

December 12, 2013 (Issue 106)

Participatory Budgeting Highlight

Through the triumphs of public participation in community spending decisions, the City of Vallejo was recently named as an example of a successful Participatory Budgeting Project in the [White House Blog](#).

During the President's announcement of the release of his Second National Action Plan on Open Government, a section of Participatory Budgeting (PB) was described as a community-led tool that enables residents to assist in identifying, discussing and prioritizing certain local public spending projects, and for giving citizens a voice in how taxpayer dollars are used in their communities.

Vallejo, which established its city-wide PB process in 2012, was the first city in the nation to do so. In June 2013, as part of the Fiscal Year 2013-14 budget process, the City Council approved an allocation of approximately \$2.4 million for **Vallejo's** second cycle. Through PB, Vallejo residents and stakeholders present ideas and develop project proposals, then residents vote, and the top projects within the budget allocation are submitted to the City Council for consideration.

Projects that benefit the public, are a one-time expenditure that can be completed with funds from this year's PB process, and those that are implemented by the City, or in collaboration with the Vallejo City Unified School District, the Greater Vallejo Recreation District, or any other public agency, non-profit organization, or religious institution that operates in Vallejo are eligible for funding.

The **Second Open Government National Action Plan** states that in 2014, the Administration will work with the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative, the National League of Cities, non-profit organizations and philanthropies to create tools and best PB practices, raise awareness of PB, and educate communities of PB and its benefits.

Below is an excerpt from the White House Blog about PB:

"Participatory budgeting allows citizens to play a key role in identifying, discussing, and prioritizing public spending projects, and gives them a voice in how taxpayer dollars are spent. Several communities around the country, such as Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Vallejo, already have had success in, or are currently planning, participatory budgeting processes to help determine local budgeting priorities."



Water Bond Financing

On November 13, the City of Vallejo successfully closed its \$18-million water financing, representing the City's first entry into the capital markets since emerging from bankruptcy in 2011. The bonds, sold to refinance an outstanding series of water bonds issued in 2001, received an "A+" credit rating from Standard & Poor's with a stable outlook.

The Standard & Poor's noted that the water system's financial performance has been stable during the last six years, with strong debt service coverage and a consistently strong liquidity position. The Series 2013 bonds carry an interest rate of 4.87 percent, which is fixed through the final maturity of the financing in 2031. By converting the outstanding bonds from a variable rate to a fixed rate, the City eliminated the risk of rising interest rates and the City's reliance on external credit providers.

"This bond sale was a vindication for the City of Vallejo and all that it has done to right its financial ship," said City Manager Daniel Keen. "Despite the tough times the City and its residents have been through, many investors were willing to trust us with their money at a very reasonable interest rate."

The bonds mature in 2027 through 2031, and were primarily marketed to institutional investors given the relatively long maturity. A wide variety of institutional investors approved the City's credit for purchase and the bonds were ultimately placed with the three investors willing to accept the lowest interest rates.

VCUSD's New Logo and Grant

The **Vallejo City Unified School District** (VCUSD) recently unveiled its new logo, which was selected by Vallejo's high school students, in an effort to update and enhance the image of the District.

Along with the new logo, the VCUSD will soon be revamping its website, distributing a quarterly district newsletter and issue program brochures with the new logo prominently displayed.



In addition to the updated look, VCUSD has secured a grant from the Network for a Healthy California to support the Full Service Community Schools initiative. The grant will ensure that Vallejo students and their families have the necessary tools to support healthy lifestyles and improve health and academic outcomes, as well as ensure students enter into high school with the foundational skills to graduate college and be career ready.

The \$567,520-grant from **Network for a Healthy California** will focus on elementary and K-8 Full Service Community Schools and is estimated to reach 5,000 students and 500 parents. The goal of the project is to increase nutrition education and physical activity opportunities, in partnership with the high school academies, and address social marketing strategies that increase access and consumption of healthy food and beverages at each school site.

Schools that will benefit directly from the grant are Elsa Widenmann, Loma Vista Environmental Science Academy, Dan Mini, Cooper, Highland, Lincoln, Patterson, Federal Terrace and Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy.

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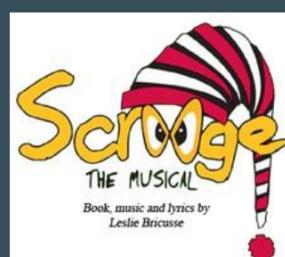
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Scrooge, the Musical!

Bay Area Stage Productions is proud to present "Scrooge, the Musical!" at the Fetterly Theatre this month for six remaining shows.

In a delightful musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel A Christmas Carol, cold-souled Ebenezer Scrooge has a change of heart on Christmas Eve night, after being visited by the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmas past, present and future. Folks might not have had much to sing about in England in 1860, but this musical will make you believe otherwise.

Critically acclaimed in 2011 and in 2012 and packed to the brim with holiday song and dance, Bay Area Stage Productions revives "Scrooge the Musical!" for the 2013 Holiday season. Tickets can be purchased [online](#) or by calling 707-649-1053.

"Scrooge, the Musical!" will show Friday, December 13 and 20, and Saturday, December 14 and 21 at 8:00 p.m. and on Sunday, December 15 and 22 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 or \$17 for students and seniors. Fetterly Theatre is located at 3467 Sonoma Boulevard, Suite 10.

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