

continued from page 1 **Community Park**

The first phase of the park offers many recreation opportunities for kids of all ages including baseball and soccer fields, tennis, basketball and bocce courts, playgrounds, picnic areas, and a zero-depth interactive aquatic playground. For true bocce aficionados the surface of the courts at the Central Park will consist of crushed oyster shells—the standard surface in Italy.

“The aquatic playground is the focal point for the park,” said Michael Pon, Landscape Architect for the Central Community Park.

The interactive fountain has various types of jets arranged in concentric circles that spray water in different shapes and heights. Children can use the push buttons which are interspersed throughout the fountain to spray a sequence of patterns. The outermost circle of “mushroom” jets spray an umbrella-like stream of water about 2-feet high, the inner circles consists of “arch and dominator” jets spurting a pencil-thin to nickel-sized diameter streams of water about four to five feet high, and the innermost “lava” jet sends out a 4-inch diameter stream up to eight feet in height.

“A seating wall and a series of locally grown palm trees encompass the aquatic playground, offering a place for adults to relax while their children cool off in the water,” said Pon. “The palm trees provide just enough shade from the sun without blocking it.”

A wind sensor allows for automatic adjustment of the fountain. If the wind is over 12-miles per hour, the pumps are reduced to 50% capacity. Over 20-miles per hour winds will shut down the entire system.

“A great deal of thought and consideration went into the planning and design of this park,” said Shareghi. “The park will certainly be a wonderful amenity for both the adults and children of Mountain House.”



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representatives were very thorough in their investigation. Not only did they review all of our financial statements, but they also reviewed the Master Plan and toured the water treatment and water reclamation facilities and visited the neighborhoods. After an exhaustive review, Standard & Poor’s awarded the MHCS D an A- rating. This is a remarkable rating, since most new municipalities rarely receive a rating higher than a B. The higher rating helped to make the bonds much more attractive to investors and reduced the interest rate on the bonds.

Mountain House was able to issue \$24 million in revenue bonds at a very competitive rate in a tough economic environment. This is because the Standard & Poor’s representatives and the marketplace saw Mountain House as a strong and growing community, and, recognizing excellent government oversight and fiscal stewardship, considered the MHCS D a good investment.

The revenues received from the bonds issuance goes towards payment of the overall debt incurred by the developers. However, to assure our continued financial stability, the MHCS D is not required to pay this debt until there are sufficient revenues generated by the utilities to pay off the bonds.

As Mountain House continues to grow, we anticipate that our prudent fiscal stewardship and excellent government oversight will continue to make it possible for us to sell additional revenue bonds to continue to pay down the overall debt, and to pay for any necessary upgrades or replacement of the infrastructure in the future.

As the manager of the MHCS D finance department, I take great pride in the fact that we were so successful with our efforts and other new cities can look to Mountain House as an example of how to deal with financing their infrastructure. I think the Mountain House residents should feel assured that, even in these tough economic times, Mountain House remains a stable and healthy community.



Neighborhood News

MOUNTAIN HOUSE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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Mountain House’s First Community Park Opens in March

Central Community Park, Mountain House’s first community park, is the first phase of a three phase, 45-acre Community Park and is scheduled to open to the public sometime in March. Located at the heart of the planned Town Center, Central Community Park provides the largest active and passive recreation area within Mountain House. Planned amenities for the entire park include 14 acres of open space, picnic areas, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, a water park, a restroom/storage facility and Italianate gardens.



“When planning and designing this park, we wanted to make sure we created a space that offers residents a variety of recreational opportunities, but also was an idyllic place to just spend time wandering the grounds and enjoying the atmosphere,” said Nader Shareghi, Public Works Director for the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D).



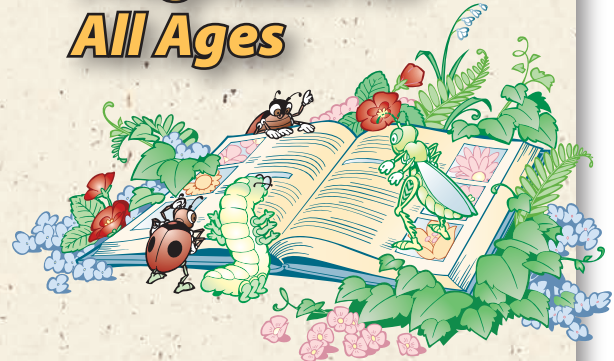
The park’s design and architectural detailing reinforce the Civic Italianate architectural style of the planned Mountain House Town Center. A serpentine alley of London Plane trees on either side of an eight-foot walkway provides the major circulation route through the park. The Mediterranean-inspired plant pallet creates formal parterre gardens, bosques of flowering trees, and allees of cypress trees.

“Wind and the summer sun are two major considerations when designing a park in Mountain House,” said Shareghi. “The landscape design provides plenty of shade and respite from the Altamont winds.”

An elevated planting of evergreen trees and shrubs form a windbreak along the western edge of the park. This windbreak also provides a “wildlands” contrast to the formality of the other areas within the park and buffers park users from Central Parkway vehicular traffic.

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Mountain House Library Offers Programs for All Ages



Have you checked out the Mountain House library yet?

Kaye Leuck, the Lead Library Assistant and part-time storyteller, says she still hears the occasional patron wonder out loud why they waited so long to come in. While Kaye admits that the Library Staff loves to hear that kind of talk, she and her colleagues also want to make sure that residents keep coming back.

In addition to a wide selection of **books, CDs and DVDs**, the Mountain House Library offers programs for a wide range of ages. The **Preschool Story Time** is held on Tuesday mornings at 11:00 am and **Family Story Time** on Thursday evenings at 4:30 pm.

In addition, the Mountain House Library offers **computer courses**, such as beginning word processing using MS Word. "These computer classes are typically very popular and the seating is limited; so it is important to sign up early," said Leuck.

Young adults will be interested in an upcoming computer class titled "**All about My Space.**" This class will be held on March 26 at 5:30 pm. Those who would like to attend this class should sign up at the library.

Flyers providing information about future classes or other programs are posted at the Mountain House Branch Library. In addition, you can contact the Mountain House Branch Library to become part of the future Friends of the Mountain House Library. Once formed, the Friends of Mountain House Library can help library staff find additional resources to build and diversify the programs offered by the library.

A Word from the Finance Manager



Gay Giles, Finance Manager

Financing infrastructure is a complex undertaking for any municipality, particularly given the current economic environment. Financing infrastructure for a brand new community multiplies that complexity ten-fold. Our recent efforts at the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D) to issue Utility System Revenue Bonds to finance the water treatment plant, the water reclamation facility and storm drain infrastructure could serve as the model for other new municipalities in the future.

While utility providers of existing communities are able to build new facilities or expand current facilities by incurring debt, new communities such as Mountain House do not have that luxury. It is impossible for a utility provider of a brand new city with no credit history or current revenues to obtain a loan and/or sell bonds. To make the community of Mountain House happen, developers needed to finance the necessary water, wastewater and storm drain systems before the first resident moved into Mountain House. Of course, once the facilities are built, operating and providing revenue, the developers need to be reimbursed by the MHCS D. Reimbursement of this debt is similar to normal municipal financing, except that it is accomplished through the Pledged Component of your utility bill.

Take a look at your MHCS D utility bill. The amount you pay is divided into two categories: operation and maintenance and another category called Pledged Component. The latter category is the amount we collect from our customers to pay for the costs of building the treatment plants, pipes and the other utility-related infrastructure.

The formal agreements between the developer and the MHCS D require that when the MHCS D can afford to pay off \$10 million of debt through anticipated revenues, then the MHCS D must sell Utility System Revenue Bonds.

In October 2007 my department started the process to issue revenue bonds that would pay for these infrastructure projects. A revenue bond is a special type of municipal bond. Revenue bonds guarantee repayment solely from revenues generated by a specified revenue-generating entity associated with the purpose of the bonds. In our case, the bonds allow us to purchase MHCS D utility infrastructure based upon utility billing receipts.

Similar to a prospective homeowner who is looking for a loan, a municipality that is issuing a bond wants the lowest rate possible. Also, even though a municipality may issue revenue bonds, investors may choose not to buy those bonds. Therefore, a municipality needs to time the issuance of bonds when the market is most receptive. We considered issuing revenue bonds in 2006, but the market conditions were not suitable for us. Allowing another year to pass provided us with more favorable conditions.

To assure that we get the lowest rates possible, the MHCS D needed to be considered a good credit risk by the bond marketplace. Standard & Poor's is an independent credit rating agency that rates municipalities. Their responsibility is to inform investors whether or not a municipality is considered a good credit risk, or not. They do this by assigning a credit rating to the municipality. During the early phase of the process, Standard & Poor's sent representatives to Mountain House. Those

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Master Restrictions Help Keep Mountain House an Enjoyable Place to Live

Master Restrictions (MRs), commonly referred to as CC&Rs, help to maintain a pleasant and enjoyable environment for every resident in Mountain House. Please be aware of and follow the MRs to preserve the unique design of Mountain House, which in turn will help keep property values from declining. The MRs were adopted by ordinance and are administered by the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D). The following MRs were singled out by Jerry Torres, MH Neighborhood Administrator, as being frequently violated.

Campaign, Garage Sale and other Signage

Residents are prohibited from displaying on public property any signs, including those promoting political campaigns, garage sales, homes-for-sale and businesses. The MRs also prohibits the placement of political campaign signage in front yards (private property) until 30 days prior to the election; and the signage must be removed within 48 hours after the election.

Garbage Cans

Refuse collection containers (fondly referred to as garbage cans) must be screened from public view, except for 24 hours before and after scheduled pick-up. Containers that are in public view outside of the allowable time period are considered a violation. The MHCS D generally conducts sweeps for garbage can violations on Mondays, but may survey the neighborhoods at anytime.

Boats, RVs and Disabled Vehicles

Boats and recreational vehicles (RVs) are allowed in the community for a 24-hour period for loading and unloading. MRs prohibit residents from storing their boats or RVs on their private property or in the public right-of-way. Disabled vehicles are allowed to be stored at a residence only if they are kept in an enclosed garage, and such storage does not force another owned vehicle to park in the street.

Dogs

Dog owners are required to keep their pets on a leash at all times when they are off their private property. Dogs that are unleashed can be confiscated by San Joaquin County Animal Control. Owners are required to clean up after their dogs defecate. Residents are subject to MRs penalties if they do not clean up after their dogs.

Mountain House Creek Park

The Mountain House Creek Park is a combined wildlife preserve and storm detention facility, and some areas are off-limits to dogs and children. Please keep your dogs and children on the trails when enjoying Mountain House Creek Park.

Master Restrictions Violations

Most routine MRs violations carry a penalty of a \$100 a day, with a maximum fine of \$700 per occurrence. Residents receive a First Notice as a reminder of a violation, then a Second Notice as a final warning. A Third Notice invokes a fine of a \$100 a day. Do not let this happen to you. Please revisit the MRs that were provided to you upon the close of your home purchase, or were provided to you, as required, by your landlord. Please continue to have pride in your community.



Little League Baseball Comes to Mountain House

Boys and girls will be rounding the bases at baseball fields as part of the newly formed Mountain House Little League organization. More than 160 boys and girls signed up to play Little League, starting this spring. There will be teams in every age division including T-Ball (age 5-6), Farm (age 7-8), Minors (age 9-10), Major (age 11-12) and Junior (age 13-14). Games will be held on Saturdays, with practices once or twice a week.

The season runs from March through mid-June. Opening Day ceremonies, scheduled at 8:00 am on March 1 in the Wicklund Neighborhood Park, included team and individual pictures, a keynote speaker, the singing of the National Anthem and the inaugural first pitch.

"This is the first community sporting organization formed in Mountain House," said Jerry Torres, Neighborhood Administrator for the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D). "We are working hard to help the Little League Baseball organization become a major success in Mountain House."

The MHCS D worked closely with resident Eric Payne, who is responsible for forming the first Little League Baseball organization in Mountain House. "I love baseball," said Payne, who played second base for UC Davis. "I was looking for ways that I could help build upon that wonderful sense of community we have at Mountain House, and bringing Little League Baseball to Mountain House just made sense. I just didn't realize how many people would be interested."

In addition to working with volunteers to help get kids, coaches and sponsors, Payne has been working with the MHCS D to get the fields in shape for play. "Field dimensions vary slightly for different age levels and the organization is very specific about how the fields need to be laid out," said Payne. "Jerry has been dynamite and we really appreciate that the MHCS D is helping us make sure that the kids will be playing on fields that fit within Little League regulations."

A few coaching positions are still available. While previous coaching experience is a valuable asset, it is not a requirement. Coaches are paid to attend a basic training clinic. The League is always looking for additional sponsors. To learn about how to become a coach and/or sponsor, just e-mail Eric Payne at ericweb1@yahoo.com.