

New Fire Engine Arrives for Firebaugh Volunteers

The City of Firebaugh Fire Department has taken delivery of a new 2007 Smeal Fire apparatus.

The fire truck which was delivered Thursday, April 3, cost just less than \$3,000,000 and was purchased with joint funding of the City of Firebaugh and a Community Fa-

cilities grant, which is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.

It is the product of City Council and Staff workshops called Vision 2000 in which capital expenditures and other projects in the City are planned several years in advance

with known projected completion dates.

When this new apparatus is placed in service, an existing fire truck will be refurbished, which is the process of modernizing and updating to current standards. This \$55,000.00 project is to be accom-

plished with another Community Facilities grant from the USDA.

The city of Firebaugh Fire Department operates four fire fighting vehicles and is manned with an all volunteer staff of 26 men and women, under the command of Chief John Borboa.

The Department provides fire, rescue and emergency medical services for the City of Firebaugh and contracted areas of both the County of Madera and county of Fresno. It responds to approximately 600 incidents per year.

Local Firm to Benefit from Training Dollars

Fresno, April 11 - Assemblymember Juan Arambula announced more than \$2 million in funding awards to local businesses throughout the Central Valley at a press conference today. Local businesses received the funding from the California Employment Training Panel (ETP) and will use the money to help train new and existing employees for high wage and high skilled jobs.

One of 12 local businesses in Arambula's Assembly District slated to receive job training funds is California Retreaders. The company and its owners, Paul Neufeld and Matt Schoettler, have been praised for hiring and retraining ex-gang members. They currently employ 25 convicted felons, of those, 11 are former gang members.

Neufeld plans to use the \$182,540 ETP award to help expand the successful program, "When you look into the face of someone getting their first paycheck, you see the pride and excitement beaming. Watching the transformation from hopelessness to proud, taxpaying citizen is an amazing thing to see. Without the help of Mr. Arambula this program expansion would never have been possible."

"I am pleased business owners in my district could connect with the ETP and were able to take advantage funding opportunities that will help further their business goals and give their employees the skills they need to advance themselves into better jobs," said Arambula. "Bring-



Assemblyman Juan Arambula speaks about the training grants. His 31st District includes the Westside

ing our business community together with the ETP has made a difference in the amount of funding the Central Valley receives for job creation and advancement. I hope to continue these types of meetings."

Another local business which was awarded an ETP contract is the Neil Jones Food Company (NJFC). NJFC will use the \$944,136 award to

train workers and to transform the Firebaugh facility into a more competitive workplace.

"Programs such as ETP are so needed by manufacturers in order to meet the challenges of new technology year after year," said Matt Jones, Chief Operating Officer of NJFC. "As we continue to invest in our infrastructure, we must be able to invest in our most important asset, our

workers, and ETP funds will allow us to do just that."

Since January of 2007, 12 local businesses have been awarded grant funding throughout Arambula's Thirty-First Assembly District. More than \$1.2 million in grant funding are a direct result of a meeting last November where Arambula brought together local businesses for a workshop which instructed

business owners on how to apply for funding through the ETP.

"The Central Valley has always received less funding in the area of training employees and maintaining a high-performance workplace. This new ETP funding is a crucial step in creating a strong economy and workforce and ensuring the Central Valley gets its fair share," said Arambula.



Carlos M. Molina

Home Invasion Leads To Arrest Of Mendota Man

April 7 - Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims today announced the arrest of a Mendota man on numerous charges including attempted home invasion robbery and burglary. Arrested was 38 year old Carlos Morales Molina.

On April 6, shortly after 4:30 pm, deputies responded to a residence located in the 41000 block of W. American Ave. regarding a hot prowl burglary.

The female victim advised deputies that she had encountered an unknown male subject who had apparently entered her house through a window. She further advised deputies that the subject was armed with a knife. The victim was able to get out of the residence and call for help. She provided a good description of the subject and his vehicle which was immediately broadcast to responding deputies.

Just after 6 pm, the sheriff's helicopter "Eagle One" located the possible suspect vehicle in the area of Panoche and Newcomb, approximately two miles from the victim's residence. A male subject who matched the description of the suspect was seen walking into a nearby trailer. Eagle One was able to direct deputies to the vehicle and trailer where they made contact with the subject who was identified as Molina.

Molina was positively identified as the subject who had broken into the victim's residence and taken into custody.

During the investigation, it was learned that Molina was also wanted in connection with a carjacking incident that occurred on Jan. 24.

Firebaugh PD detectives responded and, as a result of their investigation, arrested Molina on charge of attempted murder, carjacking, and robbery.

Gas Prices Continue Record-Breaking Rise

San Francisco, April 8 - Gas prices continued to rise to record-breaking levels in California over the last month. According to a new report from AAA of Northern California, which tracks fuel costs as a service to consumers, the statewide average cost for a gallon of regular gasoline is now a record high \$3.72, a 14-cent increase since the last AAA gas price report on March 11.

The cost of crude oil, the raw material from which gasoline is made, continues to drive retail fuel prices higher. The Energy Information Administration now forecasts that crude prices will average over \$100 per barrel this year. Falling demand

for gasoline in California is easing some of the upward pressure on gas prices and reducing profit margins for refineries, but not enough to stop the trend of increasing prices for consumers.

"At today's average price, it costs \$119 to fill up the tank of a Hummer," said Michael Geeser, spokesperson for AAA of Northern California. "Five years ago, the same amount of fuel would have been about \$69. No matter what you drive, prices at this level are having a big impact on consumers, especially the people who can least afford it."

The most expensive average gas price in the California communities where AAA

monitors fuel costs is in Tahoe City, where regular gas sells for \$3.90 per gallon. The lowest price among Northern California cities tracked by AAA is in Chico, where gas costs an average of \$3.65 per gallon.

Throughout Northern California, the average price is \$3.73, up 13 cents since the last AAA gas price report. In the Bay Area, the average price is \$3.86, an increase of 14 cents from last month.

The nationwide average price of self-serve regular gasoline is \$3.33 up 10 cents from last month's AAA gas price report. That ties the previous record high price. The average statewide price in California is 39 cents per gal-

lon higher than the national average.

The least expensive gasoline in the country is found in New Jersey, where the communities of Atlantic and Monmouth have an average gas price of \$3.05. The highest average price in the nation is in Wailuku, Hawaii, on the island of Maui, where a gallon of regular costs \$3.94. No state in the country now has an average gas price below \$3.

AAA Tips for Saving Money on Gas

• **Avoid Luxury Gas**
Premium fuel costs about 20-25 cents a gallon more than regular. If your car

doesn't need premium grade fuel, don't buy it. You're just wasting your money. Check your owner's manual. If the manufacturer does not require high octane fuel, your car will run just as well on the least expensive gas.

• Shop Aggressively

Since prices change overnight, the gas station that offered the best deal last time you filled up may be the most expensive the next time your tank is empty. AAA of Northern California has a tool that can help. Located online at www.aaa.com/gasprices, the AAA Fuel Finder has real time information on gas prices at more than 85,000 gas stations throughout the United States.