

June 25, 2009



## **COUNTY ADOPTS BUDGET BUT MORE STATE CUTS LOOM**

As I wrote you earlier, the Board of Supervisors held budget hearings last week. On Friday, June 19, we adopted a spending plan for the fiscal year that starts on July 1. Although service levels in some areas will be reduced, we have so far been able to avoid devastating cuts to County services.

The adopted budget closed a \$273 million gap between last year's spending and available revenues for next year. The total budget is \$4 billion. \$2.2 billion of that is discretionary funding and includes a 5% reserve fund. The shortfall in expected revenues will be remedied through a mix of service reductions, increased efficiencies, and use of one-time funds.

Because much of the funding comes from the State, mental health and drug and alcohol services unfortunately received the deepest cuts. Transitional housing units and residential beds are reduced in the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services, saving \$3 million. \$1.5 million will be achieved by reducing contract providers in the Mental Health Department are reduced by 1.5%.

The Board was able to save a number of public health nurse positions slated for elimination, and a reorganization should keep service at nearly the same level. A new service delivery practice called the "Medical Home Model" will also use reorganization to save money. By combining mental health services with other County health clinics, \$12 million in cost savings will be achieved.

One of the most important actions we had to take was to plan for potential impacts of the State budget crisis. In addition to regular contingency fund, the Board decided to create an additional one-time reserve of \$63 million. This will give the County about \$93 million total to help blunt potential cuts that will be enacted by the Legislature.

In a worst case scenario, that impact could be as much as \$283 million for Santa Clara County alone. Based on what happens over the next few weeks in Sacramento, the Board will need to make additional adjustments to the County budget by fall.

As always, I encourage you to contact my office if you have any concerns or are interested in additional information. You can reach me at 299-5040 or via e-mail at [Supervisor.Yeager@bos.sccgov.org](mailto:Supervisor.Yeager@bos.sccgov.org).

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## **LIFE EXPECTANCY INCREASES WITH CLEANER AIR**

At our California Air Resources Board (ARB) monthly meetings, the board members are often informed about the latest research results that examine the relationship between air quality and health effects. The May 28 meeting brought us news from an amazing report showing how cleaner air affects life expectancy.

A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine investigated the association between fine particulate matter and life expectancy in 51 U.S. metropolitan areas (including the San Jose metro area). Particulate matter, one of the pollutants the ARB regulates, is a blend of tiny particles that include elements such as carbon and metals that can accumulate deep in the lungs and contain substances that are particularly harmful to human health.

The study found that for every decrease of 10 micrograms per meter cubed of fine particulate matter, life expectancy increased by seven months. Since the late 1970s, improvements in health care, lifestyle and diet have increased the average life expectancy in the United States by nearly three years. Air quality improvements alone accounted for nearly five months of that increase.

As a long-time health advocate, I am very excited by this news. It proves that the actions we are taking to improve our environment are working. By requiring our industries to be cleaner, our air quality is improving, and we are getting healthier.

Fine particulate matter is associated with as many as 18,000 premature deaths per year in California. Along with reduced life expectancy, particulate matter has been linked to increased hospitalizations and emergency room visits for people with chronic heart or lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, and heart and blood vessel disease.

The ARB and the 35 local air districts have adopted many measures that have reduced statewide concentrations of fine particulate matter by nearly 13 micrograms per meter cubed between 1987 and 2006. These reductions are expected to continue as recently adopted regulations curbing emissions from diesel engines come into effect over the coming decade.

Aggressive regulation of polluters is reversing this trend. Going forward, we must do even more to curb emissions. We all deserve clean air and long, healthy lives. But we must put in the hard work to get there.

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## **RETHINK YOUR DRINK FOR A HEALTHIER SUMMER**

As temperatures rise this summer, you may want to think twice about reaching for an ice-cold soda to quench your thirst. A 20-ounce bottle of soda not only contains 240 calories, it also includes a whopping 17 teaspoons of sugar. That is why the County is again promoting the “Soda Free Summer” campaign.

Soda is the No. 1 source of sugar in the American diet, and all that sugar adds to rising obesity rates and obesity-related diseases, such as diabetes. Soda Free Summer is partnership between Santa Clara County, the Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative, The Health Trust, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and other community groups to encourage residents to rethink the sugary drinks they consume every day and make this summer soda-free by drinking healthier beverages.



Teenagers in the United States consume twice as much soda as they do milk. Locally, about 26 percent of all Santa Clara County children are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. Drinking just one 20-ounce bottle of soda every day for a year can pack on an extra 25 pounds.

*First 5 of Santa Clara County is using its Super Healthies characters to promote healthier habits, such as drinking less sugar, for young children under age five. Click on their logo to learn more.*

With all the sugar in sodas, sweetened teas, sports drinks and artificially flavored juices, one in three children born today is

expected to develop diabetes, unless communities begin adopting healthier lifestyles.

Reducing calorie and sugar intake by drinking water can make a big impact on the health of adults as well. About half of all adults in Santa Clara County are obese or overweight, and the cost of treating obesity-related illnesses in Santa Clara County between 2000 and 2002 totaled \$140 million.

Over the weekend, representatives from FIRST 5, Kaiser Permanente San Jose Medical Center, and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department joined me at the annual Festival in the Park health faire to officially launch the event. Last year, 100,000 Bay Area residents took the Soda Free Summer challenge. I hope we can double that number this year.

Learn more about Soda Free Summer by visiting [www.sodafreesummer.org](http://www.sodafreesummer.org). Click on “Commit to a Healthier You!” at the top of the page and enter to win hundreds of dollars in prizes for avoiding sodas and sugary drinks this summer.

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## **NEW COUNTY EXECUTIVE APPOINTED**

On June 24, the Board of Supervisors announced the appointment of Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., as the County Executive of Santa Clara County. He will start on September 1.

Dr. Smith currently serves as Executive Director of the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers. He is also a former member of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the Martinez City Council.

Dr. Smith earned a Juris Doctor degree from Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California, Berkeley and a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Southern California.

## NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS DESIGNATED IN SAN JOSE

We are lucky that Santa Clara County is teeming with beautiful parks and trails that let residents connect with nature and participate in healthy recreational activities. This month, I was happy to learn that Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar officially designated three connecting trails in San Jose as a National Recreation Trail.

The National Recreation Trail system links communities to recreational opportunities on public lands and in local parks across the Nation. The San Jose Trail System was one of 22 trails in 13 states as newly recognized this year, adding more than 525 miles of trails to the National Trails System. It joins a network of more than 1,050 previously designated trails that total more than 12,500 miles.

National Recreation Trails have been a touchstone of the National Trails System since the first designations in 1971. The designation recognizes existing trails and trail systems that connect people to local resources and improve their quality of life. The San Jose trails designated as part of this network include the Guadalupe River Trail, the Highway 237 Bikeway, and the Coyote Creek Trail North.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Rose, White and Blue Parade**

**What:** This annual event celebrates the founding of our country and continues the tradition of the Fiesta de las Rosas Parade, a San Jose tradition that began in 1896. The conclusion of the parade will feature a festival of food, games, vendors, kids corner, historical associations with San Jose photographs and the Santa Clara County Rose Society offering demonstrations of rose culture.

**When:** July 4 at 10 a.m.

**Where:** The parade begins at West San Carlos St. at Shasta Ave. and ends at Hanchett Ave. at The Alameda.

**More Information:** Visit [www.the-alameda.com](http://www.the-alameda.com).

### **Bay Area Fatherhood Conference and Information Fair**

**What:** The conference features interactive workshops that emphasize the importance of early childhood development. The conference admission of \$25 includes all workshops, resource materials, lunch, entertainment, and door prizes. The Health and Information Fair includes free health care screenings for diabetes, cholesterol, blood pressure, visual acuity, and dental issues.

**When:** July 11, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Where:** San Jose Convention Center, 150 West San Carlos Street

**More Information:** Contact Hilda Delgado at 928-5820.

### **Free Electronic Waste Recycling Event**

**What:** County residents are invited to take advantage of this opportunity to bring any unwanted and outdated electronics such as computers, monitors, TVs, stereo equipment, copiers and cell phones that they have wanted to get rid of but haven't had the chance. Household hazardous wastes such as paint, motor oil, etc. are not accepted at this event.

**When:** July 11, from 8 a. m to 2 p.m.

**Where:** Veterans Services Office Parking Lot, 68 N. Winchester Blvd., Santa Clara

**More Information:** Visit [www.hhw.org](http://www.hhw.org) or call 299-7300.