

# **LEMOORE PARKS & RECREATION**

## **SYNOPSIS**

The Lemoore Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of services and activities to the citizens of the area. The Background and Facts portion of this report is divided into four sections to explain and clarify the different aspects of the Lemoore Parks and Recreation Department.

## **WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED**

Public interest

## **AUTHORITY**

California Penal Code Section 925(a) The Grand Jury may at any time examine the books and records of any incorporated city in the county.

## **METHOD OF INVESTIGATION**

The Grand Jury interviewed the Lemoore Parks and Recreation Director and toured Heritage City Park, the Lemoore Golf Course, the Lemoore Senior Center and the Cinnamon Municipal Complex. The Grand Jury also examined the contract between the City and the Lemoore Youth Sports Foundation.

## **BACKGROUND AND FACTS**

The Lemoore Parks and Recreation Commission has seven board members who make recommendations to the Recreation Director concerning program changes and facility upgrades. The Recreation Department is staffed with two full-time and two part-time employees and oversees the 21 parks and facilities which are maintained by the Lemoore Maintenance Department employees.

The City of Lemoore commissioned an Access Compliance Survey Report (SSA Project #28094) regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The October 15, 2009 report states that Lemoore Parks and Recreation Department parks and facilities are not completely compliant with ADA standards. The Director of Parks and Recreation has stated that the newer ADA standards will be met as funds become available.

## **Section I – Lemoore Golf Course**

The Lemoore Golf Course first opened to the public in 1928 as a nine hole course. It was expanded to its current 18 hole par 72 course in 1991 along with other improvements such as a new clubhouse and the pro shop. The golf course has an annual budget in the \$900,000 range. Maintenance costs currently account for approximately 70% of the budget with the rest being allocated to all other expenses. The Golf Course has 11 full time employees year-round and two to six part-time employees depending on the time of year. The clubhouse has recently undergone some needed repairs and additions, most notably new paint, a new outdoor patio, and repairs to the arbor at the rear. A number of new trees have also been planted to enhance the challenge for golfers and beautify the premises along the first hole. There is a small, but real, possibility that golf balls may hit cars traveling on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue which is parallel to the second hole. The current golf pro has been working there 19 years and in July of 2010 won the contract from the city for the management of the course. The financial operations of the Golf Course are audited by the city on a yearly basis.

## **Section II – City parks**

D Street Plaza is a mini park located in the center of downtown Lemoore. In the past, outdoor movies were shown during the summer. The gazebo located in the park is a popular location for outdoor photography and weddings. The fountain was built using donations from citizens. Each brick around the fountain is engraved with a name chosen by the donor of that brick. According to interviews with Parks and Recreation staff, the restroom in this park is the most vandalized in the local park system.

Heritage Park is situated in North Lemoore and offers volleyball, tennis and basketball courts as well as a large picnic gazebo. A 4,000 foot walking path surrounding the park was added two years ago. The park is lighted throughout the year until midnight to accommodate night time activities. The softball field has a small pond in left field which can make ball playing difficult.

Lemoore City Park is the oldest park in the City and located near the center of town. Barbecue pits and picnic tables are available and can be reserved. The City holds many events in the park such as its Fourth of July festivities and Memorial Day observances. This year a 3 day Pizza Festival was held there.

Lemoore Rotary Youth Plaza is located by the old train station in downtown Lemoore. The Farmers Market and Swap Meet are held there March through September on the first Saturday of each month. A Summer Concert Series is planned for every Friday evening from mid July to mid August.

An interactive water feature, a skate park and lighted basketball courts are located there for the public's use.

Lions Park, situated next to Liberty Middle School, is now the location of the annual Easter Egg Hunt and, later in the year, the Beer Fest. This year outdoor movies will be shown at Lions Park instead of D Street park as had been the

custom in earlier years. The park has a large gazebo and a snack bar. The City's newest playground is located there and soccer and baseball fields are available to local youth sports teams.

Lemoore Sports Complex is located at 19<sup>th</sup> and Cinnamon and is the location used for local soccer and softball programs. The city does not subsidize the maintenance of the facility so the leagues pay for everything with the exception of water.

19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Park is almost entirely a ponding basin. In the past, a portion of the park was used as a BMX track. Behind that complex at 19<sup>th</sup> and Tammy Lane is a large fenced area reserved for Waggin' Tails Dog Park. This is a field set aside for owners to let their dogs run and play unleashed.

### **Section III – Facilities**

The Cinnamon Municipal Complex was originally a large yarn factory (Candlewick) building, bought by the City. The Complex is being implemented as a recreation area encompassing a boxing ring and a scaled down basketball court for children which can be used by adults when the basketball hoops are raised. There is also a walking track around the inside perimeter of the recreation area. A dance/aerobics classroom with a connecting children's play area is located in the facility. Weddings and other events may be held in the multipurpose room for a fee. A teen center with access to reading materials, video games, billiards, and ping pong tables is planned which will be available to local youths at no cost.

A portion of the building is devoted to a maintenance area for the City's vehicles. At this time, there is ample room for additional recreational activities in the six acre building even though half of it has been allotted to the Food Bank.

The Senior Citizens Center is leased from the City of Lemoore and is located adjacent to the Lemoore Golf Course. The Gene Stebbins Building and the Tom Martinez Building are available for rent to the public for meetings, parties, etc. Wednesday Night Bingo is held in the Gene Stebbins Building and is open to the public. Seniors' lunches are served Mondays through Thursdays in the Tom Martinez Building and bingo is played after lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Friday nights are reserved for musical sessions in which anyone is welcome to participate. Wednesday Night Bingo and Fourth of July fireworks sales are the main fund raisers for the Senior Citizens Center.

Lemoore Civic Auditorium was originally built in 1920 as the United Service Organization (U.S.O.) Building. The auditorium is available to the public to rent for weddings, quinceaneras, and other large events. The building currently houses the Parks and Recreation offices where reservations and rentals can be arranged. The building is equipped with a large kitchen, a conference room, the main hall, and two closet sized rooms being used as office space by the department head and the rest of the staff. The main hall is equipped with a stage for use by the local drama club. The Parks and Recreation Department is in the process of taking bids

from contractors to have the building refurbished. The building's main hall will have new paint, new stage curtains, and window treatments to match the new curtains. A wheelchair ramp leads to one of the front doors and a ramp also leads to the restrooms.

#### **Section IV – Activities**

The Lemoore Parks and Recreation Department sponsors a number of activities geared towards youth and seniors alike. Some of the activities are T-Ball, Tennis Camp, Lemoore Boxing Club, Vacation Camps (these are available during winter and spring break). There is also Senior Card Night and Social Networking for Seniors. There is a Swap Meet & Farmers Market on the first Saturday of each month, March through September at the Train Depot Arbor.

#### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **Finding 1**

There is a pond in the left field of the softball field at Heritage Park.

##### **Recommendation 1**

Fix it.

##### **Finding 2**

The city has a number of unaddressed ADA deficiencies in all of its city parks and recreation facilities.

##### **Recommendation 2**

The Lemoore City Council should work with the Parks and Recreation Department to alleviate ADA deficiencies in the parks and recreation facilities.

#### **COMMENT**

The Grand Jury believes the Lemoore Parks and Recreation Department staff is doing an excellent job administering programs for the citizens of Lemoore and the surrounding communities.

#### **RESPONSE REQUIREMENT**

**Penal Code Section 933(c)** requires that no later than 90 days after the Grand Jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the Presiding Judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations.