

Merced Neighborhood Watch building a better community

An organizational meeting for Merced Neighborhood Watch Block Captains and people who want to start a Neighborhood Watch on their blocks, drew 84 attendees last month.

Merced Police Chief Norm Andrade said the City's reorganized Merced Neighborhood Watch Program will continue to assist neighbors uniting to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods by improving safety and building a sense of community.

"Neighborhood Watch is more than just a crime-fighting tool, it is a program designed to build relationships among neighbors and make Merced a stronger and safer community," said Andrade.

The Neighborhood Watch Program includes participation

by the Merced Police Department, Merced Fire Department and Code Enforcement. The program will be coordinated by the City's Office of Recreation.

"With the on-going cuts in City resources, the need for inter-department cooperation has grown exponentially," said Andrade.

"The Police Department is collaborating with the Office of Recreation to revitalize the Neighborhood Watch Program, and help the program spread throughout the City and become an important public partner with us in making Merced a better place to live and work," Andrade said.

For more information on the Neighborhood Watch Program or to set up a program, leave a message at 385-6835.

A community showcase



Market on Main Street is Merced's Thursday night outdoor market and community festival from 6 to 9 p.m. through Oct. 13. Organized by Downtown Life Magazine and co-sponsored by the City, it offers art, music, food, entertainment and local produce.

By Chris Ayers Courtesy of DLM/Market on Main

City swaps out streetlights to save money, energy

Residents are going to be seeing "Best Electric" aerial bucket trucks in front of their homes working on a street light, and that's good — the workers are saving us money.

In a cost-saving move, and a step toward a greener community, the City of Merced is retrofitting city-owned street lights with a newer technology called induction lighting.

The new lights have a whiter, cleaner light and a wider light pattern than the old yellowish sodium vapor lights.

The upgrade project has begun in south Merced and will move northward before finishing early next year.

Siemens Building Technologies has sub-contracted with locally-owned Best Electric for the streetlight work.

Upgrading to the greener technology is

Think Green

expected to save the city as much as \$268,924 per year in energy costs. That's a 44 percent reduction in the total streetlight bill. The new parts come with a 10 year warranty so on-going repair costs will be reduced as well.

When all street lights and facility upgrades are done, contractor Siemens has guaranteed an annual savings of 3.3 million kilowatts per year.

A reduction of 3.3 million kilowatts per year reduces annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2,276 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂), equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions from 446 passenger vehicles or CO₂ emissions from 255,105 gallons of gaso-

line consumed.

The City owns more than 5,600 streetlights in the City. There are also streetlights with wooden poles in the City limits owned by Pacific Gas and Electric Co. that are not part of the City's upgrade.

The Downtown's decorative green street lights will not be changed nor will street lights owned by Caltrans along the state highways that go through Merced.

Other work includes Modern Air of Merced replacing the rooftop unit for the South Police Station, Merced Airport, Senior Center, Public Works Corp Yard and Central Police Department. First Day Electric of Merced has been working with Sylvania assisting in the interior lighting retrofit at the Merced Civic Center and other buildings.

Merced City Council

Mayor Bill Spriggs
Council Members:
Bill Blake
John Carlisle
Michele Gabriault-Acosta
Noah Lor
Josh Pedrozo
Mary-Michal Rawling

Contact the City Council by email at Citycouncil@cityofmerced.org, by calling 385-6834 or writing to Council members at the Civic Center address below.

Council meetings

The Council meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers in the Civic Center, except when there is a holiday, such as Sept. 5, then it is on Sept. 6. The agenda is posted online at www.CityofMerced.org.

Contacting us

The Web site, www.CityofMerced.org, contains City Council information, the Muni Code, General Plan and other information. Contact the Newsletter at newsletter@CityofMerced.org, call the Public Information Office at 385-6232 or write:

Merced Civic Center
Attn: Public Information Office
678 W. 18th St.
Merced CA 95340

The Civic Center is open Monday-Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., except holidays.

Call us

City Council	385-6834
City Manager	385-6834
City Attorney	385-6868
City Clerk	388-7100
Airport	385-6873
Code Enforcement.....	385-6861
Finance	388-7900
Inspection Services	385-6861
Personnel.....	388-7100
Planning Department.....	385-6858
Public Works (7:30-4:30) ...	385-6800
After hours	385-6905
Recreation	385-6855
Utility payments.....	388-7289

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department.....	385-6891
Police Department	385-6912

Ask the City: City has new graffiti contractor

Ask the City is an ongoing column answering questions that have been submitted to us by mail, email or phone. Readers can submit their questions to the addresses in the column on the left.

How do I contact the City's new graffiti contractor?
Anonymous caller

The City recently hired Environment Compliance Resources to wipe out graffiti on City property.

It only takes a few minutes for a graffiti vandal to cause thousands of dollars in damages. They not only spray paint walls and signs, they etch glass, mark parks and vandalize homes.

The company has been working with the Merced Police Department to document the

graffiti so that vandals can be prosecuted in Superior Court for felonies.

If you see someone marking or defacing public or private property call 911. It is a crime and we do want it reported immediately so that officers can respond.

If you see graffiti in place, call 761-0954 or 385-8807. You can also report graffiti online at the company's website: www.valleygraffitiremoval.com.

The best defense in fighting graffiti is the quick removal of the vandalism. If that happens enough, the vandals will either quit altogether or move on.

City offices closed for Labor Day holiday

City offices will be closed Monday, September 5 to observe the Labor Day holiday.

Refuse collection will be delayed for all residential users by one day that week.

People with regular collection on Monday will have their trash picked up Tuesday, and people with Tuesday pick up will get it collected Wednesday, etc.

The regular Council meeting will be held Tuesday, Sept. 6. Normally the Council meets on Monday.

Effective August 1
City Hall is open 10 am-5 pm

Efectivo el 1° de Agosto el
nuevo horario de la Ciudad
Sera 10 am-5 pm

Pib lub 8 hli ntuj vas thib 1,
cov xooj hmoos tshiah rau
City Hall yog 10am – 5pm

The regular 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. employee work day will not change, only the Civic Center building hours at 678 W. 18th St.

Survey will help City plan for hazards and disasters

Each year, in the United States, natural disasters take the lives of hundreds of people and injure thousands more.

Nationwide, taxpayers pay billions of dollars annually to help communities, organizations, businesses and individuals recover from disasters.

Many natural disasters are predictable, and much of the damage caused by these events can be alleviated or even eliminated.

The City of Merced received funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prepare a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Hazard Mitigation Planning is the process where natural hazards that threaten communities are identified, likely impacts of those hazards are determined, mitigation goals are set and appropriate strategies to lessen impacts are determined, prioritized

A dollar spent on prevention can save \$4 in losses

and implemented.

On average, each dollar spent on mitigation saves an average of \$4 in avoided future losses in addition to saving lives and preventing injuries according to the National Institute of Building Science Multi-Hazard Mitigation Council.

You can help Merced craft a valuable *Hazard Mitigation Plan* by completing a short survey.

What hazards are of concern to you? How should we prepare for those hazards? Sharing your voice and ideas is a key part of drafting the best plan that works for our community.

A link to the survey can be found on the City's home page, www.cityofmerced.org.

