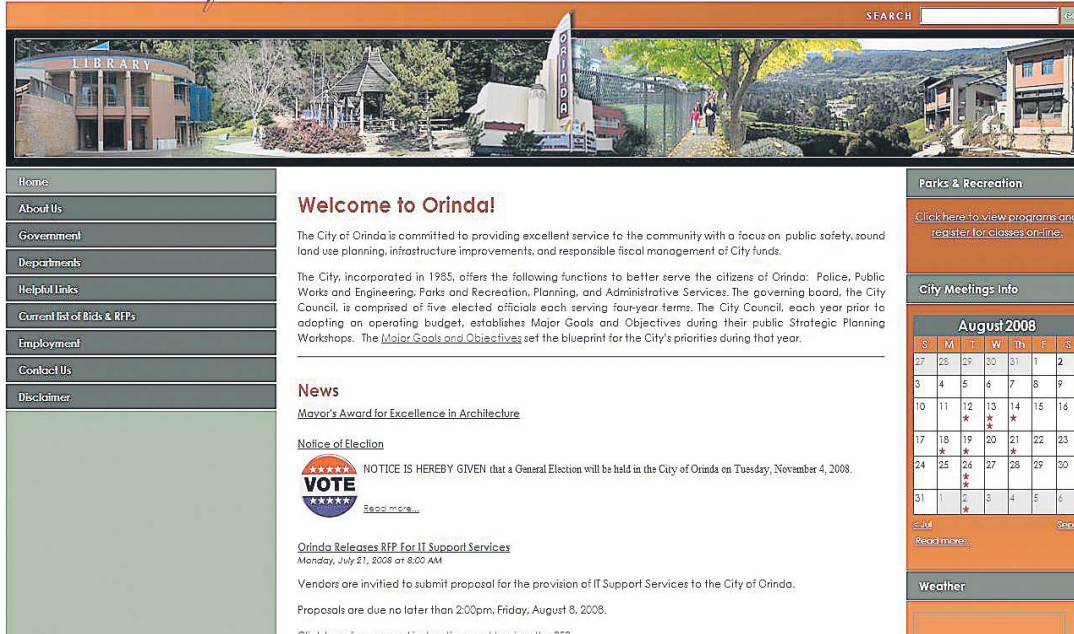# City of Orinda Launches New Website–www.cityoforinda.org

By Andrea A. Firth

The city of Orinda's website has a new name and a new look. Go to www.cityoforinda.org and you will find a user-friendly website with a sophisticated design reflective of the community it supports. "Our website is the electronic face of the City, and we are pleased at the exceptional progress we are making to create a better link between our friends and neighbors in town as well as those who are making a virtual visit," states City Council Member Steve Glazer.

"The old site was not that user-friendly," says Monica Pacheco, Assistant to the City Manager, who spearheaded the development of the new website over the past year. "The City Council has established outreach to the community as a priority, and the new website will serve as an important tool for communicating with the residents and business community," she adds.

Throughout the year-long process, significant time and thought went into understanding what information Orindans need and how they go about looking for it. "We tried to put ourselves in the user's position in planning every aspect of the website," states Pacheco. "Information is accessible from multiple links on the website. So you can get to the same place in several different ways," she explains.

A photo banner of city landmarks—including the library, the theater, City Hall, a hill-side view, and a school walkway—traverses the homepage reflecting Orinda's beauty and character. "We wanted the website to show what it is like to live in Orinda and how people feel when they come here," says Pacheco. The website's color scheme mirrors the look of Orinda's landscape employing the same earth tones; such as green, terra cotta, and brown, that are evident in the hills surrounding and buildings throughout the city.

Providing meeting information is one of the key functions of the website notes Pacheco. The new website has a calendar of meeting events on the homepage and provides easier access to agendas and minutes. "We broke the government section into a few parts to separate the Council activities from the various committees and commissions that have grown in number and activity," she adds. And, to communicate (via email) with a Council member or city employee is as easy as point and click.

"The City Council and our numerous citizen commissions need residents' participation to be a truly representative government," notes Glazer. "With only a few clicks on your computer you can read the who, what, where and why on almost any matter coming to the City Council."

Although the new website has been updated, launched and is running smoothly, Pacheco believes that it will continue to evolve and grow. "It is my hope that the City's website can continue to be improved so that it can be the source of all things Orinda," adds Glazer. "I hope we can find ways to provide expanded links to civic organizations and businesses."

Pacheco explains that the website will be an important source of information during emergencies. "Phone lines get flooded quickly," she states. "The News and Updates section on the homepage will be on of the first places where information is posted during an emergency."

However, in this age of e-news, email, and e-everything, Glazer points out, "The City Council and City Staff continue to provide written information to residents who don't have access to a computer. No one should be left out of the information loop if they don't have access to our website. Committee agendas, minutes, and city policies can still be requested by calling the City at 253-4200."

To check out the City of Orinda's website go to www.cityoforinda.org.