Fire inspection fees debated

New Fresno council member, city fire chief trade arguments.

By George Waterfield
The Fresno Bee

Fresno City Council Member Clint Olivier says the city’s fire-inspection program is broken. The program is a drag on the budget and doesn’t come close to collecting all of the fees that are supposed to keep it in the black.

It may not be perfect, counter’s Fire Chief Joel Aranaz, but the fire-inspection program still does an excellent job of saving lives and protecting property.

All the program needs in these tough budget times is a bit more money, Aranaz said.

The program “is not broken,” Aranaz said. “There are areas that need attention, such as enforcement. We are taking care of this.”

At the heart of this battle is the Fire Department, which says it has met its state-mandated safety inspection of every thing from hospitals and jails to apartment complexes and barber shops.

There is a wide variety to the fees and the proposed increases. For example, a business in a small one would see its first-time inspection fee rise from the current $40 to $111. High-profile entities, such as hospitals, are impacted more often than small businesses.

The council was engaged to vote on the proposed increases last Thursday, but at the re-quest of City Manager Mark Ornelas, the council postponed its decision until after a Nov. 3 election.

Avatars for the aged

UC Merced students developing technology to aid in medical care.

By Heather Sparling
The Fresno Bee

MERCED — In a dark room in I-80 by the rear of houses of infirmed camer a. University of California at Merced graduate student Carlo Camporesi spends most days — and many nights — in a contraption of sorts, sitting in front of a screen, wearing a harness and a harness and a harness and a harness.

But at the end of the string of operations, agents were left holding a speck, of dust that measures a few grams of office and a 24-year-old student who was wounded by armed agents.

The next time the avatar has to provide physical therapy to the patient. Professors say the project has the potential to improve the health of thousands of people. It offers a blueprint for future projects that college administrators hope will help UC Merced’s reputation as a research institution and help it compete for three dollars for the administration of federal research dollars.

There’s much budget talk in the crowded room where Camporesi works, immersed in a world that bears a resemblance to the real world.

With his every movement, suddenly, the avatar’s right hand bends at a precipitous angle. The sensor strapped to Camporesi had failed. Camporesi and colleague computer graphics and animation doctoral student David Huang, called this a “screw up in progress, they are."

But give them three to five years, and the students say they could have the next breakthrough in delivering health care through avatars.

NASCAR sting terrifies woman, 74, selling moon speck

By Thomas Watkins
The Fresno Bee

LOS ANGELES — The elaborate mission to extract a moon rock from NASA’s eager to one of the most down-to-earth places: a downtown restaurant in Beverly Hills.

CRAIG KOHLRUSS/ The Fresno Bee

University of California at Merced graduate student Carlo Camporesi is shown through a large 3-D screen as he talks about how he can use it to help amputees andQuadriplegics who are training to do physical therapy.

On the screen, an avatar stands in a virtual reality kitchen. Each time Camporesi moves as does the avatar. This training the avatars to mimic people so perfectly that, in a computer, or TV screen, they could be mistaken as human.

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