



BASS LAKE BULLETIN

Vol. VIII No. 7

The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

July 2010

www.basslakeaction.org


Map showing area covered by Folsom's draft specific plan

FOLSOM MOVES TO DEVELOP SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 50

FOLSOM'S PLAN FOR SOUTH SIDE OF U.S. 50 OPEN TO REVIEW

The city of Folsom recently released a draft of the "Folsom Planning Area Specific Plan" (SP) and a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to annex a 3,600-acre area south of Highway 50 to Folsom.

The SP calls for building 10,200 residential homes with a projected population of 24,335 at build out. Large- and small-lot homes and high-density condominiums and apartments are contemplated by the SP.

In addition, the SP land use will include 1.1 million square feet of industrial and office park floor space, which will provide areas for businesses, financial and professional services, limited retail uses, research and development and light industrial and public uses.

The SP also calls for 2.1 million square feet of general commercial floor space, which will provide for a wide range of highway oriented retail, office, manufacturing, lodging and service uses on sites ranging in size from 12 to 60 acres. Typically, general commercial parcels accommodate power centers, outlet stores, lifestyle centers and free standing specialty stores or offices. Office use is permitted and encouraged in the general commercial land use designation.

The SP provides for a 110-acre regional

shopping mall parcel adjacent to Highway 50 and Scott Road, with regional access provided by the existing East Bidwell-Scott Road interchange and a proposed Oak Avenue freeway interchange. The commercial parcel is expected to contain 1.3 million feet of floor space designated as regional commercial land use, and provides for highway-oriented, large-scale regional retail uses, entertainment uses, business, financial and personal services uses, and lodging and public uses constructed either as a traditional enclosed mall or as an open-air lifestyle type center.

Other commercial land uses provided for are office parks, mixed use (a combination of retail, office, residential, hotel, recreation or other functions) and community commercial (small shopping centers).

Measure W, approved by Folsom city voters in 2004, sought to minimize the impact of future development in the planning area on existing residents, and requires that the full cost for water, schools and roadways be borne by the new area.

In addition to Measure W and the Water Forum agreement, the proposed expansion complies with the city of Folsom's public 2005 Visioning Project and the resulting Annexation Concept Plan adopted by the City Council, establishing the land-use vi-

sion for the area.

The draft SP and DEIR may be viewed at the city's web site, www.folsom.ca.us. ~



HIGHWAY 50 HOV LANES TO BE EXTENDED

The Highway 50 HOV lane project will ultimately construct HOV lanes in the eastbound and westbound directions by widening U.S. Highway 50 from approximately El Dorado Hills Boulevard to just west of Greenstone Road. The project includes bridge modifications, lighting improvements and new asphalt overlays. The project originally contemplated three construction phases: Phase 1 to extend the current HOV lanes from their existing terminus west of El Dorado Hills Boulevard to west of Bass Lake Road, with targeted completion in Fall 2010. Phase 2 to extend the lanes from a point west of Bass Lake Road to approximately Ponderosa Road. Phase 3 to extend the lanes from Ponderosa Road to just west of Greenstone Road.

The *Bulletin* has learned that the HOV lanes now being constructed on Highway 50 between El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Bass Lake Road are to be extended past the original eastern end point just before Bass Lake Road, under an agreement among El Dorado County Department of Transportation (DOT), CalTrans, and the contractor.

Persons familiar with the extension said that due to the low cost of the Phase 1 contract, not all of the money allocated to Phase 1 was spent. County DOT negotiated with CalTrans and the road contractor to use those funds to extend the eastbound HOV lanes past Bass Lake Road to prevent traffic congestion at the top of Bass Lake Grade.

(continued on page 2)

HOV LANES *(continued)*

The original scope of Phase 1 included rebuilding the El Dorado Hills Boulevard interchange and widening the Silva Valley overpass to accommodate the additional HOV lanes. The HOV lanes are being added as additional left lanes of the freeway and will reduce the median strip. The Silva Valley overpass, which originally consisted of two separate bridges, each carrying two lanes, is being widened by bridging the open space between the bridges to carry the HOV lanes.

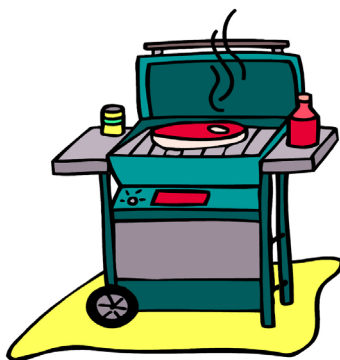
Eastbound Highway 50 past the Silva Valley overpass and up the Bass Lake Grade was planned to be four lanes wide: a truck climbing right lane, two center travel lanes, and a left-hand HOV lane. This four-lane configuration would have created a bottleneck at Bass Lake Road, where the overpass is only two lanes wide, until Phase 2 of the project was completed. Phase 2 contemplated extending the HOV lanes eastward by widening the Bass Lake overpass in the same manner as the Silva Valley overpass.

However, until Phase 2 was completed sometime in the future, traffic from both the truck climbing lane and the HOV lane would have been forced to merge into the two traveling lanes at the top of the grade. CalTrans was unwilling to tolerate such a bottleneck, so it was proposed to build the four-lane configuration as part of Phase 1, but block off the HOV lane until Phase 2 of the project was completed.

A recent agreement between County DOT, CalTrans and the Phase 1 HOV lane contractor extends Phase 1 of the project past Bass Lake Road. This will include widening the Bass Lake overpass and extending the eastbound HOV lane past Bass Lake Road. Doing so will allow the truck lane to continue to merge at the top of Bass Lake grade and the HOV lane to end a mile or two later, avoiding the top-of-the-grade bottleneck at Bass Lake Road that would otherwise have resulted.

The agreement allows the contractor more money, but not more time, to extend the

HOV lane. Phase 1, including the additional work, is expected to be completed in the Fall of this year, the same time the original Phase 1 work was to have been completed. ~



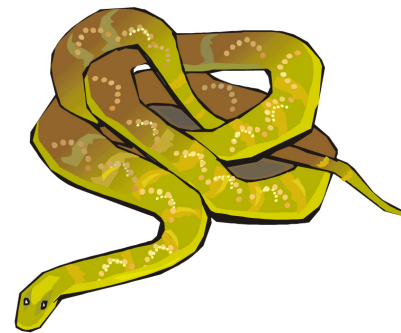
SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

A fire in the grill, under hot dogs and burgers, is a welcome sight at the family cookout. But fire anywhere else can make your summer kick-off barbecue memorable for all the wrong reasons.

Here are some safety tips from the National Fire Prevention Association: Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors. The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Keep children and pets away from the grill area. Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grill and in the tray below the grill.

For charcoal grills, there are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel. If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire. Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources. There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use. When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing of them in a metal container.

If you have a propane grill, check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill. ~



RATTLESNAKE ALERT

The warmer weather encourages outdoors enthusiasts and snakes alike, making encounters of the slithering kind inevitable. California has a variety of snakes, most of which are benign. The exception is California's only native venomous snake - the rattlesnake. There have been several reports of rattlesnake sightings in the Bass Lake Road area, so keep a sharp lookout.

Rattlesnakes can cause serious injury to humans. Generally not aggressive, rattlesnakes strike when threatened or deliberately provoked, but given room they will retreat. Most snake bites occur when a rattlesnake is handled or accidentally touched by someone walking or climbing.

Approximately 8,000 people annually are treated for poisonous snake bites in the United States. However, the California Poison Control Center notes that rattlesnakes only account for about 800 of those bites each year with about one to two deaths.

The potential of running into a rattlesnake should not deter anyone from venturing outdoors, but there are several precautions that can be taken to lessen the chance of being bitten when out in snake country - which is just about anywhere in California. Rattlesnakes live in the mountains up to elevations of more than 10,000 feet.

When hiking, stick to well-used trails and wear over-the-ankle boots and loose-fitting long pants. Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see, and avoid wandering around in the dark. Step ON logs and rocks, never over them, and be especially careful when climbing rocks or gathering firewood. Always avoid walking through dense brush or willow thickets.

Be careful when stepping over the doorstep as well. Snakes like to crawl along the edge of buildings where they are protected on one side.

Many a useful and non-threatening snake has suffered a quick death from a frantic human who has mistakenly identified a gopher snake, racer or other as a rattlesnake. This



ATTENTION READERS
Do you get your copy of the Bulletin second-hand? Get your own free subscription to the Bulletin by furnishing your email address to Kathy Prevost at kathyp@basslakeaction.org now.

(continued on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello Everyone,

After a cool Spring, hot weather is finally here. Summer, and our thoughts turn to . . . propane. Propane??? Who cares about propane when it's hot?

Well, recall Aesop's fable about the grasshopper and the ants: In the summer, the ants prepared for winter while the grasshopper played. When winter came, the ants were comfortable while the grasshopper suffered.

If you live in Woodridge, Bridlewood Canyon, or Sierra Crossing, you use propane for your heating energy needs. Because propane prices can change significantly from month to month and season to season you could save quite a bit of money if you pay attention to price trends and plan accordingly. Propane may be a great energy source, but liquid propane prices can also be volatile. By paying attention to price trends, you can find ways to maximize your next propane purchase. Summer is the time to look at your propane needs and plan accordingly.

There are three components to propane prices: wholesale price, cost of delivery, and dealer's markup. There is nothing we can do about the wholesale price, it is what it is. However, cost of delivery and dealer's markup are not regulated in any way, and shopping around can save you hundreds of dollars a year.

Over 250 homes in the three subdivisions named above have controlled their cost of delivery and dealer's markup of their propane for the next five years by signing up for an exclusive group deal on propane with supplier JS West, negotiated by BLAC. Over those five years, they will pay the wholesale price, plus delivery (capped at 10 cents a gallon) plus markup of 59 cents (the markup will drop to 50 cents when 300 homes are signed up). Last week the delivered price was the wholesale price of 99 cents plus 6 cents for delivery plus 59 cents for a total of

\$1.64 per gallon. That's it. Period. No fuel surcharge, no hazmat charge.

My regret is that this deal is possible only because of the contiguous nature of the neighborhoods, and that we could not get the same deal for stand-alone users. However, you can always call your supplier and ask for a lower gallon rate or reduced tank rental.

Of course, the wholesale propane price will increase come winter, but that will apply to all suppliers. The West Coast wholesale propane price generally tracks with the daily Mont Belvieu, Texas, wholesale cash price for propane, which is available in the Wall Street Journal.

So if you have not signed up, get going! Call Bette Best at JS West at 530-642-7001 for the details. Those of you who already have signed up can look forward to saving money on your propane bill this winter.

In the meantime, have a great Summer.

Best regards,
John Thomson
President

RATTLESNAKES *(continued)*

usually happens when a snake assumes an instinctual defensive position used to bluff adversaries. A gopher snake has the added unfortunate trait of imitating a rattlesnake by flattening its head and body, vibrating its tail, hissing and actually striking if approached too closely.

The best protection against rattlesnakes in the yard is a "rattlesnake proof" fence. It can be expensive and require maintenance, however. The fence should either be solid or with mesh no larger than 1/4 inch. It should be at least three feet high with the bottom buried a few inches in the ground. Slanting your snake fence outward about a 30-degree angle will help. Vegetation should be kept away from the fence since the snake could crawl to the top of an adjacent tree or shrub.

Discourage snakes by removing piles of boards or rocks around the home. Use caution when removing those piles - there may already be a snake there. Encouraging and protecting natural competitors like gopher snakes, kingsnakes and racers will reduce the rattlesnake population in the immediate area. And, kingsnakes actually kill and eat rattlesnakes.

Though uncommon, rattlesnake bites do occur. The first thing to do if bitten is to stay calm. Generally, the most serious effect of a rattlesnake bite to an adult is local tissue

damage which needs to be treated. children, because they are smaller, are in more danger if they are bitten.

Get to a doctor as soon as possible, but stay calm. Frenetic, high-speed driving places the victim at greater risk of an accident and increased heart rate. If the doctor is more than 30 minutes away, elevate the bite and then try to get to the doctor as quickly as possible.

You can see that staying alert and avoiding rattlesnakes is the best policy, so be on your guard this summer. ~

**NEW-HOME SALES HIT ANOTHER NEW LOW**

According to a recent article by Michael Shaw in the Sacramento Business Journal, experts say the foreclosure glut is easing, but new home sales are tied to employment. Homebuilders report that their sales fell to a new low in the second quarter, only 485 homes in the six-county Sacramento region. That number is half the total from the same period last year, according to new-home analyst The Gregory Group of Folsom. The previous low, occurring in the fourth quarter last year, was 528 homes.

One major factor blamed for the sales slowdown was expiration of an \$8,000 federal tax credit for homebuyers on April 30. A state homebuyer tax credit of up to \$10,000 remains in effect.

Sacramento's median new-home price, which appeared to have stabilized earlier, fell another 4.7 percent to \$323,000, it was reported. There also has been a shift in where home sales are occurring. More sales took place during the second quarter in Placer County than in all of El Dorado, Sacramento and Yolo counties combined.

Sales have ground to a halt in major development areas in Sacramento County such as Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova and Natomas, due to a construction moratorium. In contrast, south Placer County has drawn buyers because of jobs, commercial centers and desirable schools. Most of the new home buyers have landed in Roseville, which

(continued on page 4)

NEW HOMES *(continued)*

captured more than a third of all new-home sales in the four-county region.

Statewide, housing permits in May were up 4 percent from a year ago, according to the Construction Industry Board.

A favorable sign for Sacramento-area builders is that foreclosure activity appears to be easing. The percentage of homeowners more than three months late on their mortgages in the Sacramento area was 11.2 percent, down from the peak of 11.6 percent in January. That number measures homeowners who are late on mortgage payments but have not entered the foreclosure process.

Likewise, the number of homeowners in foreclosure and those who have lost their homes also has fallen gradually throughout 2010. The rate of foreclosures among outstanding mortgage loans was 3.03 percent in May, a decrease from 3.39 percent in May 2009.

Despite the record-low sales figures, homebuilders, land developers and speculators have been buying land for new homes in small chunks, anticipating a time when sales return. That land activity has been sparked by a steep drop in prices and an increasing willingness by lenders to move foreclosed land assets off their books. ~



An Indian Summer Day on the Prairie

The sun is a huntress young,
The sun is a red, red joy,
The sun is an Indian girl,
Of the tribe of the Illinois.

The sun is a smouldering fire,
That creeps through the high gray
plain,
And leaves not a bush of cloud
To blossom with flowers of rain.

The sun is a wounded deer,
That treads pale grass in the skies,
Shaking his golden horns,
Flashing his baleful eyes.

The sun is an eagle old,
There in the windless west.
Atop of the spirit-cliffs
He builds him a crimson nest.

—Vachel Lindsay

RUSS NYGAARD ADDRESSES BLAC

Russ Nygaard, Deputy Director - Facilities Engineering for El Dorado County Department of Transportation, was the guest speaker at the July Bass Lake Action Committee membership meeting.

Russ spoke about the budget issues facing El Dorado County. He distributed copies of a recent presentation given to the Board of Supervisors that set forth looming budget shortfalls in the coming years. Russ also talked about the economies that the county has undertaken to cut costs in the face of diminishing revenues from a variety of sources.

After Russ concluded his formal presentation, a lively question and answer period ensued, and Russ received a hearty round of applause at the end of the evening. ~

PROPANE REPORT

In the week ending July 9, 2010, the Targa San Ramon wholesale price of propane dropped 3 cents from \$1.02 a gallon to 99 cents per gallon. The JS West contract delivery charge is currently 6 cents for Woodridge-Bridlewood-Sierra Crossing contract customers, making the current laid-in price \$1.05 per gallon.

With 254 homes now signed up, the markup is 59 cents, making the per-gallon contract delivered price \$1.64 per gallon. The next threshold is 300+ contract customers, when the markup over the laid-in price will be 50 cents per gallon. For new contract customers the first fill is currently \$1.44 per gallon.

The benchmark Mont Belvieu, Texas, wholesale cash price for propane on Friday, July 16, 2010, was 99 cents per gallon. One year ago the price was 75 cents per gallon. ~

Bass Lake Action Committee
501 Kirkwood Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

DATE FOR AUGUST BLAC MEETING SET

The August regular meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee will be held on August 2, 2010, at the home of Kathy and Herb Prevost, 1080 Jasmine Circle, El Dorado Hills. The meeting will start at 7:00 PM and the speaker is scheduled to begin at 7:30. Guy Gertsch, El Dorado County Parks Commissioner and El Dorado Hills Community Services District Board Director, has been invited to speak on local issues.

For further information, please contact Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~

A PROUD SUPPORTER OF



The Bass Lake Bulletin is published monthly, within seven to ten days after the regular monthly BLAC meeting, by the Bass Lake Action Committee, El Dorado Hills, California. Copyright © 2010. Permission to reproduce unabridged articles is granted if appropriate attribution is given to the Bass Lake Bulletin

John E. Thomson, Ph.D.
President and Editor
doctorjet@basslakeaction.org
530-677-3039

For additional information
see our website, basslakeaction.org
or contact

Vice President Kathy Prevost
kathyp@basslakeaction.org
530-672-6836