



Quarter I - 2009

D3 Dispatch

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Welcome to 2009...we hope you had a joyful holiday season, are doing well in this tough economy, and have welcomed in the New Year! 2008 was absolutely electric at every level of government throughout the nation. From avoiding moth eradication spraying to the launch of a new energy agency, it was certainly action-packed locally. 2009 promises to be just as exciting and productive.

I want to thank you for your support and for giving me the opportunity to continue working for the citizens of Southern Marin. As always, while we work on numerous policy issues, we are here to serve *you*, our constituents. Please give us your [feedback](#) on our efforts to provide you with effective representation and quality service. Let your neighbors know about the *D3 Dispatch*. Sign up [here](#) and click on "Subscribe to this page."

State Budget - Outlook and Impact on the County of Marin

To balance our FY 2008-09 budget and deal with the state problem, the County reduced \$7.2 million (about 2% of our budget) and instituted a hiring freeze. Even with these adjustments, the County still faces a budget gap of approximately \$5 million for the next fiscal year. The [State of California's budget](#) picture is clearer now that the state legislature has approved a budget. We expect another \$3.6 million hit to Marin County's budget as a result of the settlement. However, we are prepared to make the necessary adjustments.

The good news is that Marin County has a history of fiscal prudence, with the lowest spending per capita for government-provided services and lower rates of unemployment and property tax decline than any comparable county in the state. And Marin has the highest bond rating in California, while an independent watchdog organization found that 49 of 58 California counties are in fiscal crisis. Marin is in relatively good shape. However, the recession is impacting the County in three ways: we are seeing lower revenues from property taxes, less money from the state and an increase in demand for services, particularly in the areas of homelessness, unemployment, and various forms of public assistance.

In addition, the slowdown in the housing market has reduced our local revenues so they are not keeping pace with our cost of doing business. While the shortfall is significant, the County is implementing careful cuts and procedures to address this budget gap. The County has developed cash reserves in excess of the minimum required; minimized debt service to less than 1% of the annual budget; and limited one-time revenues to one-time expenses. We will reach our goal to balance the budget for 2010 in a couple months, and assuming that revenues stay soft, will address the longer-term alignment of our revenues and program expenses. County departments are proposing additional reductions. We will thus face the additional \$8-\$9 million in cuts (\$3.6 million state; \$5 million local) via detailed, targeted adjustments in many departments

The Board of Supervisors will hold budget planning workshops on March 25 and 30 at the Civic Center, Room 330, which will provide an opportunity for public input. We will share information and seek additional community input through surveys, public forums, and the County's website. Despite our need to get smaller over the next few years, we do not want to sacrifice the quality of our services. By planning ahead, we can minimize the risk of significant service cuts and make changes that reflect our priorities and values.

Renewable Energy - Where Are We? And what is the Marin Energy Authority?

Since 2002, the number one policy focus for the County of Marin is climate change, from which virtually all other policy directives flow, from transportation to energy to flood control to housing and other land use issues. "Green electrons" and renewable energy have been receiving more and more attention as the prospect of global warming and the volatility of our current supplies continue to make news. Here in Marin County a serious effort to analyze the viability of moving from non-renewable energy to greener sources began in 2002 after the passage of [AB117](#), the legislation that enabled "Community Choice Aggregation". This state law allows jurisdictions to work together to procure electricity. Supervisor McGlashan has been at the forefront of this ground-breaking effort.

Five years of study and analysis indicates that Marin County and our cities and towns could successfully manage the sourcing and production of renewable energy at costs that match PG&E's rates...and significantly increase the percentage of our electricity that comes from renewable sources. This will be one initiative of a new joint powers authority (JPA) that has been formed to help the cities, towns and the County of Marin work collaboratively to tackle the tough goals presented by [AB 32](#), which requires that we reduce our green house gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The Governor has ordered additional cuts to achieve an 80% reduction by mid-century. The new [Marin Energy Authority](#) has been formed, consisting of jurisdictions including the County of Marin and eight of the eleven cities in our county. All of the cities in Southern Marin have voted to join the new JPA.

What are the benefits?

- reduce Marin's greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 15-20% in the first year
- increase price stability over the long term, without exceeding PG&E's rates
- fuel small, locally based green businesses
- enable local decision-making over the mix of Marin's power

PG&E will continue to handle Transmission and Distribution of electricity over existing power lines and will still be there for maintenance and emergency services. The only difference is how electricity is purchased. Your bill will still look the same, but the line item for "generation" will be from the MEA instead of PG&E. As a reminder, any resident whose city or town joins the MCE may still choose to opt *out* of 'green power' and stay with PG&E. However, if a city or town does *not* vote to join Marin Energy Authority, businesses and residents in that jurisdiction will not have the choice to join and will stay with the default provider, PG&E.

The MEA Board had its first meeting on Feb 5 to consider a community choice aggregation (CCA) program and other programs ([full agenda](#)) that aid in complying with AB32. Supervisor McGlashan was elected Chair of MEA, and Councilmember Shawn Marshall of Mill Valley was elected Vice Chair.

What's next? MEA will proceed with developing Requests for Proposals to energy service providers, with the goal of purchasing power directly from suppliers of wind, solar, hydro and geothermal energy and use existing PB&E-operated lines to deliver it to Marin consumers. If all goes according to plan, we will see implementation in mid 2010. MEA is also pursuing energy efficiency initiatives and funding from the state and federal government to establish leading-edge technologies here in Marin and the Bay Area.

Zero Waste and Plastic Bags

“Zero Waste” is the goal to significantly reduce and ultimately eliminate garbage and other wastes that are harmful to natural ecosystems in the land, water, and air. Marin County formed a Solid Waste [JPA](#) with the goal of 80% landfill diversion by 2012 and a Zero Waste Goal by 2025. Going forward, the JPA will evaluate existing waste programs and develop a Zero Waste action plan for Marin. Locally, Fairfax residents approved a plastic bag ban on the November 4th ballot. Supervisor Charles McGlashan is leading County efforts to cap landfill gas, transforming waste to energy; ban plastic bags; eliminate polystyrene take-out containers; and achieve a more resource-sustaining and conscious way of life. We hope to have ordinances on plastic bags and polystyrene approved by the Board of Supervisors this spring.

Zero Waste means halting the ongoing squander of natural capital. It means reusing materials in natural systems loops or in closed industrial systems [AB 939](#) required all California jurisdictions to achieve a landfill diversion rate of 50% by 2000...Marin County exceeded the requirements and achieved a 77% diversion rate by 2004 onward.

Why does Zero Waste matter? The conservation of resources through Zero Waste practices leads to significant conservation of energy, through reduced use of fuel to transport products and packaging (and to dump them at the end of their useful lives) and reduced emissions of pollutants in production and decay. Zero Waste thus translates into relief for the global climate. While helpful so far, recycling can mask the need to do further work. In spite of our history as a land-conserving county, Marin is far from being the true environmental steward we would like to be, with a large environmental footprint due to our consumption and travel.

What's Next? The JPA has contracted with R3 Consulting group to develop a Zero Waste Feasibility and Planning Study for Marin County. The study will evaluate existing waste programs, gather information from stakeholders, outline new options and develop a Zero Waste action plan for all of Marin's jurisdictions. We wish to move forward with a goal-driven and comprehensive Zero Waste Program.

Great news on plastic bags in Marin: Fairfax residents enthusiastically approved Measure C, the plastic bag ban, on November 4, 2008. Reusable bag sales are expected to rise dramatically and help the small town's retail sector a great deal. "This sets a precedent for other communities to take matters into their hands and for local democracy," said Renee Goddard of Sustainable Fairfax. Now, citizens in San Anselmo, San Rafael, and West Marin are pressing for a phase-out of plastic bags and Styrofoam take-out containers from retail businesses. These are signs of the growing commitment to Zero Waste throughout our community.

A new member of our team helping on Zero Waste issues is Chrise de Tournay, a student in the Sustainable Practices Certificate program at Dominican University, graduate of the Environmental Forum of Marin and member of the Green Ribbon Committee of San Rafael where she lives.

Let us know if you have ideas about ways that County operations or citizens in general can reduce waste (of products and energy) while improving the quality of life for all.

SMART - Another Victory

"I'm thrilled that the voters gave us permission to build the pathway and train service in our two counties." Supervisor Charles McGlashan's words resonated as the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit ([SMART](#)) board began work to build a 70-mile passenger railroad and parallel bicycle-pedestrian path along the publicly owned Northwestern Pacific Railroad right of way through the two counties. The rail line will run from Cloverdale, at the north end of Sonoma County, to Larkspur, where the Golden Gate Ferry connects Marin County with SF.

What's next? The SMART board must select the rail vehicles that one day will be the most visible image of SMART. Beyond that, critical decisions will be made as to how they will operate, how many passengers they carry, how many bicycles will fit on board and many other details. Engineering will extend through 2010, construction will begin in 2011 and you can look forward to riding the rails or trails in 2014.

Interested in SMART? There are [jobs](#) and areas for [citizen's involvement](#). Give them a call.

What about Cal Park Tunnel? On September 24, 2008, the official groundbreaking ceremony of Cal Park Hill Tunnel was held. The tunnel, which will connect Larkspur Landing and San Rafael - and fully funded with the \$25 million cost to be shared between SMART and the County- is being built to accommodate passenger trains (**SMART**) and a bicycle and pedestrian pathway (County). Cal Park Hill Tunnel will provide a safe and flat route to get people out of their cars, making it faster to bike between San Rafael and Larkspur Landing than to drive. Contracts for rehabilitation of the tunnel, preparation of the roadbed for track and construction of the multiuse pathway in the tunnel were let and work began on October 6, 2008. These phases of work are expected to be completed by December 2009. Please view a [short video](#) on the progress of Cal Park Tunnel.

What Else Is Happening? From District 3 to the GG Bridge, here's what's happening.

Traffic and Ridership Trends: For the period of July 2008 through December 2008, Bridge traffic is down by -3.6%, bus ridership is up by +3.9% and ferry ridership is up +0.6% when compared to the same time period in the previous fiscal year.

The final environmental document for the **GGB Suicide Barrier Study** is due out this spring. In October 2008, the Board selected the Net Alternative as the locally preferred alternative. The \$40 to \$50 million project is not currently funded and will be funded with non-toll dollars.

Funding to reconstruct **Doyle Drive** was resolved recently through extended regional discussions. The District has committed \$75 million to the reconstruction project and must be funded before the completion of construction.

The Preliminary Engineering and Environmental process for the **Moveable Median Barrier** will begin in February 2009 and will take nearly two years to complete. Following this, the design will be completed. Installation is now planned to occur by the end of 2011.

A construction contract was awarded for **Phase 3A of the Bridge Seismic Retrofit Project**. This phase will retrofit the north anchorage housing and the north pylons and take about 3 years to complete. The final phase, 3B, will be ready to go out to bid in 2010 and will retrofit the main span and main towers.

The re-painting of **Suspender Ropes** continues on both the east and west sidewalks. The project is scheduled for completion in 2009.

Golden Gate Transit is coordinating with the Marin County Sheriff's Office and Marin Transit to increase public awareness at the **Marin City Transit Hub** regarding a recent increase in robberies in the Marin City area.

The Golden Gate Ferry system has converted to accepting only **TransLink**, the regional fare payment smartcard, for customers wishing to receive the frequent rider discount; ticket books are no longer available for ferry customers. The bus system is much more complex and a timeline for full conversion to TransLink is not yet established.

New Bus Fare Boxes will be rolled out beginning in March 2009. Discount tickets will be replaced with a magnetic stripe card, similar to what is used at BART. As noted above, TransLink is also accepted on Golden Gate Transit buses and will continue to be accepted.

The District received grant money to install **New Bike Racks** that hold three bikes (instead of 2) on Golden Gate Transit buses. The racks will be installed by mid-2009.

Golden Gate Ferry has purchased **Two High-Speed Catamarans** from Washington State Ferry system for \$2 million each. The first vessel is planned for arrival within the next few months and will be used in service while the *M.V. Del Norte* is taken out of service to have its engines replaced. After this, the two catamarans will undergo a complete rehabilitation. One is anticipated to be ready in late 2009 to early 2010 and the other in mid to late 2010.

A Call to Action

You don't have to be a member of any political party to want to make this country a better place. During the inaugural speech, President Obama said, "Everywhere we look, there is work to be done." Bringing about change requires effort from each and every one of us. What will you do to contribute to a better tomorrow for our country and our county? Is there a need in your community where you can take action? It doesn't matter how you choose to stay involved in your community, it just matters that you do. USA.Service.org is an organization you may wish to participate in...here are a few suggestions, locally:

Volunteer - Whether you spend an afternoon at a soup kitchen, picking up trash on a local beach, fixing up a dilapidated playground, or maybe just visiting people at a convalescent hospital, do something to make your community better.

Go Green - There are a million ways to conserve energy and prevent pollution: carpool, turn off unused lights, reuse items rather than discarding them. Let's all do our part.

Donate - Some people can write huge checks to their favorite charitable organizations. Clean out your closets and cupboards and send unwanted clothing, toys, and household items to organizations that put them in the hands of individuals and families who are struggling to make it with what they've got.

Take an active part in your child's education - No matter what your economic station, education is the key to tomorrow's economy. Sit down with your child every night to help them with their homework.

Buy American - Whenever possible, buy products that come from factories right here in America that employ our fellow citizens, or food produced on American farms.

Spend responsibly - If you can, pay down your credit card debt. Buy things you need, rather than splurging on unnecessary items.

Support public services - Is there a bond initiative on your ballot for a local library? Or is a library committee hosting a fundraiser? Pitch in!

Give the gift of your expertise - If you've got a special talent or professional training, put your gifts to their best use by donating your time to those in need.

Citizen Action

Many of our friends, family members and colleagues were active throughout the County in 2008. We are extremely grateful for their generous donation of time and resources to make our County a better place. Here are a few examples where our citizens made a difference:

Belvedere

Rita Fink...Citizen Emertia 2008
Bruce Sams...Citizen of the Year 2008

Marin City

Makini Hassan - Community Services District
Reverend Pamela Griffith Pond - Marin Interfaith Worker Justice
Bettie Hodges - The Hannah Project

Mill Valley

Trish Garlock...Kiddo! Chamber of Commerce 2009 Citizen of the Year
Harbor Point Tennis Club...Chamber of Commerce 2009 Business of the Year
Richard Jessup...Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Community Leadership Award
Victoria Talkington...Steps, Lanes and Paths

Strawberry

Marguerite Hinderleider...2008 CPRS District 1 Volunteer Award

Sausalito

Susan Roe...2008 Spirit of Marin Award
Ann Arnott...Lifetime Achievement Award

Tam Valley

Jim Burns...Recognition for Tam Valley Leadership - Model "Fire Safe"
Sue Hayes...Recognition for Tam Junction Beautification and Creekside events

Tiburon

Larry Hadley...Chamber of Commerce 2008 Business/Citizen of the Year

Get Involved

Marin County has a number of [openings on community boards and commissions](#). Perhaps you have an interest in Child Care or Disability Access, Disaster Council, Mental Health, Parks and Open Space or In-home Supportive Services, to name a few. Please access our website for information and an application...**Our current openings are:**

<http://www.marin.ca.gov/depts/BS/Members/bcopenings.cfm>

Our local economy needs your assistance. Everyone is feeling the stress of a turbulent market as employers continue to trim expenses and look for opportunities to stay profitable. As you conduct your daily business, please remember to buy products that come from businesses right here in Marin County that employ our fellow citizens. With your participation, we'll make it through these troubled times together.

Finally, consider supporting your local health and social services [charities](#) and food banks. In an economy like this, charitable needs often go undetected. The following partial list of local charities looks to your generosity and so many others. Please help where you can.

- Zero Breast Cancer** 4340 Redwood Hwy, Suite C400, San Rafael, CA 94903
Committed to eliminating breast cancer www.zerobreastcancer.org
- Bucklew Programs** 914 Mission Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901
People with mental illness can live healthy www.bucklew.org
- Marin County Foundation** 5 Hamilton Landing, Suite 200, Novato, CA 94949
Apply philanthropic contributions to help improve the human condition www.marincf.org
- Meals of Marin** 3095 Kerner Blvd., Suite Q San Rafael, CA 94901
Meals delivered for those who are sick and homebound
<http://www.volunteersolutions.org/marin/org/10243114515.html>
- American Cancer Society** 750 Lindero Street Suite #120, San Rafael, CA 94901
Fighting to eliminate all forms of cancer www.cancer.org
- Marin County Food Bank** 75 Digital Dr., Novato, CA USA 94949
Provide food for families experiencing short term crisis. www.marinfoodbank.org

Keep in touch by calling or e-mailing us at cmcglashan@co.marin.ca.us Stay tuned with us about the issues in this dispatch and about future topics.