



# Sacramento County Taxpayer's League Monthly Newsletter

## “ P E R S P E C T I V E ”



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Ken Payne, President

The League's committees have been involved in several big issues lately. The Utility Rate Roll-back Committee, headed by Craig Powell, is wrapping up the details on their initiative campaign for curbing any further City utility rate increases, and other more complicated items contained in the initiative. The Redevelopment Committee recently met just after some of us witnessed the swearing in of Chris Norby to the State Assembly. As you may recall, the now Assemblyman Norby is the founder of the Municipal Officials for Redevelopment Reform (MORR). At their last meeting in San Jose, the League provided 4 attendees! It will be great for the Redevelopment Committee to have access to Assemblyman Norby right here in Sacramento. The Membership Committee is about to re-convene to discuss stabilizing and expanding our member-

ship base—which should include a heavy business component.

And, since I understand that this is Small Business month, I'd like to focus on the League's business membership. Karl Dambacher and I have been talking for some time about the League sponsoring "mixers" for League members (both business and non-business), as a business networking opportunity, and a forum for expressing their concerns about tax issues. There may be a couple of options here, we could have League business members sponsor events at their places of business, and/or the League can sponsor events at a separate venue. Please give us some feedback on that idea.

Also, as you go about your routine, please think about inviting the people, who you regularly do business with, to join the

League. That's one of the ways I have been able to recruit new members. As an example, I recently got my hair cut at Supercuts. Well, the franchise I usually do business owns 20 stores in the Sacramento Area. That's a great potential member! I just have to follow up.

See you later this month!

Ken Payne

## WHAT IS THE TAXPAYERS' LEAGUE?

**In 1961, the Sacramento County Taxpayers' League was formed by you, the local citizens and your businesses and professional organizations.**

**The Goal, to monitor tax issues, utility rates, bond measures and City and County budgets.**

**When concerns arise, the league is there writing to your elected officials, testifying at public meetings and making certain that Taxpayers' concerns are represented.**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**Bob Blymyer**  
Executive Director

The Taxpayers' League is pleased to announce that Mayor Kevin Johnson will be the keynote speaker at the League's Annual Dinner, Wednesday evening, May 5, 7:00pm at the Sacramento Marriott Hotel. Mayor Kevin will focus on what he sees as "the future for the Sacramento community".

A reservation form for the dinner is shown on the bottom of page 6. You'll want to get your reservation in soon - tickets are going fast!

### Cheers



To John Chiang (State Controller), for giving us the facts on the cost of health and dental benefits for state employees and retirees. The unfunded obligation as of today is \$51.8 billion dollars. You can thank the politicians that authorized the unfunded increases that brought us here, and the labor leaders who ensure that some

campaign coffers remain full for those that vote in their favor.

Is it my imagination, or did there used to be a thing called a 'balanced budget'?

To Marcia Fritz, for continuing to expose the mismanagement, and sometimes outright dishonesty, in public pension systems. How does that go - "Go Girl!"

### Jeers



To the High Speed Rail Program - or lack thereof! The latest business plan exposed many flaws in the original assumptions; the ticket price from LA to SF was \$55, it's now up to \$105. That new number changed the ridership projections. Last year the voters were told 55 million passengers a year by 2030. It's scaled down to 41 million annual riders by 2035. And oh yes, the cost! The \$33.6 billion has been revised upward to \$42.6 billion. Three guesses as to where addition funds would come from!

This publication has stated on several occasions that just a few billion invested into California's existing train system would produce a great transportation network. Upgrading the rights-of-way with addition trackage (so that freight trains are separated from passenger trains), an upgrade on the signaling systems to allow for closer headways and higher speeds. And then letting the passenger trains run at over 100

mph, which they are capable of doing now.

Currently the HSR plan shows construction beginning on a segment between Bakersfield and Fresno. Since there are primarily farms and cows between the two cities, why even worry about that segment now. A more logical starting point would be from Bakersfield south, over and through the mountains (near the infamous Grapevine on I-5), and then drop down into the Santa Clarita valley on the way to LA. Passenger train service currently stops at Bakersfield, with a dedicated bus transfer to many points south via I-5. However, freight trains continue on their run all the way to LA, but have to go via Bakersfield east to San Bernardino County and then back west to get into the LA basin. This is an extremely long and slow routing. Freight trains could knock 4-5 hours off the their north/south interstate train movements with a direct route over the mountains, significantly reducing freight delivery costs. And think what that right-of-way could do for passenger trains.

Just think, we could have semi-high speed rail at a fraction of the cost. If only we could keep the politicians out of it.

## BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES

### Bond Oversight Committees (BOC) Overview

One of the Taxpayers' League functions of the last few years, has been for members to serve on advisory boards, called BOC's, to review how K-14 school districts spend the bond dollars collected through property taxes. This is a result of a taxpayer measure voted on (Prop 39) in the year 2002, requiring school districts to set up a citizens BOC to review their bond funded capital programs; ensuring that bond monies are not used for salaries, benefits or pensions. It also requires that each district provide a financial audit and performance audit to show compliance.

The funds are used to build new and expanded instructional space, modernizing classrooms, updating library, P.E. and parking facilities, among other needs. BOC members also make site visit inspections to see actual results, or work in progress.

Currently three League members sit on four BOC Committees; Sac City (Bob Blymyer), San Juan (Troy Dinin), Los Rios (Bob Blymyer), and CaLBOC, a newly formed state level BOC (Mike Day).

### Sacramento City Unified School District - BOC

Sac City (SCUSD) is a large urban school district serving all public schools, and some charters,

Sacramento County Taxpayers' League

within the city limits. As of a year ago it consisted of 62 elementary schools, 14 middle schools, and 19 high schools, totaling 95 campuses. The District serves approximately 47,000 students today, down from over 53,000 in 2001. Some facilities are very old, and occasionally require significant upgrades to meet 21st century student requirements.

SCUSD has been issued funds of \$678,774,494 since 1996. As of December 31, 2009, about \$640 million has been spent. Major projects have included the new Rosemont High School (2004), Sac High modernization program, the new George Washington Carver High School of Arts and Sciences (2008), new School of Science and Engineering in Pocket area, new Kennedy High Auditorium, and most recently, the new Burbank High stadium/athletic fields. The last two are still under construction.

The BOC meets 5-6 times a year; at least four with District staff, and one to two meetings for BOC sub-committees only. SCUSD has gone through significant administrative/organizational changes over the last two years, which had somewhat slowed the function of the BOC. However, the Districts new superintendant has shown a renewed interest in the BOC, which should bring the group back up to speed.

### Los Rios Community College District - BOC

Los Rios is the second largest community college district in the state, and sixth largest in the nation. It consists of four full size campuses; American River College, Cosumnes River College, Folsom Lake College, and Sacramento City College. In addition, Los Rios has six permanent smaller education centers,

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dubbed "mini-campuses". Each of the mini's, which are located in urban areas within the greater Sacramento region, are attached to one of the full campuses. North Natomas, El Dorado Center (Placerville), Davis, Elk Grove,

*(Continued on page 6)*

**CA LEAGUE OF BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES (CALBOC)**

The California League of Bond Oversight Committees (CaLBOC) was formed by BOC members unhappy with the level of training they received. Our motto is "Helping Those Who Serve Their Communities". We do this by providing independent, non-partisan, training to BOC members and school district staff. Our standard presentation includes

- 1. Proposition 39 requirements
  - a. What MUST BOCs do?
  - b. What MAY BOCs do?

- c. What may BOCs NOT do?
  - d. What is oversight?
  - e. What tools do BOCs have?
2. Brown Act requirements.
  3. Auditing: Basics of government audits for non-financial professionals.
  4. Basics of Robert's Rules.
  5. CaLBOC "Best Practices" handbook.
  6. Discussion of items of common interest.

CaLBOC has made this presentation to BOC members from dozens of districts, and will soon have the

content on our Website. Recent accomplishments include:

1. Sponsoring "fix-it" legislation the last two years.
2. Gaining 501(c)3 status.
3. Participating in a Little Hoover Commission investigation that produced a number of recommendations. The report can be accessed at <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/197/report197.html>

**SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT - BOC**

This past summer was indeed busy for San Juan Unified School District, completing several modernization and landscaping projects around the District using funds collected via taxpayer approved Measure J funding.

Measure J was passed to ensure funding for 10 years of school modernization projects. This past summers' activities focused mostly on paving and landscaping projects at many

sites throughout the district. Several locations received face lifts of their street facing school sites which included stamped brick patios, new cement walkways, hedges and the addition of fruit trees and lawns. Additionally, the San Juan Unified School District Citizens Oversight Committee hosted its most recent meeting at Mesa Verde High School on September 16<sup>th</sup>. During this meeting, the entire committee was provided an opportunity to personally inspect Mesa Verde High School's

newly constructed Gymnasium and inspect the site for the planned library. In the next few years, more paving and landscaping projects are planned as well as significant modernization improvements to San Juan High School and actual construction of the Mesa Verde Library.

Seven years after Measure J was approved by taxpayers our District facilities continue to be improved for our students and our community. Bravo!

\*\*\*\*\*

Enclosed is a ballot for the election of your

**2010 Taxpayers League Officers and Directors.**

Please fill out and return to the League office by March 1, 2010.

Thank you!

\*\*\*\*\*

**BOC'S**

*(Continued from page 4)*

Rancho Cordova and West Sacramento. All are located within convenient access to public transit.

Los Rios currently has over 92,000 students enrolled at the campuses, and this is projected to grow to 112,000 by 2015. Several major projects are underway at the main campuses, in addition to the smaller education centers. Funding for this expansion and modernization is provided by local and state bonds and some District funds. As of 2009, \$743,250,000 has been

allocated to the District during the decade; \$475,000,000 Local Bonds, \$230,097,000 State Bonds and \$38,153,000 District/Other.

One of the few positives of the current recession is community college enrollment goes up. Each campus site offers some special training programs, in addition to the regular curriculum, to prepare students for the workplace:

- \* ARC - Hospitality and Culinary Arts
- \* CRC - Architecture and Construction

- \* FLC - Performing Arts
- \* SCC - Cosmetology, Nursing and Healthcare

The Los Rios BOC meets 3-4 times a year, with most meetings occurring at one of the campuses. This allows for a site visit to review construction activities, in addition to the financial documents presented to the group.

All in all, Los Rios appears well prepared to meet its future community objectives.

**Dinner Reservation Form  
Taxpayers' League 49th Annual Dinner  
Keynote Speaker: Mayor Kevin Johnson**

- DATE: May 5, 2010, a Wednesday ( ) \$55.00 per person
- TIME: 7:00pm, no-host bar at 6:00pm ( ) \$100.00 couple
- LOCATION: Sacramento Marriott Hotel, 11211 Point East Drive, Rancho Cordova 95742 (at Folsom and Sunrise Blvds) ( ) \$250.00 Honor Role  
( ) \$350.00 Table of Eight

Send checks to League office: 1620 35th Avenue, Suite 'K', Sacramento CA 95822, or you may call 399-5600. You will be contacted in early April to provide names of guests and meal choices.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Category \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Company Table of Eight is listed on the Program; Honor Role, two tickets and Program listing.

## Membership

YES! I am concerned about Sacramento. Please enroll me as a member the Sacramento County Taxpayers' League. I have checked my membership level below, and my check is enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Firm Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_



- \_\_\_\_ Individual - \$45
- \_\_\_\_ Family - \$60
- \_\_\_\_ Professional - \$75
- \_\_\_\_ Small Business - \$140
- \_\_\_\_ Medium Business - \$295
- \_\_\_\_ Large Business - \$600
- \_\_\_\_ Large Corporation - \$850
- \_\_\_\_ Student/Gift - \$20

**Sacramento County Taxpayers' League**  
 1620 35th Ave., Suite K  
 Sacramento, California 95822  
 Phone (916) 399-5600  
 Email - info@sactax.org

The Sacramento County Taxpayers' League meets for lunch on the third Thursday of each month (except August and December) at Denny's Restaurant, 7900 College Town Drive (Howe Ave and HWY 50), north side of Freeway.

Although this is an official Board meeting of the League, guests are encouraged and welcomed to attend. Each month the Board discusses topics of community interest that affect all taxpayers. Come join us at anytime.



**1620 35th Ave, Suite K  
Sacramento, CA 95822**

Phone: (916) 399-5600

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Website: [www.sactax.org](http://www.sactax.org)

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and economy in government

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## 2009 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS OF THE TAXPAYERS' LEAGUE

### President:

\***KEN PAYNE**, Project Manager

### Vice Presidents:

\***JEFFREY ALLEN**, IT Analyst

\***JON COUPAL**, Pres., Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Assoc.

\***KATY GRIMES**, Political Journalist

### Secretary:

\***DIANE SCHACTERLE**, ACRI

### Treasurer:

\***THOMAS REAVEY**, Analyst

### Executive Director:

**BOB BLYMYER**

### \*Executive Board

### Directors:

**JEFF ATTEBERRY**, Civil Engineer

**CARL BURTON**, People's Advocate, Inc.

**LARRY CARLI**, Retired, Co. Sheriff, D.A.

**TED COSTA**, CEO, People's Advocate, Inc.

**KARL DAMBACHER**, Professor

**MIKE DAY**, President BESTCO

**TROY DININ**, Raley's Superstores

**MARCIA FRITZ**, President, CA Fnd. for Fiscal Responsibility

**ED GREBITUS, JR.**, E.A. Grebitus & Sons, Inc

**THOMAS HILTACHK**, Bell, McAndrews & Hiltachk

\***BILL HIRSCHFELT**, John O. Bronson Company

**BILL JOHNSON**, Geophysicist & Civil Engineer

**W. BRUCE LEE**, Fiscal Policy Analyst

**JIM LOFGREN**, Rental Housing Assoc. Sac Valley

**LARRY MASUOKA**, San Juan School Dist., Board of Trustees

**AL McNULTY**, Taxpayer

\***RICHARD MERSEREAU**, Taxpayer-Policy Analyst

**ROGER NIELLO**, Assemblyman 5th District

**CRAIG POWELL**, Attorney

**TIMOTHY RAY**, AT&T

**DAVID SANDER**, PhD, consultant

# Sacramento County Taxpayers' League

## 2010 Ballot

### Board of Directors Nominees

€ Check here to vote for the entire slate

#### OFFICERS

##### President:

€ **KEN PAYNE**, Project Manager

##### Vice Presidents:

€ **JON COUPAL**, Pres. Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Assoc.

€ **JEFFREY ALLEN**, IT Analyst

€ **KATY GRIMES**, Political Journalist

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€ **TED COSTA**, CEO of People's Advocate, Inc.

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€ **MIKE DAY**, President BESTCO

€ **TROY DININ**, Raley's Superstores

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€ **LARRY MASUOKA**, Bd of Trustees, San Juan School District

€ **AL McNULTY**, Taxpayer

€ **RICHARD MERSEREAU**, Taxpayer-Policy analyst

€ **ROGER NIELLO**, Assemblyman 5th District

€ **CRAIG POWELL**, Attorney

€ **TIMOTHY RAY**, AT&T

€ **DAVID SANDER**, Councilman, City of Rancho Cordova