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**City of Chico Introduces ‘Smart Meters’ for Downtown Retail/Restaurant Core
Cornerstone for Building Downtown Vitality**

Chico, Calif. – The City of Chico will install 450 Smart Meters in the downtown retail and restaurant core the week of August 17. In the short term, these meters will increase convenience and reduce frustration for Downtown Chico customers and visitors by enabling credit card payment, and in the long term they will further enhance the downtown experience by increasing the currently limited parking availability in the retail/restaurant core. Better and more convenient access will lead to more downtown visits, which will lead to stronger merchants and greater vitality for Downtown Chico. More information and exhibits can be found on www.GoDowntownChico.com.

According to IPS Group, Inc. — manufacturer of Downtown Chico’s new solar-powered, smart-parking technology — customers in more than 100 cities throughout North America have experienced these smart-parking benefits:

- Paying by credit card makes it fast and easy
- Better parking availability with real-time technology
- Improved economic vitality as a result of better, more convenient access

The Parking/Access Resource Committee (P/ARC), a volunteer group of interested citizens, downtown advocates, and business owners, has been working closely with the City of Chico (which is administering the Smart Meter project) and DCBA leadership to move the Smart Meter project forward and to provide information to the broader Chico community about the transition. *“P/ARC is thrilled to be a part of this big first step toward improving the customer’s experience, revitalizing Downtown Chico and encouraging more of our community to come back downtown. For so many reasons, we believe downtown is the heart of Chico, and we are committed to its long-term vitality,”* says Mike Trolinder of Location Arts, and co-chair of P/ARC.

The new Smart Meters will enable greater parking availability. After usage data has been collected and analyzed, city staff will bring forward recommendations to City Council to incorporate an 85 percent

parking occupancy guideline for managing parking in the downtown restaurant/retail core (i.e., each block having 1-2 spaces available at any given time for arriving customers and visitors).

“New meter technology is the first step in making it easier for customers to shop, dine, work, and enjoy the many things to do in Downtown Chico. Prioritizing customers, clients, and visitors for premium on-street parking will restore, revive, and support the north district merchant base. Managing parking supply for workers will also promote alternate modes of travel (walk, bike, bus) and will help expand the downtown workforce. High-quality businesses and merchants will attract more people into the downtown,” says Melanie Bassett, executive director of the Downtown Chico Business Association.

Parking meter revenues will continue to be reinvested into the beautification of Downtown Chico. The revenues go into City of Chico Fund 853, and by law can be used to benefit only the metered area. Permissible uses include sidewalk cleaning, sidewalk lighting, parking meter management, parking spaces, and street trees. *“Our vision for downtown access includes addressing the needs of shoppers, employees, and business owners, whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists, or drivers,” says Brendan Ottoboni, Public Works director, City of Chico. “By prioritizing on-street parking for short-stay customers and visitors, and managing parking supply for workers while promoting ‘active transportation’ choices like bicycling and walking, we can make the downtown better for everyone.”*

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About the City of Chico

The City of Chico was founded in 1860 by General John Bidwell and incorporated in 1872. The City of Chico has grown to more than 33 square miles with a population of 88,634 (January 2015) in the incorporated area and a greater urbanized area population of approximately 100,000. Chico is in the northern Sacramento Valley of California, 90 miles north of Sacramento on Highway 99, in Butte County, east of Interstate 5. Chico is known as a well-managed city that values quality infrastructure and services, and maintains a special sense of community and small-town living as it has developed into a vibrant regional center for business, recreation, and cultural activities. For more information, visit www.chico.ca.us.

About DCBA

Recognizing the need to plan for the future of downtown and ensure its economic vitality, the Downtown Chico Business Association (DCBA) was formed in 1975 by a group of downtown business owners. Encompassing 40 square blocks, the DCBA boundaries include 450+ diverse businesses. Formed as a Downtown Parking and Business Improvement Area (DPBIA), DCBA is a nonprofit organization that has contracted with the City of Chico to benefit and support Downtown Chico. DCBA has evolved over the past three decades into a strong marketing and advocacy organization that continues to help maintain an environment where businesses can flourish and prosper. For more information, visit www.DowntownChico.com.

About Chico Parking and Access Resource Committee (P/ARC)

P/ARC is a volunteer citizen committee formed to address parking and access issues in Downtown Chico. P/ARC works with and supports city staff implementation of existing plans for improving downtown access, and provides ongoing feedback to Chico City Council. The group is made up of a diverse group of interests and perspectives, including representatives from downtown businesses and retailers, architects, environmentalists, bike and pedestrian advocates as well as city staff. The group holds regular meetings, and interested citizens are welcome. For more information, email Mike Trolinder at mike@locationarts.com.