



Dec. 18, 2015
Issue #105

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 3: Submit Your Ideas for the League's Annual Conference Sessions
Just 100 Spots Left for January New Mayors and Council Members Academy

Federal Update: Internet Tax Freedom Act, 2016 Appropriations
*Permanent Extension of Internet Tax Freedom Act on Hold,
But Cities Should Remain Vigilant*

Congress last week moved to make the Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA) permanent when a conference committee included it in an unrelated Customs Reauthorization Conference Report. Cities and other stakeholders responded in force and were able to avoid the passage before the winter break. Instead a temporary extension of the ITFA will be included in the annual Appropriations Omnibus bill that will be passed this week. The omnibus bill extends the ITFA through October 2016. *For more, see Page 2.*



California City Solutions: Santa Clara's Library Offers Sustainable Programs to Enrich Community Health

This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2015 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). The city of Santa Clara's Sustainable U was submitted in 2015 for the Health and Wellness Programs award category.

Santa Clara's library set out several years ago to offer free educational programming built around sustainable living. Through funding from the federal [Library Services and Technology Act \(LSTA\)](#), administered by the state librarian, the library developed Sustainable U, a series of sustainable programs and resources that partner with local educational institutions, farms, fisheries and other libraries to increase the health, wellness and viability of the community. *For more, see Page 2.*



Registration Open for 2016 Municipal Law Symposium, Feb. 5

The 2016 Municipal Law Symposium will focus on the challenging issues public agency attorneys face in the areas of water and public works. Panels will focus on: water rights, drought, and enforcement; water issues related to CEQA and land use; alternative water supplies, including storm water, groundwater, and recycled water; water and public works finance issues including those related to Proposition 218; and conflicts of interest, including an update on the new FPPC Regulations and conflict of interest issues relevant to public works projects. *For more, see Page 3.*

While this action relieves some of the pressure on the Senate to pass a permanent extension, cities need to remain vigilant. The provisions remain in the Customs bill, and have already been approved by the House. It could come up for a vote with little notice after the Senate reconvenes on Jan. 11.

If your city has a letter in process, email remains the best way to contact California Sens. Barbara Boxer and Deanne Feinstein to urge them to oppose the Customs bill, officially known as the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015. Cities can use the [League's letter](#) as a sample, and sent the emails to ellen_freedman@feinstein.senate.gov, eric_haren@judiciary-dem.senate.gov and sean_moore@boxer.senate.gov.

Congress Approves 2016 Appropriations Bills

As mentioned above, Congress this week approved the 2016 Appropriations Omnibus Bills. As part of that agreement, Congress will delay the implementation of what is known as the Cadillac tax, an Affordable Health Care Act (ACA) tax on high-cost employer-paid health insurance plans. Instead in the Omnibus spending bill approved by the House and sent to the Senate, the excise tax has been delayed for two more years.

Under the bill, the tax would not be effective until 2020, instead of its scheduled 2018 implementation date. The tax is supposed to generate revenue for the ACA. In addition, under the agreement, the medical device tax is suspended for two years and the tax on health insurers is suspended for one year.

Sustainable U has two foundational goals:

- To teach and understand why sustainable living is an important and viable option for the community thereby creating a healthier community; and
- To create awareness, inspiration, and access for a sustainable lifestyle, thereby transforming the library into a hub for sustainability in the community beyond the life of the grant.

Creating a communication plan launched the process and staff structured it by divided the large topic of sustainable living into a number of smaller, manageable parts.

The plan sets out to:

- Develop a seed library to give community members a free opportunity to create their own garden and make a connection from the ground to the plate;
- Host a series of programs to be held at the library to encourage thought and conversation around sustainable living. These programs focused on the many aspects of sustainable living. The library paid attention to creating a rotation of hands-on programming, as opposed to speaker focused programming, to inspire the public;
- Partner with local farms to bring fresh organic produce and seafood to busy families, turning the library into a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Fishery (CSF) pickup location;
- Partner with local libraries and city organizations to increase awareness of sustainability;
- Organize a volunteer fair to support giving back within the community and community involvement; and
- Develop a publicity campaign to tie the many different faces of Sustainable U into one cohesive message.

Along with executing the plan, the project coordinator is also responsible for building relationships and new partnerships outside of the library. Partnerships include: Santa Clara Adult Education, local farmers, Veggilution, Santa Clara University, Master Gardeners, Metro Newspaper, local libraries, city offices, Nissan Leaf, Silicon Valley Power, and Bay Area cycling groups. All of these contacts further advance the library's goal of becoming a vital hub for the local community.

In a one-year period, the library held 22 programs for all ages. Programs covered topics such as water conservation, green transportation, cooking at home, planting, and urban homesteading. The library provides courses to teach skills that can be used at home, such as learning to make jams, pickles, and simple breads. Children of all ages learned how to transform the ever popular meal of pizza into a healthier version by making their own dough and using fresh vegetables.

The *Biking in the Library* endeavor brought awareness to alternative transportation. A partnership with the nonprofit organization Bay Area Bike Mobile, a part of the MTC Climate Initiatives Program, and the Santa Clara Police department, invited patrons to bring their bicycles to the library for free tune-ups and bike safety lessons. A *library2library* bike ride was designed in partnership with San Jose, Sunnyvale, and Mountain View libraries. Community members from all four cities rode 16 miles visiting local libraries and learning about the unique benefits each offered.

Working with local farmers in the Central Coast through the CSA program, *Eating with the Seasons*, the library became a farm box pickup location. Pick-up day coincides with the library's evening family story time in order to expose more families to the health benefits of eating locally. During the program *Sustainable Seafood*, the library developed another new partnership with *Local Catch Monterey Bay* (Now "Real Good Fish"); a local CSF devoted to sustainably caught seafood.

Additionally, the first seed library was created in Santa Clara when the library began soliciting and cataloging seeds for its patrons to use. A partnership formed with seven bay area library systems to create an initiative called *Silicon Valley Grows*.

Over 300 hundred patrons attended the library's first Volunteer Fair, which featured 27 different nonprofit organizations. Patrons signed up to work with teenagers, animals, parks and a variety of volunteer opportunities learning that anyone can make a difference in their community.

Library staff created a bed of living succulents, arranged in a dynamic display of boxes that read GROW to provide an example of drought tolerant plant solutions. The sign was placed at the library's entrance enabling patrons to touch and feel what can grow with little water.

One of the goals of Sustainable U was to educate the public about why sustainable living is an important and viable option for the community. The new partnerships formed with the CSA famers and fisheries enabled the library's patrons to have convenient access to fresh, local food. More than 350 different types of seeds were circulated through the Santa Clara Seed Share with 4,000 individual seeds sown in local gardens. During the Silicon Valley Grows program the selection of Trail of Tears black beans meant that participating households throughout the Bay Area were growing, harvesting, and saving one seed for the community to share in coming years.

More than 1,200 patrons visited the library for Sustainable U programs and 80 percent of patrons reported learning new information from those programs. Programs such as the healthy pizza class, bee keeping, backyard chickens and bread making helped the library gather statistics on children participating in Sustainable U. One hundred percent of the children in the pizza making class said they would use what they learned at home, 75 percent said they would share what they learned with friends or family, and 95 percent over the age of five reported learning something new about chickens or bees after attending Sustainable U programs.

Sustainable U was featured on the city's February 2015 calendar and also won a California Library Association PRExcellence award. LSTA viewed Santa Clara as a model seed library and flew staff from two southern California libraries to learn about Santa Clara's program. The Silicon Valley Grows program will begin a spring seed set of programs this year increasing from seven to 12 participating libraries.

Program attendance and enthusiasm was greater than expected. The attitude of other city departments changed as the city manager's office saw the success of Sustainable U and began to look into creating a Santa Clara community garden. Sustainable U became one of the library's most successful campaigns, with 76 percent of patrons reporting that they would use what they learn beyond the Sustainable U grant and in their daily lives.

'Muni Law' Continued from Page 1...

Titled "Ensuring Integrity in 21st Century California: Water & Public Works in Our Arid State," the symposium will be held on Feb. 5 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. View information and register [online](#).

This annual event is co-sponsored by the Municipal Law Institute of the League of California Cities®, McGeorge School of Law, the County Counsels' Association and the State Bar of California Public Law Section.

Submit Your Ideas for the League's Annual Conference Sessions

Proposals Due by Jan. 8

The League of California Cities® is inviting members, partners and stakeholders to submit session proposals for the 2016 Annual Conference & Expo. The event will be held Oct. 5-7 at the Long Beach Convention Center. This is a great opportunity to engage city officials and local government stakeholders on important ideas and issues.

Session Proposal Submission Information

Submissions, non-commercial in nature, from any individual, group, business or organization, on any topic are welcome. Ideas from 2015 may be re-submitted for review by the 2016 Planning Committee. The committee will consider the educational value of each proposal and the extent to which it presents new and/or significant information. Please avoid submitting product and vendor commercialization sessions.

Session proposals are due Jan. 8.

The League only accepts session proposals [submitted through the League website](#). The submission form limits the number of words allowed in the title and description of each proposal. The League recommends that individuals interested in submitting proposals carefully review and edit their descriptions before submitting them through the online form.

Please contact [Katie Sacco](#) with any questions.

Just 100 Spots Left for January New Mayors and Council Members Academy

Registration is still open for the League of California Cities® New Mayors and Council Members Academy scheduled for Jan. 20-22 at the Hyatt Regency in Sacramento. There are just 100 spots left so if your city has a newly elected mayor or council members make sure they have an opportunity to acquire all the skills they need to hit the ground running.

This conference is a must attend for newly elected officials, and for veterans who would like a refresher course on the basic legal and practical framework in which city officials operate. Delve into critical training on important, fundamental topics for local government taught by subject matter experts and seasoned elected officials. View the 2016 New Mayors and Council Members Academy announcement and schedule [online](#).

Conference registration includes admission for the following:

- Two and a half days of important educational sessions, with pertinent information for newly elected city officials, including AB 1234 Ethics Training;
- Wednesday lunch and reception, Thursday breakfast and lunch, and Friday breakfast; and
- Electronic access to all program materials.

Registration

Jan. 6 is the deadline to register.

For more information and to register, please visit the League's [website](#). If you have any questions, please contact [Caitlin Cole](#) at (916) 658-8248.

Like the League of California Cities on [Facebook](#) and follow on twitter at [@cacitieslearn](#) to get updates and useful information about upcoming conferences.
