

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF VALLEJO

August 20, 2008

TO: DEPARTMENT MANAGERS AND ALL CITY EMPLOYEES
FROM: Joseph M. Tanner, City Manager
SUBJECT: Media Relations Directive

Vallejo is in the midst of a very difficult, unusual transition right now. Citizens and employees have all been living in a state of uncertainty, and in times of uncertainty, rumors and facts can easily get twisted and blown out of proportion. Because of this, I am advising each and every department in the City that all non-routine media contacts be forwarded to JoAnn West, who is serving as the official spokesperson for the City. This is not meant to restrict the First Amendment speech rights of employees as private citizens, but the City has an interest in regulating the flow of information to the media by public employees to prevent misinformation being disseminated regarding the present litigation pending in bankruptcy court. To that end, whether on or off duty, all employees of the City shall take steps to ensure that it does not appear that the employee is making statements to the media or public as a representative of, or on behalf of, the City.

Statements By Employees While On Duty

No employee shall talk about bankruptcy or the effects of bankruptcy to the media while on duty.

For those departments that have public information officers, this means they can talk about breaking news events related to their department only. For example, statements may be made regarding an individual crime or fire incident that takes place, and individual pending criminal or fire investigation, or reports on current fire or medical emergencies. All other non-routine media contacts must be forwarded to JoAnn West. This includes statements relating to the impact and effects of the bankruptcy on your departments and/or peace officers and firefighters.

Statements By Employees While Off Duty

No off-duty employee shall make any such statements to the media in a manner that makes it appear as though the employee is making statements on behalf of the City (for example, while in City uniform or while using City-owned vehicles). Off-duty employees who choose to speak to the media shall clarify that they are off-duty, and that they are expressing their own opinions as a private citizen, and not as a representative, official or employee of the City.

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Cc: Mayor & City Council
JoAnn West, Public Information Officer