

# Fresno City Council District 1

2008



**Blong Xiong**  
**Council President**  
**Fresno City Council District 1**

During the second week of February, I was invited to join a group of Fresno County elected officials, private investors, and nonprofit organizations to advocate for Fresno's share of federal money in lieu of the looming budget cuts.

This was an important step toward securing funding for future and current projects that continue supporting our local economy.

My colleagues and I at city hall have already begun discussing next year's budget. I will work hard to ensure funding for public safety, parks, and infrastructure improvements as high priorities.

Sincerely,

*Blong Xiong*  
*City Council President*

## Turning on the Lights

This past year our City experienced an increase in copper thefts. The situation has overwhelmed the City's ability to repair the damage, which has averaged \$75,000 per month, and has caused street-lighting and safety issues elsewhere in Fresno.

At the peak of this crime wave, over 2,000 street-lights were put out of operation. Coalitions of city departments, including Public Works and the Fresno Police, along with the City Council, have worked diligently to find a solution as quickly as possible. Result: I am happy to report that services are headed toward normalcy.

Already, the numbers of theft-driven repairs have fallen dramatically. Police Chief Dyer and the District Commanders are going after those responsible. Public Works has developed and implemented a plan that, at a cost of only \$2 per site, prevents additional thefts.

I continue to work with both Public Works and the Police Department to see that these repairs are successfully completed in our District 1.

You can help us! We ask that you please give us a hand in combating the problem by reporting any off street-lights at 621-7816.

## WANTED: Doctors in the Valley

In May of this year, University of California Merced will ask the UC Regents for approval to proceed with the planning of building a medical school on its campus. This would address the need for more qualified medical doctors and specialists in the area.

A UCM-based medical school would likely result in a significant number of its students staying in the area as they finish their residencies. Approximately half of the doctors who train at UCSF-Fresno open offices in Fresno after their graduation. Graduates of the proposed UC Merced medical school would train at Fresno

hospitals, and very likely remain in the area.

Although yet in the planning phase, U. S. Congress Members Jim Costa and Dennis Cardoza lead a coalition of fifty Valley political, business, and community leaders—myself among them—in concerted support of this so much needed Valley-based medial facility.

A medical school at UC Merced would mean more doctors and specialists in Fresno. The support coalition will be drafting a report to be presented to the UC Regents at their next meeting.

A few weeks ago, while having lunch in the Tower District, I noticed our beloved U.S. flag across from the Tower Theatre had reached the end of its esthetic and functional life. It had done its duty, and badly needed a successor! I immediately contacted U. S. Congressman Jim Costa's office, who graciously agreed to provide one that had flown over our Nation's Capitol.

It is important in these times, that

## Tower Pride



our symbols such as Old Glory exemplify our commitment to preserving our communities.

Efforts such as Tower Beautification, a group of volunteers who give time to keeping the neighborhood pristine, are just one of many examples of what each one of us can do to further community pride.

Please call my office if you'd like to know about volunteer opportunities in our community.

## Pedestrian Friendly Streetscape Plan

In collaboration with the Tower Marketing Group, Tower District property and business owners, we are developing a "Master Business Streetscape Plan."

This plan will allow us to focus and leverage public and private investment to develop a business dis-

trict which is pedestrian-friendly and re-energizes investment into the Tower area.

The project will also include a Property-Based Business Improvement District (PBID) allowing resident businesses to continue investing in their own locale.

I am confident this multi-year project will spur private and public investment, ensuring that the Tower District continues to shine in our city.

If you would like to participate in this project, please contact my office.

## Future Book Worms

As a long believer in promoting education, I regularly visit area schools to read to students and meet educators. Taking time out of busy work days is offset by the investment in tomorrow's leaders.



## District 1 Here to Meet Your Needs...

Whether it is helping residents address infrastructure needs, code enforcement, or legislation, the District 1 staff is here to assist. We welcome visitors and look forward to having comments about our neighborhoods.

**City Hall**  
**2600 Fresno Street**  
**Fresno, Ca 93721-3600**  
**(559) 621-8000**  
**Fax (559) 268-1043**  
**<http://www.fresno.gov>**

Most City of Fresno services can be answered by the call center at **(559) 621-CITY**.

Requests for District Infrastructure and special cases can be directed to District 1 staff at **(559) 621-7816** or by email at **[district1@fresno.gov](mailto:district1@fresno.gov)**.

# UNCORKING THE STREET BOTTLE NECKS

The much needed widening of Ashlan Avenue will begin construction during Spring, 2008.

During the last year's budget deliberations, I worked closely with the Mayor and my City Council colleagues to ensure that they understand the needs of our District and its impact on the City. This resulted in securing funding for several of my infrastructure

priorities. For this year, top on my list is improving the State Route 99 and Ashlan Avenue intersection, continuing west to Cornelia Avenue.

Mayor Autry and I developed a plan to fully fund the Ashlan lane expansion project in the next two budget cycles. The Fiscal Year 2008-2009 budget includes \$450,000 and additional funding

from the Redevelopment Agency. The project should be completed within a few months.

The area of Shaw and Polk Avenues has also been identified as a bottle neck. As many of you know, these areas require expansion to elevate the traffic congestion and improve motorist safety. I am trying to place this area in the upcoming budget.

## Revitalizing Our Green Space

Recognizing the need for green space on the west side of the city, District 1 will soon be home to the Central Valley's first Universally Accessible Regional Park. The park is under construction on a 15-acre parcel on the corner of Gettysburg and Polk.

This new neighborhood park will be serving families by with



baseball fields, basketball courts, a restrooms/concession building, a children's play area, a water play area, picnic pavilions, on-site parking, landscaping, and security lighting.

Both Lion's and Quigley Parks

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see Parks**

Recently, the Fresno City Council approved the construction of new fire stations.

The intersection of Clinton Street and Polk Avenues will be the permanent home for Station 16. The station has been in an inadequate, dilapidated building for more than 20 years.

Station 18 will find a new home, located near Shaw and Hayes.

The relocations will provide 4-minute response-time coverage for the entire community, while meeting

## New Fire Stations

the demands of population growth.

These new facilities reflect the City's commitment to ensuring that our fire fighters have modern facilities and equipment essential to providing superior public safety; our citizens require and deserve no less.

I am committed to seeing that the retiring Fire Station 16 site is transformed into a public amenity which

will meet the needs and desires of the neighborhood.

My office has received inquiries and comments from interested groups seeking to locate various services on the site.

In the near future, I will be engaging the neighborhood and general public for their input on viable alternative uses for the old site.

I am confident that by working together we will find a use that will add to the quality of life for the neighborhood and District 1.

## Earned Income Tax Credit

On February 12th, California's First Lady Maria Shriver visited our Cesar Chavez Adult School to support the "We Connect" initiative encouraging low-income individuals to file their tax forms.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) was initiated three years ago. With help from community members, "We Connect" successfully assists more families each year. This year, the program processed more individuals in the first day of the campaign



than in preceding years. Last year, the initiative brought \$2 million dollars back to the local economy.

With current economic conditions and the downturned real estate market, EITC will assist towards bringing more money back into the pockets of workers and the Fresno community—where it belongs.

For more information visit [www.weconnect.net](http://www.weconnect.net) or by telephone at 1.800.501.5317

## Serving the Homeless

I commend the Mayor for bringing Homelessness to the forefront of City Council issues. By researching approaches taken in other cities, Fresno will adopt a framework under the Leadership Council, comprised of elected officials and community members who will choose individuals for the Planning Committee.

This Planning Committee will be tasked with drafting a 10-year plan to end homelessness, to be reported back within 100 days.

Although it may sound ambitious, I have confidence in the new

approach of using stakeholders and partners in both the nonprofit and private sectors. The Homelessness Task Force will result in constructive dialogue and a more comprehensive plan.

As Council President, I will be participating in the Leadership Council, acting as a resource and providing my input.

Fresno cannot afford to continually address this issue by simply applying temporary "band-aids" in place of seeking a long-lasting, comprehensive solution.

## ***Parks*** ***continued from Page 3***

underwent some much-needed renovations this year. The improvements include new roofs, windows, benches, resurfacing basketball courts, and improving grass areas.

Additionally, the recreational centers at both parks received some overdue attention. Quigley's Senior Softball games are in full swing.

## ***District Alleys***

Since my coming into office, residents have identified several neighborhood alleys in need of locking gates. The closures came about because of problems such as high levels of crime, graffiti, and illegal dumping near high traffic areas.

Typically, just one or two gates are installed per year. However, this year I was able to fund a total of five gates, thus giving more District 1 residents more peace of mind.

