



THURSDAY

Firms keep old Alhambra Theater building alive PAGE 7

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NEWSMAKERS

JERRY HILL

The state assemblyman, D-San Mateo, is holding a town-hall meeting on the high-speed rail project in Belmont tonight. Representatives from the High Speed Rail Authority and Caltrain will speak at the meeting to highlight the next steps and answer questions, according to Hill's office. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the Belmont City Council Chamber at 1 Twin Pines Lane.



JUANITA ANDERSON

A volunteer for Mission Hospice Direct Care for the past 25 years, the wife and mother of two will be honored at a recognition dinner tonight at the organization's office. Anderson first learned of Mission Hospice from a volunteer pamphlet on the bulletin board at San Francisco State University and was drawn to hospice work as a result of several life experiences, including watching two friends die from cancer.



PENINSULA HEARTS



JUAN CARLOS POMETTA BETANCOURT/SPECIAL TO THE EXAMINER

CHUTES AND LADDERS

Qsmin Lopez, 19, and Jonathan Liama, 22, try out the new slide at Junipero Serra County Park in San Bruno. Kids can now swoosh down a slide two stories high and 54 feet long with a view of the Peninsula. The playground itself has been renovated recently and features other new play equipment for children. The renovations replace a smaller park that no longer met safety standards.

Tell us who is doing positive things: newstips@sfxaminer.com



Burlingame from the ground up

- 18,000** Trees in the city
- 500** New trees planted within last 15 months
- 2** Landscaping staff members already laid off
- 5** Gallons of water needed once a week for each tree
- 5-10 percent** New trees that do not survive, largely because they lack enough water

Source: City of Burlingame, Parks and Recreation Department

Lend a hand: Jay Moran, left, and David Ferene of the Burlingame Parks Department, plant a tree that residents will likely have to water weekly to help out the city.

JUAN CARLOS POMETTA BETANCOURT/SPECIAL TO THE EXAMINER

Money for watering trees dries up

Burlingame asking residents to help in time of budget crisis

By Katie Worth
Examiner Staff Writer

BURLINGAME — During the past 15 months, more than 500 trees have been planted in Burlingame, and hundreds more will be planted by the end of the year. The city might not have the funds to keep those trees alive, however, so city officials are appealing to residents to water and attend to them.

With a budget hole looming, the city has already laid off two members of its landscaping staff and may be forced to lay off one of the five people assigned full time to plant and nurture Burlingame's 18,000 trees.

Last year, the city received a state grant to plant trees in areas that have been without street trees, according to Parks and Recreation Department Supervisor Bob Disco. The grant allowed the city to plant an extra 179 trees last year — on top of their usual 300 or so — and will

pay for an additional 200 more this year, said Parks and Rec administrative secretary Karlene Harvey, who helps coordinate the tree program.

But just planting a tree does not guarantee its survival, Disco said. For at least a year — preferably two or three — young, recently replanted trees must be watered about once a week.

As a result, Burlingame has asked residents to assist in watering the trees by posting a notice on their Web site, sending out mailers and placing doorknob hangers on houses near new plantings, Disco said.

The trees may be at risk, depending on volunteer participation and the reduced maintenance staff. About 5 to 10 percent of those planted typically die, largely because they are not watered enough, Harvey said.

Additionally, at a recent meeting of the city's Beautification Commission, several commissioners noted that sustaining volunteer help with the planters on Broadway has been difficult.

Tree maintenance worker Jay Moran, whose job is on the line if the budget is slashed, said city workers are needed to maintain the green-

ery. He and a partner planted a new eucalyptus tree on Easton Drive this week.

"With layoffs, there will be less manpower, which means less stuff that can get done. So we're hoping for this measure to pass," he said, referring to a storm drain measure on a mail-in ballot due May 5.

That measure, city officials say, will raise \$2 million annually to fund improvements through the issuance of bonds, instead of taking the money out of funds used to run Burlingame.

Resident John Cimino, who has one of the city's young trees in front of his house, said he understands that maintenance might not be the city's highest priority and does not mind helping with the task of watering.

"I understand how things are bad right now for the city," Cimino said.

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MY STORY

"The budget shortfall is so great, I'm sure the trees are the last thing on [the city's] mind."

Cindy Montgomery, Burlingame

"There's so many other financial problems right now. I'm sure they'd love to water everybody's trees, but I understand it's just not a good time for that."



KATIE WORTH/THE EXAMINER

LIFE BY NUMBERS

BURLINGAME'S ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

\$78M

SHORTFALL PROJECTED FOR 2009-10

\$4.27M

ADDITIONAL BUDGET REDUCTIONS NEEDED IF MAY 5 STORM DRAIN MEASURE DOES NOT PASS

\$2M

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