

Trains on time and so is underpass project

Construction of the G Street Underpass Project continues on schedule. The project will channel G Street under the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks so drivers will not need to stop for passing trains.

Crews from BNSF spent a couple weekends at the end of October installing the bridges that will carry the trains. The work was done at night, while the trains continued to run.

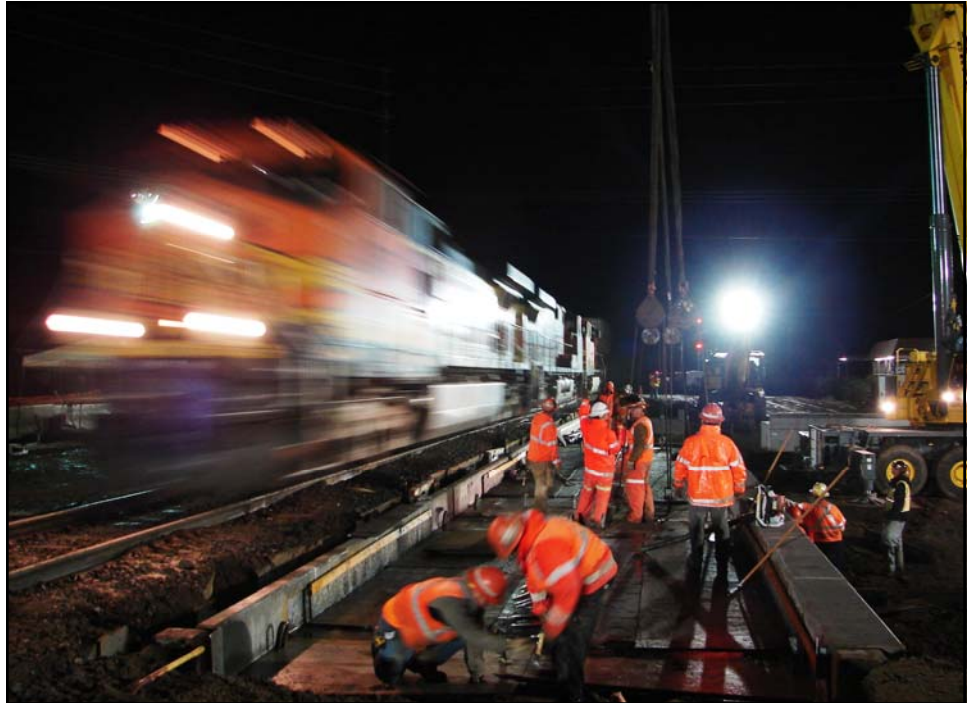
SLOW DOWN

The project has caused an increase in traffic on the neighborhood streets, and unfortunately people haven't been paying attention to their speed. Traffic officers report more than 600 speeding tickets were written in the area around the project in the first four months of work.

BUSINESSES ARE OPEN

Businesses along G Street remain open, and people are encouraged to patronize those merchants during the construction phase. There are signs directing people to the stores and shops.

Check out the live photos of the project online at www.cityofmerced.org.



Crews work on installing a new railroad bridge at night while a freight train passes close by.

Enjoy the holiday season with care, kindness, caution

The Merced City Fire Department would like to wish your family a safe and happy holiday season. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Years are a prime time for residential fires. Here are some holiday fire safety tips:

CHRISTMAS TREES:

- Unless your tree is a "choose and cut", re-cut at least 1 inch off the trunk bottom.
- Place the tree in a container or stand holding enough hot tap water to cover the stem at least two inches. Add water as needed.
- Display the tree away from heat sources.
- Use a stand that will hold the tree securely and won't tip over easily.
- Do not locate trees in front of exit doors, in exit ways or corridors.

FIREPLACES:

- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned prior to burning season. Be sure it is equipped with a proper spark arrester.

- Keep screen or glass doors closed to confine embers and sparks.
- Never burn Christmas tree branches or gift wrapping in the fireplace.



The annual Christmas Parade is on Saturday, Dec. 4 in Downtown Merced.

- Do not leave children unattended when fireplace is in use.

LIGHTS:

- Use only U.L. approved products.

- Check for old or worn insulations, cracked or broken sockets.
- If using lights outside, be sure they are labeled "for outside use."
- Always unplug lights when leaving the house, retiring for the night, or not in use.
- Never put lights on metallic trees or run extension cords under carpets or heaters.
- Do not overload outlets.

CANDLES:

- Keep candles away from trees and other flammable decorations.
- Place in sturdy, non-flammable holders or non-tip containers.
- Keep candles far away from curtains and other combustible materials and not in windows or near exits.
- Never leave candles burning unattended or within reach of children.
- Extinguish candles by wetting the wick before leaving the room or going to bed.

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 usually meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers in the Civic Center. The agenda is posted online at www.CityofMerced.org.

Contacting us

The Web site, www.CityofMerced.org, contains City Council information, the Municipal 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 8 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
Parks/CommServices	385-6855
Utility payments.....	388-7289

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department.....385-6891
Police Department385-6912

Ask the City: Wheelchair access on sidewalks

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.

When I go down G Street I end up using the bike lane because I can't get to the street with my (motorized) scooter. Some of the sidewalks have a drop of 8 or 10 inches!

K.R. Merced

Back when G Street was built, handicap access was not a high priority. Times have changed and new sidewalks and intersections are designed to accommodate people in wheelchairs.

The City has a number of retrofit projects going on to add "curb cuts" at intersections so there is a gentle ramp for wheelchairs to go down to street level.

The City has plans to overlay G Street from Park Avenue to 26th Street in

2011. That work will include the ramps. Another project to modernize the 26th Street and G intersection also will include the curb cuts.

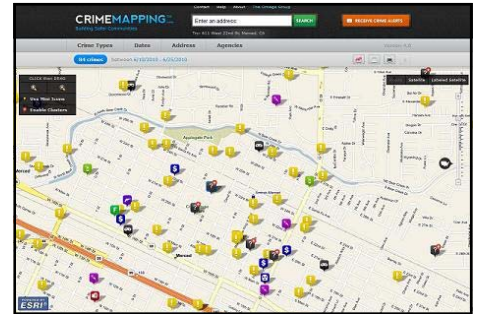
The caller also pointed out that there was a traffic sign on the bridge over Bear Creek that prevented people from using the bridge.

Crews from the Public Works Department found the misplaced sign and reworked it so that it would still inform motorists, but it would be out of the way of people using the sidewalk.

Watch your neighborhood

Crimestopping.com is a new addition to the Merced Police Department's crimefighting arsenal. This high tech mapping service lets you find out what is happening in your neighborhood, near work or your child's school.

The interactive website, CrimeMapping.com, allows people to view crime activity on the map as well as create simple reports and charts. CrimeMapping.com also includes an email-based crime alert service that allows users to subscribe to receive



reports via email regarding crime near their location of choice. There is no charge to view the maps. Use the link on the City's home page to view the maps.

Think Green

Blue can confusion — what can be recycled

Dylan said, "The times they are a changing'" but he didn't mention that the rules of recycling are too! City residents have been great about following the rules, but now fewer things are being accepted by recyclers because the market has changed.

City residents get charged higher fees when the wrong things end up in the refuse containers. The biggest problem with our blue containers is that we can no longer

take plastic bags, or anything in plastic bags. And don't add clothes, toys or any food waste.

The blue container can take plastic jugs and bottles, newspapers, clean cardboard, magazines, glass and metal cans.

By the way, the green container is for grass, shrubs, bushes, small branches and your cut up Christmas tree. No food waste, palms or oleander, please.

You can recycle your Christmas tree

Place your Christmas tree in your green waste container. Trees placed along the curb will not be collected. All trees will be mulched.

Please remove all ornamentation, including tinsel and tree stand.

Flocked (fake white snow) trees should be

chopped to fit in your gray trash can.

Trees over 6 feet tall should be cut into lengths of no more than 4 feet each.

Trees should not be burned in fireplaces. This can be very dangerous.

Apartment complex residents should put their trees in the garbage.

City celebrates two holidays this month

City offices will be closed to celebrate the Christmas and New Year's holidays this year. Because the holidays fall on a Saturday, City offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 31.

Trash pickup will be on both Fridays and will NOT be affected by the holidays.