

The

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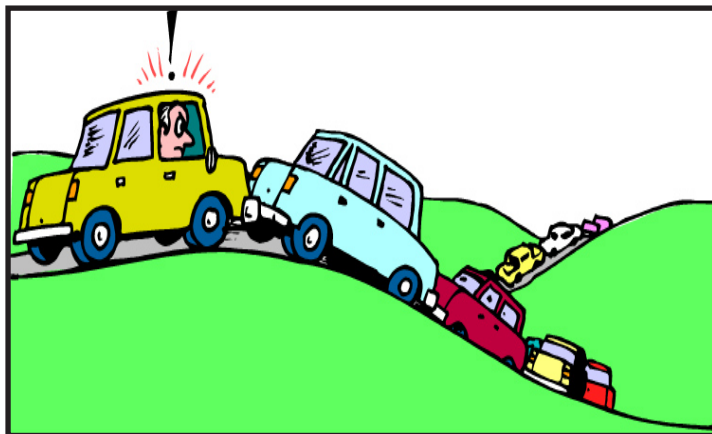
The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

December 2006

[www.basslakeaction.org](http://www.basslakeaction.org)



Bass Lake Road then



Bass Lake Road now

## THE PROBLEMS OF GROWTH IN EL DORADO HILLS

The evidence is increasingly powerful: The action, in terms of population, job growth and even politics, seems to be in California's outer suburbs, or "exurbs." The central Valley and the Sierra foothills are booming. El Dorado Hills is in the middle of all this growth. It's time to talk about whether this is the way we want to grow our state and build our communities.

The suburbanization of the United States began with mass access to automobiles, and it accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s. Between the 1990 and 2000 Census, the suburbs of the largest one hundred cities in the country grew in population at a rate twice that of the cities themselves. And when people move, so do jobs. According to the Brookings Institution, a think tank based in Washington, these days one-third of all jobs are located beyond a ten-mile radius of central business districts, and thirty-six percent of commutes nationally are suburb-to-suburb.

This rapid decentralization is creating a population living in the space between suburban and rural that does not work in cities, does not commute to cities, go to the movies in cities, or have any contact with urban life. These exurbs have broken free

of the gravitational pull of the cities and now exist in their own world far beyond. Thoughtful people are asking if this world is sustainable, is it what we want, and are there alternatives?

Migrating ever outward into low-density development tends to segregate people by income and requires the use of automobiles to connect workplaces, residences, retail centers, and entertainment. The public cost is turning out to be an enormous economic burden on these areas, and the burden could be passed on to the taxpayers.

The public burden is in the form of new sewers, new roads, and the cost of delivering new law enforcement and fire services. The fact is, it just costs more to deliver services in less-dense areas. The initial cost of building infrastructure may be initially absorbed by the developers and builders, who simply pass on the cost in the price of new homes. The effect is that the new home buyers finance the infrastructure cost over the long run in their home mortgages.

The problem for citizens and policymakers is that the costs are hidden. The result is that a sense of urgency for growth planning, on the scale required to provide for the maintenance and eventual replacement

of infrastructure, is not encouraged.

Consequently, things look quite good in the short term. There are new homes, new roads, and new shopping centers. There's no incentive to change whatsoever. Change usually only comes when things become untenable ten years or so down the road, when things start to wear out, and there's no money to replace them.

If change comes sooner, it may be in an unintended consequence of the exurban population's distaste for tax increases. With not much money in the pot, it is increasingly in the interest of local government to encourage options that allow exurbs to develop more like more cost-efficient communities.

But what if you don't have a local government? What if you have a large population center like El Dorado Hills that has in effect an absentee landlord in the form of a county board of supervisors? Each supervisor has his or her separate constituency to placate, and allocating more scarce resources to meet the growing needs of El Dorado Hills may not be their first priority.

People generally worry about schools, jobs, safety, and the availability of essential services. In rural communities, explosive

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**~ NOTICE TO READERS: The next issue of the Bulletin will be February 2007 ~**

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello Everyone,

The Christmas Season is upon us, and since Thanksgiving came early this year, we have lots more time between Thanksgiving and Christmas to enjoy the Holiday Season. This is also the time of year we are reminded that we should count our blessings. From my vantage point, our community enjoys many blessings.

Alexis de Tocqueville was a French aristocrat who visited the United States in 1831. He subsequently wrote a book, "Democracy in America," which remains one of the most influential books on political thought.

Observing Americans in action, de Tocqueville wrote, "Americans of all ages, all stations of life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. In democratic countries knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all the others."

He also observed, "When the members of a community are forced to attend to public affairs, they are necessarily drawn from the circle of their own interests, and snatched at times from self-observation. As soon as a man begins to treat of public affairs in public, he begins to perceive that he is not so independent of his fellow-men as he had at first imagined, and that, in order to obtain their support, he must often lend them his co-operation."

De Tocqueville recognized that getting involved in local affairs brings citizens out of their isolation. The free institutions at the local level constantly remind citizens that they live in a society. And it is through involvement in associations that the dangers of tyranny in a democracy can be avoided. By associations, Tocqueville means non-governmental associations such as Bass Lake Action Committee.

I would like to end the year by expressing my thanks for the blessings of association and the fellowship that come from belonging to Bass Lake Action Committee, and

which hopefully brings blessings to all of our members, and also to our supporters in the greater community of El Dorado Hills.

*John E. Thomson*

President



### GROWTH *(continued from page 1)*

construction of homes, roads, and schools overwhelms villages and towns, often replicating the problems that migrating families had tried to escape.

Many specialists who have studied this issue talk about this growth as a kind of centrifugal force. It continually spins resources and residents from urban centers to urban fringes, from urban fringes to nearby suburbs, from nearby suburbs to outlying suburbs, and from outlying suburbs to ever-distant rural developments. It's apparently a never-ending cycle, churning communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Communities are built up and, within a few years, without planning, become the type of community that people thought they left behind.

The estimated population of El Dorado Hills is currently 42,300 people, based on an estimate by the El Dorado Hills Citizens Alliance, using figures from latest the Fire Department Report. Assuming the same rate of growth that is projected by the recent El Dorado Hills Community Service District's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, El Dorado Hills is slated to be a community of 75,000 by 2020. That's only 13 years away. The two cities in the county, Placerville and South Lake Tahoe, currently have populations of 10,000 and 24,000 respectively, and are not expected to grow much more. The only other sizable community, Cameron Park, has about 15,000 residents. That means that El Dorado Hills is currently the economic engine pulling the fiscal train for the county, and looks to be the cash cow for the county in years to come. At the same time, El Dorado Hills is struggling to close the gap between present and anticipated needs and a perceived lack of funding.

Do the citizens of El Dorado Hills want their community to eventually look like San Jose, or Elk Grove, because of a lack of planning? Hiding one's head in the sand and saying, "It can't happen here," is foolish. It will happen if the populace doesn't get active and shape the community the way they want it, instead

of waiting for events to just happen. ~

*(This is the first of several articles that will discuss growth and its impact on El Dorado Hills, which includes Bass Lake.)*



### NEW PASSPORT REQUIREMENT FOR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

New rules apply to United States citizens who attempt to return to the U.S. after traveling outside the country, starting in 2007. The new rules will be implemented in two phases.

The first phase will begin on January 23, 2007, and requires all citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from within the Western Hemisphere when traveling on an airline.

A separate rule addressing land and sea travel will take effect as early as January 1, 2008. U.S. citizens traveling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea could be required to present a valid U.S. passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security in order to return to the United States.

The Department has dedicated additional resources and personnel to meet the increased demand for passports generated by these requirements. In 2006, the Department issued a record 12.1 million passports to American citizens, and anticipates issuing 16 million passports in 2007. U.S. citizens can find information about how to apply for a passport at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) or by calling 1-877-487-2778. ~

**Merry Christmas**



## SACOG MASTER TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2035 WORKSHOP

*(The following is a report by El Dorado Hills resident Paul Raveling, who attended the workshop)*

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for developing a state- and federally-required Master Transportation Plan (MTP) every three years in coordination with the 22 cities and six counties in the greater Sacramento region. Under memoranda of understanding, long-range transportation plans in El Dorado and Placer Counties are also incorporated into the SACOG MTP.

The MTP is a 28-year plan for transportation improvements in the six-county Sacramento region, based on projections for growth in population, housing, and jobs. The MTP is key to the quality of life and economic health of the Sacramento region, of which El Dorado Hills is a part.

An MTP workshop was conducted by SACOG on November 16, the purpose of which was to gather public input on alternative traffic corridor routes contemplated by the MTP as part of the required Environmental Impact Report.

My report covers the workshop conducted in Folsom, which was one of eight simultaneous workshops held at different locations throughout the SACOG region. I registered as a participant in the Community Interest category, and was seated at Folsom table 16. Of the six participants at my table, three were from El Dorado County (one from Cameron Park and two from El Dorado Hills) and three were from Sacramento County.

I was disappointed to see what little representation our community has in the SACOG MTP process. El Dorado Hills still is literally not on the map, and none of SACOG's planning maps at this event identified EDH, despite the fact that, though still unincorporated, it currently is a community of more than 42,000 people. It appeared to me that

neither El Dorado Hills nor El Dorado County is a factor in the 2035 MTP.

I was also dismayed to find that none of the transportation alternatives evaluated at the workshop involved El Dorado County. The presence of El Dorado County in SACOG MTP documents is limited to one web page that incorporates projects in the County's Capital Improvement Plan into a regional list. My personal conjecture is that this is a sign of inattention originating primarily at the SACOG staff level, where responsibility lies for the detailed execution of regional planning.

It became evident to me that a fundamental goal of the MTP is to reduce traffic delay on a per capita basis primarily through land use planning, mainly by promoting high density urbanization and infill development. The desired result is to reduce the distance between homes, jobs, and shopping throughout the region for the population as a whole. While road and transit upgrades will tend to slow down the increase in congestion, actual congestion will continue to increase because any reduction in delay times will occur only because of shorter average travel distances.

The transportation scenarios evaluated in the MTP appear to do fairly well with respect to localization of travel, but the scenarios appear to be much less adequate in addressing regional and long distance travel. SACOG's acknowledgement that road congestion will increase is not very comforting when one's travel requires traversing a large area of the Sacramento region, as is common for El Dorado Hills residents.

A point brought out at the workshop was that the MTP is limited to supporting proposals that the region can afford under current budget constraints. This severely limits its ability to initiate ideas that could potentially decrease road congestion. I think the primary objective should be reduction in road congestion, and budget considerations should be secondary. SACOG's mission should be to identify infrastructure improvements first, and then identify funding to meet those requirements. The same process should be applied locally to El Dorado County.

Though touted as an electronic voting process, in practice the system had a number of technical glitches and user interface issues. At that point there was an announcement that valid results were being gathered at each workshop location, and that they would be processed later. The most important choices, voting on transportation planning alternatives, were luckily submitted on

paper ballots.

What about the results of the voting? SACOG has posted the results of the workshops on its web site [sacog.org](http://sacog.org) and the file may be downloaded. The raw data is presented without any summary or suggested outcomes from the endeavor. When all is said and done, it may come out that this was just an exercise required by Congress so the Sacramento region could get its transportation dollars. Federal law requires that certain public outreach steps must be followed, then the local agencies can get the federal funding. Whether or not the results of the workshops will affect how the money is spent may never be known. ~



## THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Though historians disagree somewhat, the custom of a Christmas tree, undecorated, is believed to have begun in Germany, in the first half of the 700s. We do know with greater authority that by the sixteenth century, fir trees, indoors and out, were decorated to commemorate Christmas in Germany. The decorations that were hung on a tree in that time were roses cut of many-colored paper, apples, wafers, gilt, and sugar.

It is a widely-held belief that Martin Luther, the sixteenth-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

By the 1700s, the Christbaum, or "Christ tree," was a firmly established German tradition and the custom spread to other parts of Western Europe. It was popularized in

*(continued on next page)*



## CHRISTMAS TREE *(continued)*

England in the nineteenth century, by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's German consort, who had grown up decorating Christmas trees. When he married Victoria, in 1840, he requested that she adopt the German tradition. The custom was introduced to America with the influx of German and Irish immigrants.

Godey's Lady's Book, a women's publication of the 1800s, played a role in popularizing festive Christmas practices. Through its lighthearted and humorous drawings, its household-decorating hints, its recipes for Christmas confections and meals, and its instructions for homemade tree ornaments, the magazine convinced thousands of housewives that the Nativity was not just a fervent holy day but could also be a

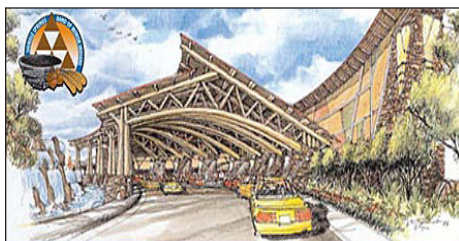


## HOLIDAY TRASH PICKUP SCHEDULE

Bass Lake residents are reminded that although Waste Connections, our trash disposal company, continues to operate on most legal holidays, there will be no trash pickups on Christmas Day or New Years Day, both of which fall on Monday this season.

During those holiday weeks, pickups will be made on the day following your usual pickup day. That is, pickups usually made on Monday will be made on Tuesdays, and pickups usually made on Thursday will be made on Friday.

Further information is available by calling Waste Connections at 530-626-4141 during regular business hours. ~



Artist's concept of new casino

## SHINGLE SPRINGS CASINO TO OPEN IN 2008

The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians intends to get to work quickly to get their new Foothill Oaks Casino up and running in a little over a year.

After being held up by various lawsuits for six years, the tribe will try to make up for lost time with around-the-clock construction of its casino and highway interchange west of Placerville. If all goes as planned, the complex could be ready by early 2008.

The tribe plans to have its contractors work days, nights, and weekends to build the gaming hall, highway ramp and tunnel, five-story parking garage, and sewage treatment plant that make up the first phase of the \$245 million development.

Construction could start in February or March, and the project could open 14 months later, said Elaine Whitehurst, tribal council member and head of communications for the Shingle Springs Rancheria.

Thunder Valley Casino near Lincoln, completed in 2003, was also built with three shifts working around the clock.

The tribe recently settled a lawsuit brought against the casino by El Dorado County. The remaining suit brought against the project by Voices for Rural Living was thrown out of Sacramento Superior Court last month.

Minnesota-based Lakes Entertainment

Inc. is working with the tribe to develop the casino complex. A second phase of the development would include a 250-room luxury hotel and conference center. The tribe has approvals from the National Indian Gaming Commission to build and operate a casino.

The casino would be one of the largest employers in El Dorado County, with an estimated work force of 1,500 people, and potentially the largest private employer. ~



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