECRMC Foundation Presents Check for Pediatrics Renovation

The El Centro Regional Medical Center (ECRMC) Foundation presented a check to ECRMC administrators in April in the amount of $145,338.

The funds will be used to help cover the costs of the newly renovated pediatrics unit.

“We’re pleased to present ECRMC the funds earned during our campaign,” said Marty Dineley, executive director, ECRMC Foundation. “The pediatric upgrades are wonderful and provide a great experience for young patients.”

The renovation included new flooring; trim and paneling; paint; flat screen TVs in all rooms; air conditioning units; cabinets; blinds; and cubicle curtains. In addition, six bathrooms were remodeled and included low-flow toilets, sinks and fixtures. Ten wall murals were painted in the five sponsor rooms, parent sleeper chairs were purchased for each of the 12 rooms and a ceiling mural was painted in the treatment room.

“The ECRMC Foundation provides much needed assistance to our hospital as we continue to grow and better serve our patients,” said David Green, CEO, ECRMC. “The funds raised by the Foundation go back into the hospital to build and improve on.”

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Upcoming Street projects within the next 12 months

• $14.8 million throughout El Centro
• Dogwood/I-8 signalization and ramp widening
• Traffic Signal Synchronization
• 8th Street/Cruickshank Drive
• Imperial Avenue Overlay and ADA improvements between Adams & Orange
• Adams Avenue Rehabilitation
• Ross Avenue Rehabilitation
• 2010 Overlay

Sunflower Parking Lot Paving Project

$120,320 from County Air Pollution Control Grant
Completed January 2010

The City of El Centro had its ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Sunflower Parking.
85% of El Centro City Road System to be Improved Over the Next 2 Fiscal Years

The City of El Centro Financing Authority sold $14,740,000 in Lease Revenue Bonds on December 10, 2009 to fund road and transportation projects. The Bonds were designated Bank Qualified and $10,125,000 of the bonds were Build America Bonds (BABs). Build America Bonds are a new financing option created by the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), a stimulus program created by President Obama. Although the interest is taxable, the Federal Government provides a 35% subsidy payment to the City on each interest coupon on the bonds.

The bonds carried a blended interest rate of 5.5%. It is estimated that by using BABs and a new investment model the City will be able to exceed its road and streets project fund requirements by an estimated $21,054. This will allow the City to improve over 85% of its road system. The work will be done in two separate $5 million construction projects in fiscal year 2011 and fiscal year 2012. The City of El Centro is the first Imperial Valley City to utilize the Build America Bonds financing technique. The Bonds were rated by Standard and Poor’s (S&P) along with the City’s general debt. S&P rated the City’s general debt A+ and the bonds were rated A. Both ratings were upgrades for the City. S&P cited a track record of the very strong fund balances during the past five years and the diverse El Centro economy with per capita sales at 130% of national averages, in awarding the City both ratings.

Message from City Manager

The City of El Centro has been working very hard to help the community recover from the earthquake that occurred on April 4, 2010. We have discovered during our damage assessments that there may be underlying damage to buildings and structures that may have not been initially realized. Make sure that an inspection is conducted in areas of your homes and businesses that are not immediately obvious, such as your air conditioning units, chimneys and pools. Initially these structures might have seemed to be okay, but with a 7.2 earthquake and numerous aftershocks things can move and continue to move out of place.

Parks & Recreation Receives Award

The City of El Centro Parks and Recreation Department was notified recently that they have been chosen to receive the 2009 California Park & Recreation Society (CPRS) Award of Excellence for the category of Agency Showcase for their summer brochure. The awards raise awareness for work well done among cities and communities throughout the State of California.

Kristie Riester, Director of Parks and Recreation stated “Our department is so excited to receive this award! We feel honored that we were selected from many cities that have also been doing great things across the State! For us, it means so much to receive recognition from CPRS as well as from our peers!”

The Parks and Recreation Department attended the awards ceremony in March. A formal presentation was also made at a City Council meeting.