October 2023

The City of Sonora's Quarterly Insights

A Message from Mayor Mark Plummer

As a professional timber faller, fire safety and fuel reduction are top-of-mind topics for me. Fires pose a year-round threat to county residents, infrastructure and natural resources. Just two years ago, Sonora itself was imperiled by the Washington Fire. Rapid response by city, county and state fire agencies and favorable weather conditions saved our city.

Every household should take steps to prepare for fire. Reducing/removing flammable trees and shrubs to create defensible space around homes and businesses is a first step to slow/prevent fire from spreading. Sonora boasts several FireWise neighborhoods where residents have united to help one another reduce fuel/fire danger and "harden" their homes with fire prevention measures.

Visit the Tuolumne Fire Safe Council website to learn more about keeping your home and property safe. tuolumnefiresafe.org

City Updates

Pictured here is a Type 6 Fire Engine

Sonora Welcomes Two New Fire Engines

Ever-resourceful, the City of Sonora's Fire Chief Aimee New has amassed grant funding to acquire two new fire engines (with state-of-the-art exhaust systems), and critical fire equipment used for fighting wildland fires.

What residents can expect to see in action soon:

- Type 3 fire engine—serving mountainous and rural communities, this larger, heavier four-wheel drive vehicle is designed for wildland urban interface areas.
- Type 6 fire engine—a go-to for wildland and municipal response, this vehicle is engineered for versatility, maneuverability, and off-road capabilities. The Type 6 offers pump and roll capabilities and is compact for quick response.

Upcoming Events

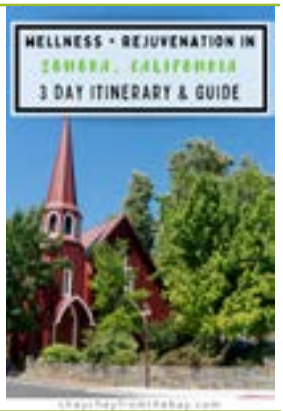
City Council Meeting
10/16, 11/6, 11/20, 12/4, 12/18
1st and 3rd Mondays, 5pm

Trick or Treat Street
Saturday, 10/28, 4pm
Downtown Sonora

Christmas Town Sonora • 11/11-12/10
christmastownsonora.org
Downtown Sonora

Sonora Christmas Parade
Friday, 11/24 • bit.ly/sonorachristmasparade
Downtown Sonora

Sonora in the News



Visit Tuolumne County partnered with San Francisco based blogger and Content Creator, Chelsea Davis, also known as Chey Chey from the Bay, for a City of Sonora wellness campaign. Chelsea spent three days in Sonora and experienced all the wellness Sonora has to offer. Read about her Sonora wellness journey on her blog at cheycheyfromthebay.com.

Read about Sonora in the News here:
visittuolumne.com/in-the-news

City Works Project and Updates

See Sidewalks Shine

Early morning walkers on Washington Street might be greeted by a welcome sight: Public Works Supervisor Mike Lagomarsino–or one of his crew–power washing City sidewalks.

Frequent comments about the unclean state of sidewalks in the historic downtown district have not gone unheeded. The City has purchased power-washing equipment and is scheduling frequent cleaning sweeps throughout the busy tourist season.

To complement freshly scrubbed sidewalks, the City is negotiating to lease a state-of-the-art street sweeper to ensure City streets reflect the title "Queen of the Southern Mines."

City Spotlights

Sonora Community Development Director to Retire

Rachelle Kellogg, City of Sonora Community Development Director and a 27-year employee, will retire on December 22nd. Rachelle started with the City in 1996 as a Coordinator, was quickly promoted to Grants/Redevelopment Program Manager in 1998 and moved into the Community Development Director position in 2010.

Over the years, Rachelle has executed essential job functions such as: directing and evaluating department personnel, grants/loans processing, redevelopment and economic development marketing, and working with local, state and federal agencies and redevelopment.

While often behind the scenes in City workings, Rachelle has been the force behind developing the Dragoon Gulch Trail/City Park, implementing road projects like the Red Church "Y" and the City's new transit center/intersection, inspiring the Magic of the Night celebration, and directing the annual Sonora Christmas Parade.

Business and Community Information

Constructive Giving Starts With Local Organizations

While we can empathize with the distressed individuals on our streets, the loitering in our parks, and camping in our creek beds, random donations of food and clothing left on park tables and city benches frequently end up scattered and unused. What seems like aid quickly becomes another pile of decomposing trash that City services must dispose of.

Fortunately, our community is rich with organizations that strive to return the homeless and other individuals in difficult situations to stable and active lives. Each organization listed here can more efficiently serve disadvantaged individuals with a high degree of accountability; all accept cash and/or in-kind donations.

- Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency atcaa.org
- Give Someone A Chance, Inc. givesomeoneachancetc.org
- Lambert Community Enrichment Center tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/223/Lambert-Community-Center
- Nancy's Hope nancyshope.org
- Resiliency Village resiliencyvillage.org

Public Safety Information

HOST Works to Reduce Homeless Calls

According to Sonora Police Chief Turu Vanderwiel, residents call law enforcement to interface with homeless and unpredictable individuals*. Sonora Police Department officers always respond (17-23% of service calls involve the homeless, approximately 2,000/year).

Chief Vanderwiel realized arresting the homeless isn't a solution and directed the development of a trained team to intercept and redirect homeless individuals to county and state services. Today, the Homeless Outreach Support Team (HOST) is a targeted force that includes Officer Mikale Bell (pictured here), whose specialized training has created trusted relationships among our homeless community. For HOST, he maintains a list of resources to assist the homeless, coordinates efforts with social services, monitors encampment locations meets with property owners, and assists SPD officers with legal issues surrounding homelessness.

- HOST is a collaboration of City and County agencies and private service providers, which includes Behavioral Health, ATCAA, and Mathiesen Memorial Health Clinic to name a few.
- HOST deploys monthly functions like a mobile navigation center that brings the experts and the referrals into the field where homeless feel most comfortable.
- The Central Sierra Continuum of Care Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program awarded the City $135,000; SPD applied the funds to the HOST program.

*According to recent PIT counts, Tuolumne County has the highest homeless population in the five county region. Consequently, with health and human services located in Sonora, the City has a high concentration of homeless individuals living in or near the city limits.

Scan to sign-up for our e-newsletter!

Vision

With leadership and integrity, the City of Sonora commits to excellent service through collaboration and innovation.

Mission

Our mission is to foster a safe, vibrant and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all.

Core Priorities

Economic Development (General Plan) | Fiscal Stability | Homelessness | Infrastructure
Public Safety/Disaster Preparedness | City Staffing