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Budget largely maintains status quo

INSIDE

» Mountain View proposes hikes to water, sewer and trash rates that would cost the average family \$3.05 each month.

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Adjustments could mean losing two contract workers

BY KRISTINA PETERSON
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

At the official budget process kickoff on Tuesday night, Palo Alto city staff presented a balanced "status quo" budget.

But even the relatively minor adjustments could entail laying off two con-

tract workers and appealing to the council for one-time funds.

At the first Finance Committee budget meeting of the year on Tuesday night, City Manager Frank Benest and his staff presented the 2008-2009 budget, in which the city would bring in revenues of

\$145.6 million and spend \$145.3 million, resulting in a tiny surplus. Because it is the second year of a two-year budget plan passed last year, the budget was already approved in concept last year.

However, small modifications are needed to adjust for actual costs as well

as the slowing state economy, staff said.

Though the finance committee members unanimously approved tentative budgets for the offices of the city attorney, city auditor, city clerk, city council, and city manager, they did pause over the news that the city's administrative services department expected to lay off two contract employees.

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EAST PALO ALTO

Farmers market set to open

Seven vendors will sell produce weekly

BY BANKS ALBACH
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

June 1 is going to be a very green day behind St. Francis of Assisi Church on Bay Road in East Palo Alto.

That Sunday will mark the launch of the city's first weekly farmers market, the culmination of an eight-month effort by a handful of people to bring fresh produce to East Palo Alto, which hasn't had a supermarket for about 30 years.

To find out more

» For more information on the East Palo Alto Community Farmers Market, please call 650-324-2769, or visit www.epa-farmers-market.org

The city council heard a brief update on Tuesday night from the market's manager, Cornelia Fletcher, who said she and her partners have a tentative list of seven vendors who will offer a variety of vegetables, fruits, berries and nuts.

The key, she said after meeting, is to start off small and give participating vendors a chance to sell their products out.

In 1994, East Palo Alto had a farmers market for six weeks, Mayor Patricia Foster said before the meeting. But since then, the only thing comparable was a very small one at the city's senior center, she said.

"This is one is well-organized," Foster said. "I think there is also the hope that the market will be a meeting place for residents."

The East Palo Alto Community Farmers Market has been in the making for about the last year and grew out of community health round table that studied asthma and obesity in the city, said organizer Wolfram Alderson, executive director of Collective Roots.

A recent study from the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, for example, showed that 27.7 percent of East Palo Alto's fifth-, seventh- and ninth-graders are overweight. Part of Alderson's work with Collective Roots is to teach elementary students the importance of not only eating healthy, but being able to grow healthfully food in a garden. The nonprofit, which started in 2001, is based at East Palo Alto Charter school.

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BREATHING EASIER

ABOVE: Lourdes Lopez, middle, a teacher at Head Start in East Palo Alto, plays a bingo game with children on Tuesday. The center was recently honored by Breathe California for efforts to remove asthma "triggers," including mold and dust mites from its facility.

LEFT: David Ruiz, 5, who has asthma, plays with Legos at the Head Start center.

John Green / Bay Area News Group

E. Palo Alto man shot, killed in Menlo Park

Police believe incident was on Bayfront Expressway

BY BANKS ALBACH
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

An East Palo Alto man was shot to death early Tuesday morning while riding in a car traveling along Bayfront Expressway in Menlo Park, police reported Tuesday.

Jose Antonio Contreras, 19,

suffered a gunshot wound to his head and was taken by the vehicle's driver to Stanford University Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead. Medical personnel notified police at 1:23 a.m.

Detectives have not yet determined a motive and have no sus-

pect information. And because they weren't dispatched to a crime scene, they're still determining the exact location of the shooting. But preliminary interviews have led them to believe Contreras was shot along the expressway, between University

Avenue and Willow Road.

"Our detectives have been interviewing friends and family members all day," Menlo Park police spokeswoman Nicole Acker said Tuesday. "We don't have much to go on."

So far, detectives suspect that Contreras was in the passenger

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