MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 5, 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lew C. Bauman
      County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: County Administrative Officer’s Weekly Report for January 5, 2009

This is the weekly report by the County Administrative Officer to the Board of Supervisors. This report provides information on issues affecting the County and the progress of County activities.

Cooperative Extension

New to the Monterey County Cooperative Extension team of farm advisors is Dr. Jianlong Bi, entomology farm advisor. The County is very fortunate to have Dr. Bi joining us. He comes with impressive credentials and recommendations and has already done research on Monterey County crops such as lettuce, strawberries and grapes. He has been working for the past 10 years in the entomology department at U. C. Riverside, most recently as an Associate Specialist. Through his previous research and extension work, he is well connected to campus specialists and has developed working relationships with farm advisors and industry representatives.

Dr. Bi’s work has focused on integrated management of pests and resistance/tolerance to pesticides. He holds a patent and has received two fellowships and the Isely Outstanding Ph.D. Student Award.

Dr. Bi prefers to be called Jian. He begins his duties at the Monterey County Cooperative Extension office, 1432 Abbott Street in Salinas, on January 2nd. He can be reached at (831) 759-7359. As the Cooperative Extension entomologist, he will serve agriculture, the public including any County Department needing his advice or assistance.
Social and Employment Services

The Monterey County Department of Social and Employment Services (Community Action Partnership, CalWORKs Employment Services and One-Stop Career Centers) in partnership with the United Way Monterey County have teamed up to offer free tax preparation services for low income individuals and families through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Volunteer tax preparers, greeters and translators are critical members of this team; volunteer orientation is scheduled for Saturday, January 10, 2009. Additional VITA partners include the Center for Employment Training, Salinas Libraries, Internal Revenue Service, and the California Franchise Tax Board.

VITA is a triple win! Volunteer tax preparers benefit from free tax training and making a tangible positive impact; taxpayers benefit by receiving all of their tax credits and all of their tax return; and the local economy benefits from additional federal funds coming into our community.

The IRS estimates that more than $14 million in EITC goes unclaimed in Monterey County each year. For tax year 2007, the Monterey County VITA program, at three sites in Salinas, Soledad and Seaside, completed a total of 190 e-filed returns. Total federal income tax refunds for VITA assisted tax payers in Monterey County was $170,708. With more volunteer tax preparers, we can substantially increase the impact of VITA this year.

Families in California, who work and have children, can get up to thousands of dollars in tax credits.
- Up to $2,100 from the federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and up to $1,050 from the California Tax Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses;
- Up to $4,824 from the federal Earned Income Tax Credit; and
- Up to $1,000 per child from the federal Child Tax Credit.

VITA tax preparers are required to attend the morning trainings on January 10 and 31, 2009; to attend a two-hour Taxwise® lab; and to be trained and certified by January 31, 2009. CERTIFICATION CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN-PERSON AND/OR ONLINE. In-person training is total of 24 hours: Saturdays, January 10, 17, 24 and 31. We are also looking for volunteers to be greeters and translators.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact:
The Volunteer Center
901 Padre Drive, Salinas, CA 93901
www.volunteermontereycounty.org
(831) 757-3206

This concludes the CAO report.