

Photo Credit: Barco

LED signs in New York City's Times Square

LED SIGNS CATCH EYES AND NAYS

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors has once again grappled with the question of whether to allow electronic message boards illuminated with light emitting diodes (also known as LED signs) and, being pretty smart folks, they punted the hot potato right back to the county Planning Department.

In 2008, David Brazelton, owner of Western Sign company in Diamond Springs, applied for a permit to construct a sign on his property. Subsequently the Planning Commission approved a special use permit to allow Brazelton to build a sign that would be somewhat larger than the ordinance standards, but denied his request to include an LED message board in the center of his sign. The ordinance clearly prohibits “moving signs,” Brazelton acknowledged, but it was also his understanding that the Board of Supervisors could overrule the Planning Commission’s decisions and recommendations. That’s what he was hoping for when he spoke to the board last month.

Brazelton also told supervisors that he thought a “moving sign” within the ordinance described a board attached to a human being who waves and wiggles a sign

on street corners to attract attention, known colloquially as “sign dancers.” Brazelton explained that his proposed sign would be about 12 feet high and 6 feet wide and the message section would be 2 feet by 6 feet.

The principle behind the sign ordinance is to insulate county residents and visitors from critics call the urban blight of unrestricted light, most particularly signs like the one at the Folsom Auto Mall. Brazelton noted that by comparison to his sign, the Auto Mall sign is about 30 feet wide and 20 feet tall.

Brazelton assured the board that his proposed sign would be discreet and appropriate in the Diamond Springs industrial park, not visible from cross streets nor from any residence. He said that he assumed that the Board of Supervisors was the final authority on a special use permit. He noted that over the years he had seen the board take similar kinds of executive action.

Several supervisors said that they wanted the sign ordinance changed to include LED signs one way or another. Other board members wanted to resolve the matter before the end of the meeting by either overriding the ordinance or applying some other remedy

that would allow Brazelton the sign he wants.

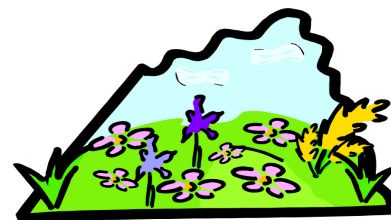
However, County Counsel Lou Green explained that the ordinance could not be trumped by board action. Green explained that the board could not make this kind of exception for one person, you would have to do it for everyone and you could lose control. However, you could adopt controls with an amended ordinance, Green noted.

That process would require a series of public input sessions, notification, public reading of proposed drafts and weeks of time from beginning to end, Green pointed out. In addition, he clarified that a special use permit cannot be created if it would allow something that is expressly prohibited by the ordinance, such as that portion that prohibits moving signs.

Development Services Department chief Roger Trout then announced that his department has nearly completed a proposed new zoning code that could include an easing of restrictions on signs. He said the board should have it by March 31. He explained, however, that in final form, after following the necessary procedures, it would not become law much before the end of the year.

Supervisor Sweeney recommended that the moving sign issue be sent back to planning staff for inclusion in the new zoning ordinance. Supervisor Ron Briggs wanted to know if there was anything they could do at that time to “grease the wheels” for Brazelton. Trout responded that there was nothing the supervisors could do until perhaps the end of the calendar year. The supervisors voted unanimously to refer the matter back to planning staff for revision.

Persons interested in following this issue as it wends its way through the planning process can sign up for updates at <http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/zoning.htm>. ~





CALIFORNIA CAP AND TRADE OPPONENTS SEEK 2010 BALLOT INITIATIVE

The energy industry and an antitax group are challenging California's plan to cap greenhouse-gas emissions, saying the effort would lead to job losses and raise energy prices if it goes into effect in 2012.

These groups are collecting signatures to put an anti-cap measure before voters in November; the proposition would postpone any carbon limit until the economy rebounds. Backers of the cap think the measure is almost certain to make the ballot, and they are raising money from technology companies to persuade voters to reject it.

Other states are also having second thoughts about similar cap-and-trade programs, largely because of the anticipated costs. Arizona, citing the recession, has backed out of the cap-and-trade part of an emissions program involving several Western states and Canadian provinces.

Under a cap-and-trade program, such as one already in effect in Europe, a government limits the amount of greenhouse gases its economy may emit each year, and then it issues companies permits to emit a specific amount of gas. The companies can buy and sell permits in a market intended to spur investment in greener technologies.

California passed its law authorizing the cap-and-trade program in 2006. The ballot measure would bar the state from implementing the law until its jobless rate stabilized at or below 5.5% for a year, which supporters say would signal a strong economy. The state's jobless rate topped 5.5% in October 2007 and now stands at 12.5%.

Supporters and opponents of the law disagree about its potential effects. The California Air Resources Board, the state clean-air agency administering the law, says the cap would help the economy. It would raise the price of a unit of energy, but reduce Californians' total energy bills through greater efficiency, the board says, freeing up money

that would lead to more jobs.

But the board has scaled back its optimism. In a 2008 study, it projected the measure would produce a net gain of more than 100,000 California jobs. Economists widely criticized that study as too rosy. A second assessment, released in March, projects a net gain of about 10,000 jobs.

A June 2009 study by a group of California small businesses, however, predicted the law could raise the average household's annual housing, transportation, energy and food costs by about \$3,900, or 15%. The study didn't factor in any energy savings from the law, calling savings projections too speculative.

California's Legislative Analyst's Office, which assesses public policy, has questioned both sides' projections. The state law "will result in the near term in California job losses," the office said in a March 4 report. But the small-business-group study's estimate of the measure's costs "are overstated, perhaps significantly," the office said in a March 9 report.

The California Jobs Initiative, the group trying to overturn the greenhouse-gas law, has collected \$966,000 in donations, according to preliminary filings with the California secretary of state's office. The biggest donors have been oil companies and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, a longtime antitax citizens' group that says the law would amount to an energy tax.

The California law "would have a severe detrimental effect on California's economy," said Bill Day, a spokesman for [Valero Energy Corp.](#), a Houston-based oil refiner that in March gave the ballot-initiative campaign \$500,000, the campaign's biggest single contribution.

Anita Mangels, a spokeswoman for the California Jobs Initiative, wouldn't say how many signatures it had collected.

Steve Maviglio, a spokesman for Californians for Clean Energy and Jobs, the group fighting the referendum effort, said he had no doubt the measure would get the approximately 434,000 signatures it needed to be on the ballot.

Mr. Maviglio said he expected his group to report donations of about \$1 million in its preliminary campaign-finance filing with the state, due later this month.

In Washington, the House passed cap-and-trade legislation last year, but the issue remains bottled up in the Senate and isn't expected to pass this year. ~



BLAC HEARS PLACERVILLE CHP COMMANDER

California Highway Patrol Lieutenant Commander Chuck King was the guest speaker at the April BLAC meeting. King took over leadership of the Placerville California Highway Patrol office late last year when Capt. Bill Donovan transferred to Auburn. King, a CHP officer for 13 years, previously worked at CHP headquarters in Sacramento.

King said that the El Dorado Hills area is unique because it is at the border of two counties. The Rancho Cordova CHP is responsible for patrolling El Dorado Hills, including north and south Bass Lake Road, Green Valley Road, and Salmon Falls Road up to the American River Bridge. Areas north of the American River Bridge on Salmon Falls Road, and areas north of Green Valley Road and east of Bass Lake Road are the responsibility of the Placerville CHP.

King said that there was a triple fatality this year at Salmon Falls Road and the CHP has received a grant to provide more officers to patrol that area.

Members raised concerns about tailgating on Bass Lake Road, especially when turning into the various developments at Laurel Oak, Bridlewood Canyon, and Woodridge. Lt. King said that he has special duty officers for this type of problem, and he could send someone out to observe and also let Rancho Cordova CHP know.

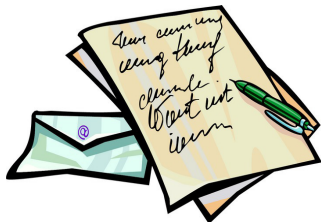
Members were concerned about the length of time it has taken in the past when 911 calls have been placed on a cell phone when an accident on the highway or a fire has occurred. King said that the Police Commissioner was concerned about the response time of the Sacramento CHP Call Center, and King said that he thinks this has been dealt with and should not be an issue in the future.

The members wanted to know what the CHP's biggest challenges are and what they could do to help. King said that resources are tight although the CHP is still hiring new officers and replacing retiring officers. They look closely at overtime and have received some grants. The best way he thinks BLAC members can help is to notify the CHP of any problems. If they are not emergency calls, he suggested that we let Dan Stark, Placerville CHP Public Information Officer, know about them.

In response to a question about the impact on the CHP of the Red Hawk Casino, King said that the CHP has not experienced a lot of problems. There have been a few DUI

(continued on page 4)

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello All,

This month's Bulletin is packed with pretty heavy stuff, so I thought I would liven things up with some breif comments on a couple of new restaurants in town.

Sienna has opened up in the old Masque space in La Borgata, so we decided to try them out the other night. There were four of us at dinner. The wine list is pricey, so you might want to bring a favorite bottle, as the corkage is only \$15.00 a bottle. We brought one favorite red wine, and the ladies selected an Argentine pinot gris (26.00), which they found very tasty. Our entrees were served over a bed of mashed potatoes garnished with asparagus. The skirt steak was reportedly tasty but not very tender, but the short rib was tasty and very tender, and the filet mignon was delicious. The service was friendly; however, the noise level was so high that table conversation was difficult at times. All in all, we rated Sienna as a keeper, but we would probably opt for eating outside, where it was probably quieter. Reservations are a must.

On the more casual side, we dropped in for lunch at Relish, Richard Righton's new upscale hamburger restaurant in Montaño, the other day. At 12:30 there was a goodly number of patrons, so we passed some time at the bar with a glass of wine. The menu is varied, with burgers and salads and other goodies. We opted for the Bordeaux burger (\$8.95), with a half pound of beef with caramelized onions and mushrooms, accompanied by French fries. We agreed that the burgers were delicious. The service was very good. The patio will be ready, weather permitting, the second week of April for outdoor dining.

Have a great April.

John E. Thomson

President



THOMAS JEFFERSON

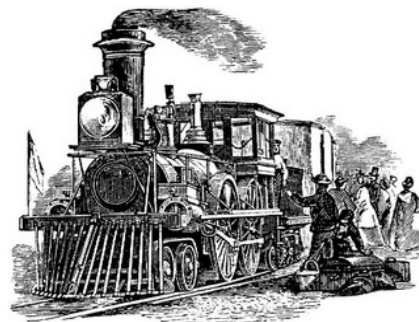
Thomas Jefferson was born April 13, 1743, on Shadwell farm, next to what is now Monticello, in the county of Albermarle, Virginia. As he was a great American patriot and statesman, you may ask why we do not have a holiday honoring Thomas Jefferson?

The date of Jefferson's birth was not revealed to the public until after his death. Repeated attempts were made to discover it by both by individuals and public bodies; but from scruples of a patriotic nature, he always declined revealing it, and imposed the same privacy upon his family. The principles which guided him on this subject was the great impropriety of permitting himself to be made the recipient of any special honor, which he felt to be incompatible with what he felt was the true dignity and independence of the American character, and the still greater repugnance which he should feel at seeing the birthday honors of the Republic transferred in any degree to any individual, including himself.

Soon after his inauguration as President in 1801, Jefferson was visited by the Mayor of the city of Washington, with the request that he would divulge the anniversary of his birth, as the city wanted to honor him on his birthday. He replied, "The only birthday which I recognize is that of my country's liberties." This was the uniform answer Jefferson gave to every application of the kind.

Jefferson wished to be remembered for three achievements in his public life. He had served as governor of Virginia, as U.S. minister to France, as secretary of state under George Washington, as vice-president in the administration of John Adams, and as president of the United States from 1801 to 1809. On his tombstone, however, which he designed, and for which he wrote the inscription, there is no mention of these offices. Rather, it reads that Thomas Jefferson

was "author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia" and, as he requested, "not a word more." Historians might want to add other accomplishments—for example, his distinction as an architect, naturalist, and linguist—but in the main they would probably concur with his own assessment. ~



COUNTY ASKS FOR GRANT FOR EL DORADO RAILROAD MUSEUM

In March the board of supervisors approved a resolution authorizing the county director of transportation to apply for California Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program grant funds for the El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park.

Recently the supervisors approved the preliminary plans for the development of the proposed railroad museum in the town of El Dorado. The proposed El Dorado County Historical Railroad Park, located on the old Southern Pacific right of way, will display and operate railroading artifacts currently housed at the El Dorado County Historical Museum. A conceptual map of the proposed park is available on the museum's website. The museum has been collecting, preserving and restoring artifacts from the county's rich railroading past for many years. It has long been the goal of the museum commissioners, volunteers (hailed as "the fire in this boiler") and staff to have a facility dedicated to their interpretation and presentation.

Mary Cory, director of the museum, said that they explored other sites, but the area in El Dorado kept coming up as the most accommodating for what they wanted to do. The project was also warmly welcomed and received by the community of El Dorado, who strongly support the project, according to Cory.

Railroad artifacts held by the museum that would be used to furnish the park and the exhibits include the 102-year-old Shay Number 4 Locomotive, a Tally-ho Rail Bus, an 1892 Porter Number 6 Switch Engine, a

(continued on page 4)

RAILROAD *(continued)*

skid shed, sidings, turntable, and a bobby car used to haul lumber via the 1,200-foot-high cableway over the American River. Some of this rolling stock will comprise an operating railroad between El Dorado Road and Blanchard Road. An architectural rendering of the park also contains plans for re-creating the original depot.

Restoration and maintenance of the railroad equipment is done by a non-profit organization, the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation (EDWRF), in order to secure grants, promote the project and eventually operate the historic steam railroad. Keith Berry, president of EDWRF, also serves as an appointed member of the Historical Museum Commission. Volunteers, skilled and mechanically knowledgeable, are working on the meticulous restoration of the railroad artifact collection. Extensive research continues to be conducted in all areas relating to the history of the county's railroad lines as well as the history of the artifacts themselves.

Keith Berry, commissioner of the El Dorado County Museum and president of the El Dorado Western Railway Foundation

**April Rain**

April rain is here again;
Hear it pitter, pitter, patter,
On the leaves and on the trees,
See it spitter, spitter, spatter.

Rain, oh rain, don't go away
We need you for flow'rs in May;
Drip, drip, drop and do not stop,
Send a little rain our way.

- Nina B. Hartford

said that they want to present to the public, whether they be eight or 80 years old, the movement of these artifacts to bring them back to life.

Various funding opportunities are being explored in addition to the present grant request. Development of the Railroad Park will occur in phases over time and as outside funding becomes available. The museum expects to collect a small but steady revenue stream from a gift shop, and ticket sales for rides aboard the restored Tally-ho Rail Bus.

The rolling stock and railroad artifacts are currently housed at the museum, which is located next to the El Dorado County Fair Grounds, 104 Placerville Drive, in Placerville. For more information contact the El Dorado county Historical Museum at (530) 621-5865 or see their page on the El Dorado County website <http://co.el-dorado.ca.us/museum/index.html>. ~

CHP *(continued)*

arrests and traffic accidents at the Red Hawk Casino property, but they have not amounted to much, according to King. In the first year of operation, the County contracted with the CHP for extra patrols for special events.

King also mentioned that when CHP officers patrol highways where construction is occurring, Cal Trans contracts for and pays for those services of the CHP.

King also called to members' attention that there would be an Amgen Bicycle Race on Sunday, May 16, which will result in road closures in El Dorado Hills and environs.

King provided his business card for calls during work hours (530-622-1110) and gave out the after-hours number (916-861-1300).

There being no further questions, BLAC members gave Lt. King their thanks and a round of enthusiastic applause. ~

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MAY BLAC MEETING TO FEATURE COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

The regular May Bass Lake Action Committee meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on May 3, 2010, at the Bridlewood Canyon Homeowners clubhouse on Devon Way.

The meeting will feature a Candidate's Night starring the contenders for El Dorado County Sheriff: District Attorney investigator John D'Agostini, retired sheriff's sergeant Larry Hennick, retired sheriff's Capt. Ernie Hillman, retired investigations chief Bob Luca, Placerville Police Chief George Nielsen, and Sheriff's Capt. Craig Therkildsen.

The candidates will speak and answer questions following a brief board meeting.

A gate code will be distributed with the meeting agenda prior to the meeting. Everyone who lives along Bass Lake Road is cordially invited to attend this meeting, especially residents of Bridlewood Canyon.

For further information contact Vice President Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~

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