

IN A Nutshell



No. 170

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

SUMMER 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: SPECIAL REPORT ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT



Walnut Creek's downtown is a hub of construction activity. Find out what is happening where, and how it all fits into a long-range plan for the future.

“A CONVERSATION WITH THE MAYOR” WRAPS UP IN JUNE

The last of six “Conversations with the Mayor” will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 9 at the Shadelands Arts Center auditorium, 111 N. Wiget. Come by for an informal gathering to share what’s on your mind and ask questions of the mayor.

FAMILY THEATRE FESTIVAL BRINGS ITS MAGIC JULY 18



The Chevron Family Theatre Festival returns to the Leshner Center on July 18. Tickets go on sale June 18 and are \$5 per person for each show. For details, go to www.LeshnerArtsCenter.org.

NEW START TIME FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Walnut Creek City Council meetings now begin at 6 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of each month. For agendas and minutes, go to www.walnut-creek.org/meetings.



Andrea Soto of Public Works programs a controller that will use real-time data transmitted from a weather station to assess evaporation rates and determine when irrigation is needed.

City takes action to cut water use

Brown will be the new green as the City shuts off water to a fifth of the 80 acres of turf it currently irrigates. A few of those acres will be converted to drought-tolerant landscaping, but look for brown grass in little-used lawn areas at parks throughout Walnut Creek.

Downtown plants and newly planted trees are going on a diet of recycled water from the Sanitary Sewer District, the dog park grass has been replaced with mulch, and the outdoor showers at

Clarke Swim Center will soon be a thing of the past.

These are a few of the steps the City is taking to meet the Governor’s mandate to cut potable water use by 25 percent. The City has been proactively reducing water use for the past several years and is determined to meet the new goals.

The 2015 Drought Plan is available on the City’s website. Residents wanting information about household water rules should contact their water district.

Resident, PD use Nextdoor to fight crime

An observant resident and the Police Department’s proactive use of social media led to a drug bust near Arbolado Park.

Police have been building relationships with residents in their specific beat by introducing themselves and posting updates via the Nextdoor social network. In late April, a resident sent his beat officer a message about a possible drug deal happening in the park.

The officer alerted the PD’s new Special Enforcement Team (SET), and also



told them that a specific individual in the area had an outstanding warrant for arrest for narcotics. The SET officers stopped the suspect near the park, found that his female companion was carrying illegal drugs wrapped for sale, and arrested them both.

Nextdoor neighborhood websites are available throughout Walnut Creek. To learn more, go to www.nextdoor.com.

Why and how to watch WCTV

Walnut Creek TV is the City's government access channel, paid for through local cable fees.

All Council and Commission meetings are aired live, and available later for viewing online.

Walnut Creek TV covers local events, from Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies to high school graduations and the Walnut Festival parade.

The award-winning "Creek Currents," hosted by Ruby Lopez and Brendan Moran, highlights city and community programs and events, and unique local businesses.

Other original programs include "Living History."

Find Walnut Creek TV on air & online

Watch Walnut Creek TV on Comcast Channel 28 (incorporated WC only), Rossmoor 26, Astound Channel 29, and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99.

Don't have cable? Out of town? Walnut Creek TV is also available online!

For live broadcasts, go to walnutcreektv.org.

For past Council and Commission meetings, go to www.walnut-creek.org/meetings.

For original programs, community events, etc., go to youtube.com/cityofwalnutcreek.

Showtimes are listed on cable TV guides, and walnutcreektv.org.



MOVIES UNDER THE STARS EXPANDS TO CIVIC PARK

Movies Under the Stars is expanding! This year's family friendly programming includes two additional dates at Civic Park. Movies at Heather Farm Park are a suggested \$2 donation, while films at Civic Park are sponsored by the Downtown Enhancement Fund. Movies begin at dusk (about 8:30 pm). Bring picnic blankets, lawn chairs, and popcorn (but no pets, please). The schedule is: Saturday, June 27, at Civic Park, "Into the Woods"; Friday, July 10 at Heather Farm Park, "When the Game Stands Tall"; Saturday, July 25 at Civic Park, "The Lego Movie"; Friday, August 7 at Heather Farm Park, "Big Hero 6". Movies Under the Stars is a program of the Recreation Division.

Here's what's happening

Art & Wine Festival

The Walnut Creek Chamber Art & Wine Festival is Saturday, May 30, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, May 31, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Heather Farm Park. Enjoy live entertainment, arts and crafts booths, wine and microbrews, food, and an expanded children's area. Free admission; free parking at the Shadelands Business Park with continuous shuttles. Visit www.artwinefestivalwc.com, or call 925-934-2007



Antiques and Crafts Show

The Walnut Creek Historical Society Antiques and Crafts Show and Sale is on Sunday, June 14 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Among the treasures for sale are early 1900s clothing, silk fringes and trims, circa 1800s antique clocks, and art. The free event will be at the Shadelands Ranch Museum, 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road. For details, call 925-935-7871

Spring Wine Walk

Walnut Creek Downtown's Spring Wine Walk is Wednesday, June 17 from 6 to 9 p.m. Enjoy sipping a variety of hand-selected wines while strolling downtown to live, acoustic music. Advance tickets are \$30, and available at www.walnutcreekdowntown.com. Tickets at the door are \$40. Maps of participating businesses, along with a wine glass, will be given at the starting point, 1666 N. Main Street. Call 925-933-6778.

Fourth of July concert in the park

The Walnut Creek Concert Band will celebrate Independence Day with a free concert at Civic Park on July 4. The music begins at 6 p.m. Bring a picnic and a blanket to sit on the grass, and wish our nation a musical happy birthday!

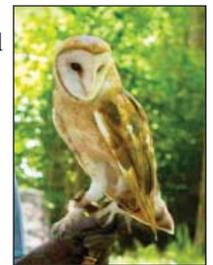
1st Wednesdays street parties

Walnut Creek 1st Wednesdays will continue through June 2016 (at least!). The free downtown street party offers live music, food trucks and a variety of entertainment each Wednesday from 5-8 p.m. on Cypress Street between North Main and Locust. Enjoy free parking in City garages on Wednesday after 5 p.m. For details, visit www.walnutcreekdowntown.com.



Family Night at Lindsay Wildlife

Meet the animals, do crafts and gaze at the stars during a special Friday Night at Lindsay! From 6 to 8:30 p.m. Friday June 26, families are invited to explore Lindsay Wildlife Experience after-dark at 1931 First Ave. There will be a food truck, games and much more! The cost is \$15 adult, \$5 for each child (ages 2-17), members \$10 per adult. For more information call 925-627-2913



'Find Your Center' campaign to promote excellence at Lesher Center for the Arts

The Diablo Regional Arts Association – the nonprofit partner of the Lesher Center for the Arts – has launched an ambitious \$5 million fund-raising campaign in honor of the Center's upcoming 25th anniversary.

The "Find Your Center" campaign is focusing on three pillars: Arts Education, Technology and Artistic Excellence. A major donor has stepped forward for each of the pillars with a \$500,000 contribution.

Sharon Simpson contributed \$500,000 to the Arts Education pillar. DRAA's Arts Access provides free tickets, transportation and comprehensive study guides to students from low-income schools. In 2014-15, the program served 6,000 students but turned away an additional 5,000. DRAA's goal is to never say no to a student, teacher or family.

The Lesher Foundation, whose founders Dean and Margaret Lesher made the lead gift to establish the Lesher Center in 1990, contributed \$500,000 to this pillar



to improve technology at the center. Chevron Corporation, whose support has made the Family Theatre Festival possible, donated \$500,000 to support the Artistic Excellence pillar and further bolster the quality of programming at the Lesher Center.

The campaign includes many opportunities to help DRAA reach its goal:

On Broadway – The annual fundraiser will be at the Lesher Center for the Arts on October 3. The event sells out every year, and features a gourmet dinner, headliner performances, and dancing to live music

Name Your Seat – Dedicating a seat in the Hofmann or Margaret Lesher theatres is a visible and lasting way to show support for the Center. A tax-deductible gift of \$1,000 saves a seat.

Annual Campaign – Each and every gift to DRAA, no matter the size, will go towards the "Find Your Center" campaign and support the future of the Center.

For more information, visit www.draa.org or call 925-295-1470.

Walks with the Mayor

Lace up those walking shoes and join the mayor and fellow community members the second Saturday of the month for "Walnut Creek Walks." Learn more at www.walnut-creek.org/walks.



Bedford Gallery highlights



Botanica: All Things Plant Life July 12 – Sept. 6

From 16th Century Flemish painters to the Post Impressionists, the color and variety found in plant life have served as artistic inspiration. *Botanica* is a national juried exhibition that asks artists to explore how plant life can be represented in a diverse range of media.

The public is invited to an opening reception on Sunday, July 12, from 3 to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5.



On exhibit with "Botanica" -
Josie Iselin, Halosaccion 12 & Nereocystis x
2, 2013, archival digital prints



On exhibit with
"BLOW UP"
- Momoyo
Torimitsu,
Somehow I
Don't Feel
Comfortable.
Photo by
Kioku Keizo.

BLOW UP Goes on the Road

BLOW UP: Inflatable Contemporary Art closes at the Bedford on June 21, but the show doesn't end there. The exhibition will tour the United States for two years starting at the Vision Gallery in Chandler AZ. This tour was made possible through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, allowing *BLOW UP* to be seen thousands of visitors nationally, while spreading the word about the Bedford.

Interactive open space exhibit opens at City Hall

Walnut Creek owns more public open space per capita than any other city in California.

To celebrate this natural treasure, Civic Arts Education curator Peter Foucault has organized a unique interactive exhibition called "Open Space," to run June 1-August 1 in the Walnut Creek City Hall first floor gallery space.

As a starting point, Foucault reached out to local artists who are Civic Arts Education students and instructors and invited them to submit an art piece that depicts their favorite Walnut Creek open space and a short written response as to why they love that particular spot.

Then, Foucault hiked into each of the open space locations selected by the artists, carrying a portable printmaking station in his backpack. At the end of each hike, he set up the portable printmaking station at the trailhead or parking lot. He invited the public to screen their own takeaway poster, and to share in writing their person stories about the open space.

The collected responses from these pop-up art making sessions will be



Bill Hesel. Heavenly Ridge Trail, Sobrante Ridge Preserve.

included in the exhibit at City Hall. There will also be a wall map at the exhibit where people can continue to share their stories of the open space on Post-Its, and then place the Post-It on the map.

For details about the exhibition, email peterkfoucault@hotmail.com. The first floor gallery at City Hall is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

Civic Arts Education, a program of the City, is Northern California's largest community arts education program. Civic Arts serves over 10,000 community members annually in the areas of 2D and 3D visual arts, dance, music and theater.

'One City One Book' selection celebrates a remarkable life

The Walnut Creek Library Foundation has chosen *Yes, Chef* by Marcus Samuelsson as its 2015 *One City One Book* selection.

In this inspiring and engaging memoir, Samuelsson tells the story of his remarkable life. Born into poverty in Ethiopia and orphaned as a young boy, Samuelsson was adopted by a Swedish family and raised in Scandinavia. He grew up to become one of America's top celebrity chefs and restaurateurs. His story encompasses professional cooking and fine dining, overcoming adversity, the immigrant experience, cross-cultural adoptions and race relations. The *New York Times* calls it, "One of the great culinary stories of our time."

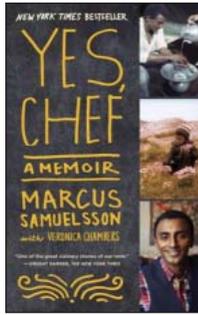
A James Beard award-winner and a passionate advocate for equal opportunity, Samuelsson cooked for President Barack Obama's first state dinner. "A hundred years ago," he says, "black men and women had to fight to get out of the kitchen. These days, we have to fight to get in."

Copies of *Yes, Chef* will be available this summer at both public libraries, in Rossmoor and other locations in Walnut Creek and online through www.ccclib.org. A fall lineup of community programs celebrating the book and its themes will be announced at that time.

Visit www.WCLibrary.org for more information about One City One Book and the great lineup of summertime activities, including the Summer Reading Program.

Downtown history tours

The Walnut Creek Historical Society offers an easy 90-minute guided walking tour of the downtown area highlighting points of historical interest. The tours are free and are held on the second Saturday of the month departing at 9:30 a.m. from the fountain at Liberty Bell Plaza, corner of Broadway and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. For more, visit www.walnutcreekhistory.info and click on "Walnut Creek Downtown Tours."



Meeting an owl at the new Raptor Redwood Grove at Lindsay Wildlife Experience.

Rebrand captures vision for wildlife haven

A staple in the Walnut Creek community, even once a city-run organization, Lindsay Wildlife Museum has changed its name to "Lindsay Wildlife Experience." The reason? "Experience" encompasses all that Lindsay is and means to its visitors, members, volunteers and friends.

"Lindsay is so much more than a museum," said Executive Director Norma Bishop. "When you look into the eyes of a great horned owl, you're connecting with a sentient being that knows things—a creature that knows the magical world of nature that we're all too often out of touch with."

With a fresh new look, website and logo – an abstract image of a barn owl – the Lindsay Wildlife Experience rebrand is about giving people more of those up-close-and-personal interactions with



animals that Lindsay has been known for, for the past 60 years.

A new public and free of charge experience is now offered at Lindsay; *Raptor Redwood Grove* sits just outside Lindsay's front doors. Raptors and reptiles make daily appearances while animal handlers tell the personal stories of Lindsay's animal ambassadors.

All summer Lindsay is offering new exhibits, new animal ambassadors and a traveling art show called *Felines: Fierce and Friendly* will anchor Lindsay's *Summer of Cats!* All part of Lindsay's mission to inspire respect and care for the natural world.

Recreation camps for all ages and interests

Summertime means sunshine and fresh air, making memories and lasting friendships. Walnut Creek Recreation offers caring camp counselors, quality programming and affordable rates for a variety of ages and interests.

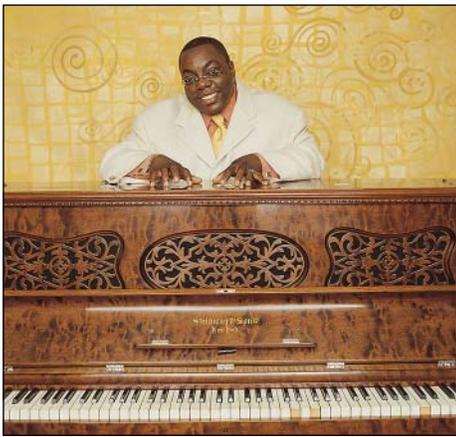
Preschool age campers can get a taste of summer camp with Camp Tenderfoot and Little Walnut, while Day Camp for children ages 6-12 has weekly themes, a special event, swimming and a Thursday trip. Budding athletes ages 9-13 will have fun at Walnut Creek Sports Camp, with two sports to choose from each week. Day

Camp and Sports Camp offer full and half day options, along with extended care.

Teen Camp is a week full of day trips and activities, while the Junior Recreation Leader program gives young people the experience and training to apply as a camp counselor in future summers.

Through the Specialized Recreation Summer Camp, children, teens and young adults with special needs experience the full summer camp experience.

We look forward to seeing you this summer! Go to www.WalnutCreekRec.org or call 925-943-5858.



Famed pianist Cyrus Chestnut.

Cool jazz, hot nights at the Leshar Center

Jazz at the Leshar Center, presented by the Diablo Regional Arts Association, will return with a fourth season of phenomenal jazz performances this August. Kicking off the series on August 1 is the Big Band sound of the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. Next up is the legendary jazz pianist Dick Hyman, appearing August 8. Cyrus Chestnut, proclaimed the greatest jazz pianist of his generation by *Time Magazine*, will continue the series August 22, and jazz guitar duo Martin Taylor and Bucky Pizzarelli will headline the closing concert on August 29. Shows will be at 5 and 8 p.m. Four-concert subscriptions are now on sale for \$125. Any remaining tickets to single concerts will go on sale in July for \$40 each. Go to www.LesharJazz.org or call 925-943-7469.

Service Day 2015 projects sought

Community Service Day 2015 is set for Saturday, Oct. 10, and local non-profits and community groups, public schools and libraries are invited to plan a project for the day. Good projects involve simple tasks that can be accomplished by volunteers of many ages. Projects must be located in Walnut Creek.

Community Service Day 2014 featured 45 projects and 1,200 volunteers for community gardens, social service groups, public schools, libraries and others. For more information and to submit a project, visit www.Walnut-Creek.org/Service. Submission deadline is June 26.



Jim Siemons, Mark Berch and Mike Patterson talk with radio operators throughout Walnut Creek as part of a weekly net, or check-in. The three are volunteer Ham radio operators trained to work in the City's Emergency Operations Center during disaster.

Join the volunteer Ham radio team

Walnut Creek's volunteer Ham radio operators provide essential communications during emergencies and drills. Most are assigned to one of Walnut Creek's eight Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Areas. In addition, specially trained volunteer Ham radio operators work in the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

If a large-scale disaster occurs, CERT Area members gather at their pre-designated CERT staging area, set up a command post and respond to the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Volunteer Ham radio operators relay vital information between the CERT command post and the City's EOC as part of this response. All CERT Staging Areas have Ham equipment and designated radio frequencies ready for use.

A unique situation

How did Walnut Creek put together such a unique radio network? It's all thanks to dedicated volunteers, who not only arrange for ongoing training, but also raise money to buy the Ham radio supplies.

The story begins in 2010, when resident Greg Karakashian proposed and designed a radio kit that would allow Ham radio operators at each CERT area command post to communicate with the City of Walnut Creek's EOC.

Working with the City, Karakashian successfully applied for a grant from the AT&T Foundation to pay for the equipment. Volunteers spent several weekends building the radio kits for each CERT area.

Unfortunately, there were still "dead

CERT Ham Radio Class

What: Students prepare for, and take, the FCC license exam, then following up with two classes to learn how to operate Ham radios.

When: Saturday, June 13, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Wednesday, June 17, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.; Wednesday, July 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (all three classes required)

Cost: \$35, payable at the door on June 13. Covers cost of FCC license exam; all training materials; and breakfast and lunch for the June 13 class.

How to register: www.walnut-creek/cert or the CERT registration hotline, 925-256-3556.

zones" where radio communications were blocked due to hills. In January 2014, the East Bay Regional Communications System Authority offered to host a CERT radio repeater on their antenna at the intersection of Highways 680 and 24, greatly enhancing the CERT radio reach. The repeater was purchased in part with a generous donation from the Rotary Club of Walnut Creek.

CERTs also arranged for additional antennas on top of City Hall, installed this spring.

Today, Walnut Creek CERT areas can communicate quickly and effectively throughout the city, providing life-saving information to our professional responders.

While Walnut Creek CERT has a number of volunteer Ham radio operators, many more are needed to ensure that this communications link keeps running after disaster. Anyone 16 or older is encouraged to take the upcoming training and join this team of dedicated volunteers.

City Briefs

Public Works director Ballenger honored

Heather Ballenger, the City's Public Works director, has been named Leader of the Year by the Northern California chapter of the American Public Works Association. The chapter also named the City's All Abilities Playground at Heather Farm Park the Public Works Project of the Year.



Heather Ballenger

Swim center replacement update

The City received three responses to its Request for Qualifications for a partner to help fund, construct, operate and maintain a new aquatics facility at Heather Farm Park.

An ad hoc committee made up of two Council members has been reviewing the Statements of Qualifications, and will share their findings with the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission on June 1. Successful responses will be considered by the City Council at its June 16 meeting.

Dedicate a tree, bench or other park amenity

Walnut Creek's dedication program provides an opportunity for any individual, family, group or organization to sponsor a tree, bench or other park amenity in honor of a current or former resident of incorporated or unincorporated Walnut Creek.

Staff will work with the requestor to choose a location for the tree or amenity in a park or open space. Examples of amenities are benches, drinking fountains and picnic tables. Prices range from \$500 to \$5,000, depending on the tree or amenity selected. Some amenities offer an option for a commemorative plaque to be installed for an additional fee.

For a detailed description of the program, including program guidelines and application, call 925-943-5854 or email corpyard@walnut-creek.org.



The interior courtyard of the Arboleda affordable housing complex, which opened May 14.

City partners on new affordable housing

The Arboleda, a new affordable multi-family housing project on 1550 Third Avenue, celebrated its grand opening on May 14. The Arboleda provides 48 rental units affordable to very low- and extremely low-income households. The project has a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, and focuses on families and people with special needs.

Funding for the project was provided in part by a \$4.1 million loan to nonprofit

housing developer Satellite Affordable Housing Associates from the City's housing program funds.

Thanks to a number of "green" features, Arboleda received LEED for Homes Platinum certification.

These features include a 44 kilowatt solar system, as well as a solar water heating system that can reduce water heating costs by 67 percent. In addition, Arboleda is close to bus route 9, which connects to BART.

Geary Road project nears completion

The Geary Road Improvement Project is driving toward a late-summer completion.

The project includes new sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of the busy road, continuous left-turn lanes, LED street lighting, traffic signal updates, and replacement of drainage ditches with sidewalk curbs and gutters and underground drainage pipes.

The project is collaboration between the cities of Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill, paid for through Measure J, the voter-approved half-cent sales tax.



Work on Geary Road will be done by late summer.

Left-turn improvements at N. San Carlos and YVR

Making left turns onto Ygnacio Valley Road from Heather Farm Park or the Rancho San Miguel subdivision will become simpler some time this fall, when the City installs new signal poles and modifies signal timing to eliminate the

current left-turn conflicts.

As part of the improvement project, the City will also extend the left-turn lane on Ygnacio Valley Road and reconstruct the intersection's median islands.



A Walnut Creek K9 unit treated exchange students from Walnut Creek's sister cities of Noceto, Italy and Siofok, Hungary to an up-close demo of crime-fighting skills. The 8th graders were in Walnut Creek as part of the Sister Cities' Youth Ambassador Exchange (YAE!!) program.

3D printing coming to the WC library

New devices to be unveiled at June 20 event

Thanks to a generous grant from the Leshner Foundation, the Walnut Creek Library Foundation has purchased two 3D printers that enable users to "print" three-dimensional objects from their own designs or from among tens of thousands of free online programs.

3-D printing has revolutionary implications for health care, manufacturing, food production, artistic expression, and more. Any object can be "printed" in any substance: plastic, metal, glass - even chocolate!

This summer, the Walnut Creek Library will roll out introductory programs and introduce its new "3D Printer Makerspace" to teach people how to use the devices. The printers will be made available free of charge for public use.

Join library staff in the Oak View



Teens check out the new 3D printer at the Walnut Creek Library.

Room Saturday, June 20 from 2 to 4 p.m. for a first look at the new printers. Experts will be on hand to discuss the evolution and implications of this amazing technology, and multiple machines will demonstrate printing various objects. Attendees will also be able to sign up for the library's 3D printing programs.

For more information, visit WCLibrary.org or call 925-977-3340.

Home repair loans for low-income households

Low-income Walnut Creek homeowners in need of emergency repairs or significant upgrades can apply to the Home Rehabilitation Loan and Emergency Grant Program.

The funds can be used for many types of home improvements, but are required to fall under one of the following categories: health and safety, property maintenance, functional obsolescence, energy efficiency, or removal of architectural barriers for the disabled. Common repairs funded by the program include new roofs, insulation, central heating, ramps, grab bars, and electrical and plumbing upgrades.

The City provides up to \$60,000 for approved loans with a 3 percent simple interest rate. The City also gives emergency grants of up to \$10,000.

The house must be the applicant's primary residence. Household income by size may not exceed the following: \$73,050 for five-person household; \$67,600 for four; \$60,850 for three; \$54,100 for two; and \$47,350 for one person.

Additional eligibility and funding criteria may apply. The program is administered by the Contra Costa County Neighborhood Preservation Program. For more information, call 925-674-7886.

PG&E to use copters to install power lines

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) will be working in Walnut Creek through fall to upgrade a major electric power line. While most of the work will take place in late summer and fall, some work in the Rudgear area occurred in May.

The utility will be increasing the height of existing towers and pulling new wire across the top of the towers. Portions of the work will be done by helicopters.

A temporary staging area for the helicopters has been established on a ridge in the Sugarloaf Open Space adjacent to Interstate 680.

The project, which started early this year in Antioch and is expected to end in summer 2016, will result in the upgrade of approximately 27 miles of power lines and electric transmission towers between Antioch and Moraga. The goal is to improve service reliability and ensure the growing East Bay has the power it needs.

For more information, visit the PG&E website, pge.com/contracosta-moraga.

Most City trees spared from PG&E removal plan

Only 6 of the 250 trees in the City's right of way originally slated for removal by PG&E's Pipeline Pathways project will need to be removed following a tree-by-tree evaluation.

PG&E had planned to take out the trees as part of its statewide Pipeline Pathways initiative to clear obstructions from the utility company's gas lines.

Walnut Creek officials, as well as those from neighboring cities, protested the number of trees designated for destruction, leading to PG&E's agreement to analyze each tree's risk potential and submit this information for City review and approval.

In addition to City trees, PG&E's original plan called for removing 380 trees on private property and other areas outside of the City's right of way (such as the golf course).

At an April meeting, PG&E agreed to analyze the remaining private property trees on an individual basis, with the expectation that the number of trees slated for removal will be reduced.

City staff will work with PG&E on this review, and with homeowners impacted by this work.



Employees of the Year Ken Nodder, left, and John Johnston.

City names Employees of the Year

Long-term employees Ken Nodder of Community & Economic Development, and John Johnston of Public Works are the 2014 Employees of the Year.

Johnston joined the City more than 30 years ago, and is the Streets Division supervisor. He is known as an exceptionally good listener, who responds so courteously to citizen complaints that their frustrations “melt like butter,” said City Manager Ken Nordhoff in announcing the award.

Nodder joined the City as an intern 27 years ago. In recent times, he managed the processing of the John Muir Medical Center 50-Year Master Plan and the Broadway Plaza Long-Range Master Plan.

“Ken’s attention to detail and commitment to excellence has helped created the vibrant and exciting changes that our community has experienced over the past 27 years,” said Community Development Director Sandi Meyer.

Red light app, green light to future safety

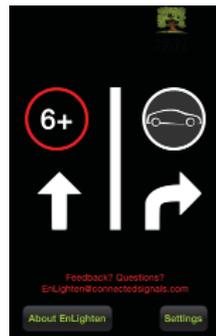
Wondering how long you have to wait until that red light changes? If you’re stopped in Walnut Creek, there is an app for that.

All 100 of the city’s traffic signals can “talk” to smartphones through a free app called EnLighten, available for iPhone and Android users. Walnut Creek is the second city in California to offer this technology to the public.

When a car stops at a red light, EnLighten shows how many seconds remain until the light turns green. A few seconds before the light turns green, the app sounds an alert. Use of the app is completely hands free.

Walnut Creek was chosen because it has a sophisticated traffic signal system that can support the new technology. Implementation costs for EnLighten were covered by a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The red light app signals another step toward connecting cars with transportation infrastructure and with each other. In a similar vein,



This screenshot from the EnLighten app shows that right turns are allowed, and there are 6 more seconds until the red light for through traffic changes.

the Contra Costa Transportation Authority has partnered with Honda to test driverless cars at the GoMentum Station at the Concord Naval Weapons Station.

The hope is that these connected technologies may lead to safer roads.

Consider that more than 30,000 people die each year in the U.S. due to traffic fatalities. Connecting cars with traffic technology has the potential to reduce human error and save lives, as well as reduce congestion through increased efficiency.

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* To reach the Council, call 925-256-3504

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The Nutshell Newsletter is published quarterly. For questions and comments, contact editor Gayle Vassar, 925-943-5895 or vassar@walnut-creek.org

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