

# King City manager goal oriented

*She has helped put troubled town back on track*

By **NIKO KYRIAKOU**  
For The Salinas Californian

Ann Marie Gallant became city manager of King City about nine months ago, during some of the city's worst-ever financial problems.

King City was in bad shape. The former city manager, responsible for overseeing such public services as the police and fire departments, street maintenance, parking, recreation and development, had resigned under pressure.

Challenges included an unpaid redevelopment bond debt, suspended or curtailed public services and a thinned-out city staff working reduced hours. In addition, King City was locked in a lawsuit with the Community Bank of Central California over \$4.4 million in frozen municipal funds.

When Gallant started, she told the City Council she would help get the city on track by the year's end.

"I'm going to have met that new goal," she said.

Gallant has helped King City get back in the black by selling numerous properties and was able to propose a successful budget this year.

She has reinstated a 40-hour work week for city employees and helped resolve the city's dispute with Commercial Bank, which she said should reach a mediated solution by January.

In addition, King City has resumed more regular street sweeping, outfitted all police vehicles with new equipment, upgraded emergency equipment and raised grant money for a sewer fund.

Gallant also has helped push along the process to get federal, state and highway money for street repairs, and she said she expects to begin putting bid packages together for the repair of First Street next summer.

## Voters reject tax measure

But not everything has been so upbeat.



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Ann Marie Gallant, city manager of King City, sits in City Council Chambers on Nov. 22.

In an attempt to raise funds for the cash-strapped city, Gallant worked hard to pass Measure K, which 51 percent of voters opposed in the November elections. The measure would have increased utility tax rates and brought in \$400,000 a year to add staff and upgrade the police and fire departments.

She called the failure of Measure K her "biggest disappointment" and said she considers the city to be understaffed by four or five police officers.

Also, even though Gallant has helped improve city finances, the redevelopment bond has yet to be repaid.

Gallant has worked in government administration since 1978 in a number of large and rapidly growing cities such as Santa Ana, Los Angeles and Marina Valley.

As deputy administrator for economic redevelopment of Los Angeles, she handled the development of Hollywood's Kodak Theater in 1999, which brought the Academy Awards back to Hollywood.

But when she first arrived in King City, some officials didn't like her big city flair.

"My first impression: I didn't

care too much for her because she was a big city girl," said Fire Chief Danny Conaster. "But I've changed my mind."

Gallant has done an "outstanding job" professionally and socially, Conaster said, and has adapted to King City "like a glove."

She speaks with evident excitement about her job and said she is most proud of her project to create a youth commission. At little cost, the commission would generate and host activities for students who have too little to do, hopefully steering them away from gangs, she said.

"We are not going to improve this community unless we start to focus on the youth," Gallant said.

Outside of work, she teaches American government at Hartnell College in King City once a week and puts in extra time as a youth commissioner.

## Daughter is her joy

Gallant said she loves to read and listen to music, especially Elvis Presley, and called her grown daughter, a school teacher, "the joy of my life."

"I think what keeps me going is my faith and what motivates me

## ANN MARIE GALLANT

n **AGE:** 55

n **JOB:** City manager of King City.

n **EDUCATION:** Masters in public administration with an emphasis in finance from California State University, Fullerton, and bachelor and master's degrees in education from University of California, Irvine.

n **EXPERIENCE:** Former teacher, grades 7-12. Government administrator since 1978, including work as deputy administrator for economic redevelopment in Los Angeles.

n **PERSONAL:** Lives in King City. She is divorced, with one grown daughter, who is expecting her first child in March.

is just watching the faces of these kids and also the city staff when you know things are moving well," she said. "After three and a half years of a real nightmare around here, they are so grateful."

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