



**CALEXICO NEW RIVER
COMMITTEE**

Improving Our Way of Life

January

February

2011

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New River Improvement Project: Imperial Valley Public Outreach

The New River Improvement Project's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is ready to present the public the work that is underway and to comment about the planning process and the future of the New River Improvement Project. For this first round of public meeting the Calexico New River Committee (CNRC) put forth an outreach campaign aimed at notifying Imperial Valley residents about three public hearings that will take place in Brawley, El Centro, and Calexico.

For this initial outreach of public meetings three promotoras targeted over 250 unduplicated residents, documenting at least 150 of them over a span of two weeks. Promotoras performed their outreach in Calexico, El Centro, Heber, Brawley, Calipatria, and Seeley.

The Calexico New River Committee (CNRC) partnered with Comite Civico del Valle (CCV) in this program; both agencies have combined over 30 years of community empowerment and outreach

activities with promotoras in Imperial Valley.

As we recall, AB 1079 initiates the *New River Improvement Project* and requires the California Mexico Border Relations Council to develop a "strategic plan" to guide the clean-up of the New River on both sides of the border. The New River Improvement Project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to assist the California Mexico Border Relations Council and the City of Calexico in developing a strategic plan for the New River Improvement Project. The committee has been meeting regularly since October 2010 and has created four action-oriented work groups to develop the background

necessary work to complete the strategic plan.

The purpose behind this outreach is aimed at informing the residents of Imperial Valley about the progress made to this day by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) through its four action oriented work groups. To perform this outreach the CNRC hired four recognized promotoras from Imperial Valley: Esther Bejarano, Bianka Velez, Veronica Hinojosa, and Ema Rosa Silva (see picture below). The four promotoras have combined decades of public awareness and outreach efforts in environmental and public health related tasks in Imperial Valley.



Calexico residents find hope in "new" New River efforts

The Imperial Valley Press reported on their February 27, 2011 edition that Calexico residents that attended the New River Improvement Project public hearings expressed hope that the current efforts will remediate the current conditions of the most polluted river in North America. Residents testified that the current efforts from the City of Calexico and the California Mexico Border Relations Council are bringing the public, the local non profit groups and government agencies to act as one voice and find the best way to resolve this environmental and public health predicament. Jose Angel, California Regional Water Quality Control Board assistant executive officer stated that "this project will have a comprehensive plan that doesn't just focus on one part of the river but rather an "A to Z" approach."



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The Vision of Students for a Clean New River: Award Ceremony

The Calexico New River Committee's school project enabled our young generations to know how they can engage themselves and be part of the current efforts to remediate the most polluted river in North America. Students from different grade levels shared their thoughts, recommendations, and concerns through essays and drawings.

Please join the CNRC and the Honorable Mayor of Calexico John Moreno, City of Calexico Councilman Bill Hodge, the representatives for U.S. Congressman Bob Filner and California Assemblyman Victor Manuel Perez to honor the winners at: Enrique Camarena Memorial Library, 850 Encinas Avenue, Calexico, CA
Thursday, March 10, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For further comments or questions please contact Miguel Figueroa by calling (760) 357-8389 or by email at info@calexiconewriver.com

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Calexico to begin negotiating with Environmental Resource Management

The City of Calexico Council will determine at its regular meeting on March 1, 2011 if it begins contract negotiations with the company "ERM" (Environmental Resource Management) for architectural and engineering (A&E) consulting services pertaining to phase one of the New River Improvement Project (NRIP). City staff is making this recommendation based on a competitive bid process that took place in previous weeks.

Background

Over the last two years, the City Council has taken several actions authorizing the City to enter into a variety of grant and funding agreements for the New River Improvement Project (NRIP).

The NRIP is a multi-phased program that is anticipated to be carried out over the next several years or until the environmental problems associated with the New River are resolved. Pursuant to legislative action (AB 1079 (Perez) Chapter 382, Statutes of 2009), the NRIP encompasses the 66-mile reach of the New River, which extends from the international border to the Salton Sea. The City of Calexico has been legislatively assigned a leadership and management role for various aspects of Phase 1 of the NRIP.

Phase 1 consists of two parts:

Phase 1A – Development of the New River Strategic Plan in accordance with AB 1079 for the entire 66-mile reach of the New River. The City of Calexico is both the administrator of the funds for developing this plan pursuant to a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board, an active participant along with other government and non-government entities on the Technical Advisory Committee charged with developing this Plan.

Phase 1B – Development and implementation of the City's plans for transforming parts of the three-mile reach of the river that flows through and adjacent to the City from the international border to State Rte 98 into a safe and accessible public parkway comprised of recreational areas and bicycle and pedestrian paths. This Phase will also develop engineering alternatives for water conveyance and treatment and environmental restoration opportunities for the River itself.

Current Action

The City has administrative oversight of the State and Federal funds that have been obtained for carrying out Phase 1A and Phase 1B activities for the NRIP. Pursuant to the CalTrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual, in December 2010 the City issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to seek bids from qualified firms for necessary Architectural and Engineering (A&E) consulting services.

If approved, City staff will now work with the Council-approved contractor on developing an actual scope of work and budget. This will also come before the City Council for approval at a later date in early 2011. There are approximately \$4 million in state and federal funds available for Phase 1 of the NRIP in Calexico.

Support our project with a tax deductible donation

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