Solano County's "Work Pays" Newsletter

Bridges

Summer 2008
Distributed in April, May, June

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

All County offices will be CLOSED on the following holidays: May 26, July 4, September 1

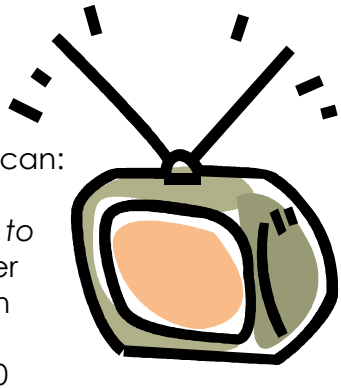
2008 North Bay Stand Down

October 14, 15, 16 at the Dixon Fairgrounds. This three-day encampment is for Veterans and their families ONLY. If you are, or know, a homeless or at-risk Veteran, please tell him/her to contact the Veterans Services Office at 784-6590 or 553-5261

A Quick Thought

"The high destiny of the individual is to serve rather than to rule..."
- Albert Einstein

TVs ARE GOING DIGITAL!



At midnight, February 17, 2009, all of the major television stations are going to stop analog broadcasting.

What does this mean to you?

If you have an older model TV and use an antenna, you won't be able to pick up the TV signals any more. (If you have cable or a satellite dish, the box already converts the signal to digital, so this change won't affect you.)

However, we have some good news for you! You don't have to throw away your old TV, all you need is an analog converter box.

On top of that, you can get two $40 coupons to use toward two converter boxes! Now, these coupons are good for only the basic converter boxes. If you want the fancy box with a DVD recorder, it will cost a lot more and you can't use the coupon for it.

If you would like one or two coupons, you can apply online or by phone by March 31, 2009. You can mail or fax in a Coupon Application.

You can choose to request one coupon now and one later, but no more than two coupons per household are allowed.

Supplies of the coupons are limited. The coupons will expire 90 days after they are mailed.

To request the discount coupons, you can:

- *Mail an application to*
  TV Converter Box Coupon Program
  PO Box 2000
  Portland, OR 97208
- *Or fax an application to*
  1-877-388-4632
- *Go online to*
  www.DTV2009.gov
- *Call*
  1-888-388-2009
  TTY: 1-877-530-2634 (English)
  1-866-495-1161 (Spanish)

I did a little online research and the best price for a converter box was about $50 (so far). So with a coupon and $10 or so, you can continue to watch your favorite TV shows after February 17, 2009.

The current list of stores selling the converter boxes include Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Sears, Radio Shack, Circuit City, Best Buy, Target and Sam's Club. I'm sure that converter boxes will be available at many other stores in the future, so do check around for the best price and availability before buying one.

For more information about the change from analog to digital, please go to www.dtv.gov.

Free Money From The IRS!

OK, lets be honest, it's not really free.

What I read at www.irs.gov is that Congress and the IRS are [basically] giving you an advance on next year's tax refund. Happily, if your "stimulus payment" is higher than your refund for your 2008 taxes, you won't have to pay anything back, you get to keep the excess.

But to be honest, I don't care what they call it or how it all works, I can use the money right now. The ONLY thing I have to do to get this money is file my income taxes for this year.

Oh, but maybe you're reading this in June and you didn't do your taxes? Good news! You can still file and receive the stimulus payment. The IRS will send out payments until December 31, 2008, so Mom's advice would be to go ahead and file right now while you're thinking about it.

The rest of the good news is that even if you don't normally have to file your taxes, as long as you have at least $3,000 in eligible income and file your 2007 taxes, you should get at least $300.

Qualifying income includes Social Security benefits, some Railroad Retirement benefits, some Veteran's benefits and earned income (wages, salaries, tips and self-employment).

Last and best of all, if you have your regular tax refund direct deposited to your bank account, you won't have to do another thing! The stimulus payment will be deposited in your bank account automatically. (The payments should start arriving in May.)

Now, let me warn you, there are already a lot of scams going on. You may get a phone call, a letter or an e-mail from someone pretending to be from the IRS.

NEVER give your personal information over the phone, by mail, or on the Internet. The IRS isn't going to ask you for your Social Security number, your address, or other personal information.

Trust me, they already know it, it's all in their computers!

The Cheapskate's Corner

Make A Little $$ This Summer...

I don't bother with garage or yard sales anymore. I post items for sale online at www.craigslist.org. I've sold everything from computer speakers to furniture using the free online classifieds.

I've also bought great stuff like a washer, a used picket fence, and even got a free cat!

Naturally, you should be very careful about giving out your phone number and address to strangers. Sellers often use a cell phone to set up meetings outside of stores or gas stations, where there's cameras and/or lots of people in the area.

Remember, don't take checks, travelers checks, bank checks or money orders. It's CASH ONLY and be sure to tell the buyers to bring exact change.

You should also be ready for "flakes". Those are the people who call and tell you they're on the way — and then they don't show up. That's why my personal policy is "first one with the cash gets the item".

Don't forget to report your income!!

Workforce Investment Board of Solano County Offers Work Experience For Youth: Ages 14-18

The Workforce Investment Board of Solano County (WIBSC) is offering a special "Youth Employment Program (YEP)" for youth ages 14-18. This program includes paid work experience, individual case management, and job readiness workshops. The program is designed for youth in TANF/CalWORKs households, or foster children in group homes (AFDC funded), or those youth enrolled in the County's Cal-Learn program.

Youth who participate are enrolled in either a "Summer Employment" program, or a "Year-Round" program, depending on their individual school circumstance. Youth for whom WIBSC first receives completed packets, containing the required work permit, parent and school signatures, and other documents will be the first matched with appropriate worksites.

"The Youth Employment Program is comprehensive. It includes a group of employment related services designed to assist CalWORKs dependent and foster youth in achieving success as a result of exposure to the world of work", said Marion Aiken, Workforce Services Manager for the WIB. "The YEP work experience program can also offer enrolled youth employability skills, career exploration and career planning, problem solving in the 'World of Work', setting and achieving goals, and resumes, interviewing and the internet, as appropriate to facilitate individual program achievement", said Mr. Aiken.

For information or an application packet for the Youth Employment Program, contact Joey DePew at (707) 863-3502.