The Exide battery recycling plant in nearby Vernon closed its doors in 2015 after reports surfaced that as many as 10,000 homes in surrounding cities—including the City of Commerce—are believed to be contaminated with lead, cadmium, and arsenic. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) released a revised Draft Closure Plan and a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) available for public consumption and comment until March 28.

The Draft Closure Plan explains the process by which Exide cleans and takes apart the facility while the DEIR identifies the potential environmental risks and impact associated with the proposed Closure Plan activities. An approved closure plan would begin cleanup and deconstruction of buildings at the 15-acre facility located at 2700 South Indiana Street.

Copies of both documents are available at the Rosewood Library from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday and on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. They are also available online at www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/UpdateExideSuspension.cfm. Written comments can be submitted to Wayne Lorentzen at the DTSC Permitting Division by March 28. Submissions can be sent by mail to 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826; by email at Wayne.Lorentzen@dtsc.ca.gov; or via fax at (916) 255-3697.

The City of Commerce added its voice to the record, sending its written statement to the DTSC asking for a quick but effective solution to the contamination problem. “The City of Commerce is in full support of any and all efforts that are necessary to ensure the Exide Plant does not negatively impact the surrounding communities, including the City of Commerce which is north of the subject line,” reads the City letter.

So far, the DTSC has cleaned up around 200 properties contaminated with lead, cadmium, and other harmful chemicals. It is estimated that at least three properties are cleaned each week, according to DTSC Director Barbara Lee.

In addition to written comments, residents affected by the contamination provided verbal testimony at a Draft Closure Plan and DEIR Public Hearing on February 3 in the City’s Council Chambers. Many regional leaders have advocated a quick cleanup of the damage caused by Exide over the years.

“This issue is personal to me,” said County Supervisor Hilda Solis. “My father spent two decades working at a battery recycling plant in City of Industry, and I saw firsthand the lifelong health impacts that resulted. It is imperative that the affected communities be restored to health. Every day that passes, the lead in these houses continues to harm the men, women and children who live there.”

“While I was glad to hear… that the Exide plant would close permanently, we must now make sure Exide cleans up the mess it has left in our communities,” said Assembly Speaker-elect Anthony Rendon. “The DTSC must quickly evaluate the scope of the contamination and clean up all affected communities - including those in the Southeast downstream from Exide.”

Exide Technologies is a manufacturer of lead-acid batteries, such as automotive batteries and industrial batteries. The closed facility operated in Vernon for over 90 years and was used to recover and recycle lead from automotive batteries and other lead-bearing materials.
March is Women’s History Month, a time in which we look back and celebrate the lives and contributions of women who have made a lasting impact on society and our lives. Commerce has plenty of female role models that have inspired many young women to pursue their dreams. Among them are Olympic Gold Medalist Brenda Villa, Olympian Patty Cardenas, Water Polo Hall of Famer Margo Miranda and City Founders Valentina “Val” Basset and the late Eva Long, who were both instrumental in the process to incorporate Commerce in 1960.

Speaking of positive female role models, we will soon crown a new Miss Commerce at the 56th annual Miss Commerce Pageant on March 26. Nine young women have entered the pageant and will have the opportunity to represent Commerce as the City’s Queen. The Miss Commerce Pageant provides these young ladies an opportunity to make friends, create cherished memories, and grow from a wonderful once in a lifetime experience. Residents can contact the Parks and Recreation Department at (323) 887-4434 to purchase tickets to the pageant being held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. If you are unable to attend, we encourage you to visit us online at crossblood.org.

Don’t forget, the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Festival is set for 10 am sharp on March 19 at Veterans Park and the Rosewood Main Library will also be hosting a Book Fair on March 19 at 10 am. Have a great month and remember to set your clocks ahead one hour on March 13 for Daylight Savings. The rule of thumb is “Spring Forward, Fall Back.”

Sincerely,

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Sincerely,
It seems like just yesterday when I was crowned Miss Commerce. I remember that night being filled with great joy and surprise when they announced my name. As I reminisce on that day, I truly had no idea of the adventures that were in store for me.

My reign as Miss Commerce 2015 has been an amazing and beautiful journey. I’ve had the opportunity to travel, build relationships with wonderful people, and participate in countless events. Whether I was on stage celebrating the city’s Christmas Tree Lighting; making Halloween crafts with the toddlers at the ItzyBitzy Party; or meeting talented athletes from the Special Olympics, I can genuinely say I’ve enjoyed every minute of it.

Of all the activities I was fortunate to be part of, my trip to Aguascalientes, Mexico, stands out as one of my favorites. I had the opportunity to visit lovely seniors at the senior homes and played with jubilant children at the orphanages. I am both humbled and grateful for the experiences and memories I made visiting our sister city Aguascalientes. It was the people who truly made my entire trip unforgettable and I will cherish these connections forever.

This journey has definitely been a once in a lifetime experience. I first decided to run for Miss Commerce because I felt that this would be a wonderful way to help me evolve as a young woman. Now that I have served as Miss Commerce, I feel stronger, more outgoing and more confident than before. I would first like to thank the community for their acceptance and support throughout my reign. I’d like to thank the pageant steering committee, honorable mayor, and council members for everything they have done for me and for their continuous support of the Miss Commerce Program. To Adolfo Marquez, Tina Fierro, and Lucinda Blancarte: we shared so many great moments together and I thank you for the time you put in making things run smoothly throughout my reign. To my royal court: my year would not have been the same without you. You’re all incredible young women and I’m so glad to have shared endless laughs with you.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my entire family and friends for believing in me and supporting me every step of the way. Mom, thank you for your words of encouragement and for the beautiful dresses you made for me during my reign, I love you very much.

City of Commerce, it has been an honor representing you. Thank you for an incredible year!
Presley Hernandez graduated from Schurr High School in 2013 and currently works at Interior Plus, Inc. in Commerce. She is a contracting administrator, handling the paperwork for the family-owned business. She plans to go back to school for a business degree in order to further her career with the company. In her spare time, Presley enjoys hiking, traveling and spending time with her family. The last book Presley read was the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling.

Running for Miss Commerce: “My mom and sister both ran and won the Miss Commerce pageant and suggested I should try it out. I am running more so for the experience and it has been fun so far.”

Angie Ruiz is a freshman at California State University, Dominguez Hills where she is majoring in Dentistry and Orthodontics. She is working to become an orthodontist in order to help people and make them feel better about themselves. During her free time, Angie likes to draw, dance, do make up, workout and help others achieve their own weight loss goals. The last book she read was Rules of Civility by Amor Towles.

Running for Miss Commerce: “Ever since I was small I said I want to be a princess but being Miss Commerce will be something even bigger. I have lived in the city for 18 years and I like my city. I also want to experience something new and hopefully get out my shell. Having worked for the city, I developed great affection for Commerce.”

Jazmin Diaz is a sophomore business major attending California State University, Dominguez Hills. After she graduates, she hopes to attend either USC or Loyola Law School. Jazmin hopes to become a family lawyer in order to work with children and families in difficult situations. She currently volunteers at the LA Regional Center where she reads to kids with disabilities. During her free time, Jazmin likes to read, spend time with her friends and family and work out. The last book she read was Song of the Hummingbird by Graciela Limon.

Running for Miss Commerce: “I am running for Miss Commerce because it would be an honor to represent the city that has been such a positive impact on me and on so many other children and teenagers. This is also a great opportunity to develop new friendships and make this experience memorable.”

Kiana M. Hernandez is a junior at Schurr High School who has a long term plan of becoming a physician. Holding a passion for science and helping people, Kiana volunteers at Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center in the Telemetry/Oncology department. During her free time, she enjoys playing volleyball, reading, spending time with her family and friends and learning how to cook traditional Mexican meals with her grandmother. The last book she read was Rain of Gold by Victor Villasenor.

Running for Miss Commerce: “I would enjoy becoming the next Miss Commerce because I am eager to be a positive role model for young women and men. This great opportunity would also allow me to become an advocate for students in my community.”

Kassandra Carvaja is enrolled at California State University, Los Angeles as a freshman undecided major. Right now, she is leaning more towards the behind-the-scenes aspects of the entertainment industry, wanting to work in management and representation. During her free time, Kassandra keeps busy by playing soccer, hanging out with her friends and trying out new restaurants and locales. The last book Kassandra read was the Fault in Our Stars by John Green.

Running for Miss Commerce: “I am running for Miss Commerce because I always wanted to be a positive role model to the young girls in Commerce. I want to be a positive influence to them and show them how to be empowered.”

Melissa Avila-Briones is a sophomore at Cerritos College where she is studying Chemistry. A self-proclaimed “lover of science,” Melissa hopes to one day become a forensic scientist, bringing together her passion for helping people with her passion to bring people to justice. She currently works at Ruby’s Diner making shakes and desserts for the restaurant. During her free time, Melissa likes tutoring her coworkers and babysitting her brother. The last book she read was Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov.

Running for Miss Commerce: “I’m running for Miss Commerce because I think it’s a good opportunity to network with people and learn new things. I like how the Royal Court gives back to the community, like the Ronald McDonald House Charities. I feel like I get a chance to help other people, not just help myself.”
Carina Rodarte is a sophomore at California State University, Dominguez Hills where she is majoring in Liberal Studies. Carina says that her nephews inspire her to one day become a teacher so that she can make a difference in the lives of children. She currently works at Starbucks as a barista. During her spare time, Carina likes to workout, enjoy new experiences and meet new people through community service. The last book she read was The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander.

Running for Miss Commerce: “Not only will it bring me new opportunities, but I’ll also be able to get involved with the community. I’ll be able to grow as a person and as a leader, because being a teacher is like being a leader. I want people to see that all my hard work pays off; that there is no limit to what I can do.”

Georgie Antioneett Rosales is a junior at California Virtual Academy and a freshman at East Los Angeles College studying Biology. She is working to become a neurosurgeon in order to find solutions and cures for those who have suffered head injuries. Georgie currently volunteers at NKLA Pet Adoption Center, an animal shelter in Santa Monica and also enjoys concerts, dance and creative writing. The last book she read was Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov.

Running for Miss Commerce: “I’m running for Miss Commerce because it’s a great opportunity for me to step out of my comfort zone, gain self-confidence and be an example for the girls in Commerce.”

Kimberly Ibarra is a freshman at East Los Angeles College where she is majoring in Photography. She is currently working to become a professional photographer, using computer programs and applications to spruce up the photos she takes. She hopes to one day work for ESPN and take pictures during huge sporting events. During her free time, Kimberly likes to play volleyball, soccer, spend time with her family and volunteer at Rosewood Park. The last book she read was The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton.

Running for Miss Commerce: “I am running for Miss Commerce for the exciting experience and to just have fun. I want to be a great representative for Commerce. I also want to give the impression that being Miss Commerce is more than just a serious role within the City.”
The City's facilities maintenance staff worked in the early hours of the morning to give the Bristow Park Boxing Gym some much-needed TLC.

Commerce residents attended a hearing held by South Coast Air Quality Management District to discuss issues relating to contamination from the now closed Exide Plant in Vernon.

Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard speaks with young citizens during an Open House at her District Office located in the Citadel Office Building.

Miss Commerce Diana Lopez and Miss Clippers Alyssa Rubio enjoyed the reception held in honor of the delegates from Commerce’s Sister City Aguascalientes, Mex-

Veterans can now obtain valuable information about various programs and resources at the newly opened Veterans Resource Center at the Rosewood Library.

Assemblymember Cristina Garcia joined local dignitaries at the opening of the new Veterans Resource Center. The Assemblymember noted how important these services are for our community.
### Commerce Calendar

**March 2016**

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**Dr. Seuss’ Birthday Celebration**

- Bandini Library 6 p.m.
- City Council/Successor Agency 6:30 p.m.

**Senior Citizens Commission** 12:30 p.m.

**Parks & Recreation Commission** 6 p.m.

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**“Above all, be the heroine of your life, not the victim.”**

*Norah Ephron*

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**Task Force** 3 p.m.

**Community Services Commission** 6 p.m.

**Education Commission** 6 p.m.

**City Council/Successor Agency** 6:30 p.m.

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**St. Patrick’s Day**

**“Honor your daughters. They are honorable.”**

*Malala Yousafzai*

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**Planning Commission** 6:30 p.m.

**Good Friday**

**Spanish Reading Club**

**“I do not believe in using women in combat, because females are too fierce.”**

*Margaret Mead*

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**You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming.”**

*Pablo Neruda*

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**“There will never be a new world order until women are a part of it.”**

*Alice Paul*

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**RTTP Artículos en Español** Si le interesa recibir la versión en Español de algún artículo, por favor llame a la Oficina de Información Pública al (323) 887-4447. Cuando llame, indique el título del artículo, la fecha y la dirección de su domicilio o correo electrónico. La versión traducida se le mandará.

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**April 2016**

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**May 2016**

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**March 2016**

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**March 2016**

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CITY ALLOCATES GRANT FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

For the 42nd consecutive year, the City of Commerce has received generous funds from the Community Development Commission of Los Angeles County in the form of Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Over $118,000 will be available for programs and projects that benefit low and moderate-income residents.

Most of the revenue ($95,000) will go towards the Home Preservation Grant Program. The program provides up to $20,000 to qualified low and moderate-income residents living in single-family households within the City to conduct code compliant home repairs. In order to qualify for the grant, applicants must submit an application, prove primary residency and ownership of the property, be a Commerce resident, and provide supporting documentation.

In addition, more than $13,000 has been earmarked for Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department services, community policing equipment and vehicle expenses for crime prevention activities.

The rest of the CDBG funds ($10,000) will go towards the Code Enforcement Program, where they will be used to pay personnel costs, equipment and software to ensure Code Enforcement staff collects information on code violation cases.

The Community Development Block Grants are federal funds given to the City by the Community Development Commission of Los Angeles County and are used to reduce the impact to the City’s General Fund. For more information on the Home Preservation Grant program, contact the Department of Public Works & Development Services at (323) 722-4805.