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Financial Relief in Sight?

By Sophie Braccini

An initiative by the California Communities, a joint powers authority (JPA) sponsored by the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), could return to local governments the property tax dollars that the State of California has decided to keep for a while. "We have \$249,000 outstanding that we didn't expect to see for another three years," said Moraga Finance Director Joan Streit, "but the JPA has proposed a bill by which it will buy the receivable from us, give us the money and the State will pay them back in time." If the bill succeeds, Streit anticipates that the town would get half of that money in January 2010 and the other half in May. "The last step consists in cleaning the language and having the Governor sign that bill," explained Streit. With the high-level bargaining taking place in Sacramento, she does not expect a final result before the end of October. Another piece of good news came regarding the return of gas tax funds to cities, which was going to be delayed for a long period of time. "It looks like it's not going to be deferred for quite as long, and we'll get money sooner than we expected," she said, "if all the stars align with the moon."

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