

## **Council looks at ADA compliance in city: Need to meet requirements**

*By Judy Finney  
Advance Reporter*

An accounting of the city's progress toward meeting the state and federal Americans with Disabilities Act was presented to the Lemoore City Council Jan.15.

"We have done the level best to insure compliance," Lemoore Administrative Analyst J.P. Prichard said.

Prichard said in the past two years he has only received two complaints concerning the city's compliance with handicapped access and those were dealt with.

Prichard said there is no formal complaint procedure in the city for people with ADA complaints. He said people just come to him with their problems.

Not everyone agrees with Prichard's statement.

Local ADA advocate Jim Christian was in the audience. He said he has been trying to work with the city to get changes made since the state mandated guidelines took affect in 1992.

"The city council was informed by staff that a complete self-evaluation would be presented to the council by January 2004," Christian said in a later interview. "The city manager says he doesn't know how many bathrooms need to be changed, how many faucets, how many knobs need to be changed. In 2002 I brought up the fact that there are no signs at the city hall pointing to the accessible entrances. Someone coming to the city hall from out of town may not know how to get into the building. This is an item readily achievable. I have written many letters to the city and not one has ever been answered. This is not a building issue, it is a civil rights issue and should be treated as that."

Lemoore City Mayor John Murray was not happy with the city's response to known areas of concern.

"I'm embarrassed with the city's progress. It seems we've been talking about meeting the needs of the handicapped residents for several years and not much is being done."

Murray wanted an exact date from the city staff as to when a plan would be ready to start working on needed ADA improvements.

City manager Jeff Briltz said he had seen some progress, but a comprehensive plan takes time to develop.

"We are committed to a clean plate that will satisfy all requirements," Briltz said. "You don't want us to come up with a plan that doesn't address all the needs and then have to keep changing it."

Pritchard said the expense to meet the requirements were beyond the city's ability to pay. Pritchard used the example of curbs needing to be cut to allow access. He said there were at least 200 straight cuts that would cost between \$500 to 1,000 each.

"And that doesn't include the cuts that aren't straight," Pritchard said.

Lemoore resident Steve Rossi suggested the council earmark some of the funds under consideration for solar panels atop the city's municipal complex for ADA work.

Lemoore city attorney Hilda Cantu Montoy offered to provide the council with a resolution containing a general timeline within 90 days.

"Now that's something I'd like to have," Murray said.

The council directed city staff to return with the resolution at the next regular scheduled meeting.

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