

Clovis City Council approves \$198 million budget

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The Clovis City Council approved a \$198 million budget for the new fiscal year at its meeting Monday night.

The 2015-16 budget includes funding for several major projects and 10 more staff members, including three police officers and a community service officer.

With the new budget, which takes effect starting July 1, the city plans to make improvements to attract more business along Shaw Avenue, said Tina Sumner, Community and Economic Development director.

The city will begin work on its Civic Center North, which holds a transit hub and a new, larger senior center, said Dwight Kroll, planning and development director.

Eventually, a new Fresno County Public Library will also be added to the site.

Another project will begin at the old Clovis Winery on Clovis Avenue, south of Ashlan Avenue.

The city plans to demolish the winery and use the 15 acres for baseball or soccer fields and for adding businesses on the site to make it a profitable venue.

The Fire Department plans to implement a new alerting system for Station 3, and it's also looking to secure land for a sixth fire station, said Fire Chief Mike Despain.

The public utilities department will focus on implementing new water conservation methods, said Luke Serpa, public utilities director. One of the goals is to reduce water use by capping sprinklers, Serpa said.

Serpa added that the public utilities department plans to add a street sweeper for the city.

Clovis Police Chief Matt Basgall said the department anticipates more than 85,000 calls for service in the new year, about an 8% increase over the current year. Basgall said the police will focus on key issues such as property crimes and probation checks.

"The goal is always to make Clovis the safest city in the Valley," Basgall said.

The city will also continue to develop its technology by replacing old computers and increasing virus protection, said Jesse Velez, IT manager.

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