

State loan helps City save big bucks on project

Stimulus money will assist City ratepayers

The biggest project in City history has received a big chunk of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

The stimulus money will help reduce the costs of upgrading the City's wastewater treatment plant on Gove Road.

The construction project is expected to cost \$34.9 million. (That's about half of the original cost. Bids came in lower than expected because companies need the work in the bad economy.)

The stimulus money comes in two parts:

- The forgiveness of \$2 million of the principal.
- A loan rate that is reduced from 2.6 percent to 1 percent.

In November the City received a loan with the 2.6 percent interest rate from the State Revolving Fund through the State Water Resources Control Board. Then came the stimulus money.

City staff calculated that the interest savings is \$6.8 million, for a total savings of \$8.6 million.

The savings will mean a lower cost for the ratepayers who are financing the upgrade. The exact costs for ratepayers are still being calculated.

The upgrade is needed to meet new state and federal regulations regarding the discharge from the plant.

Built in 1977, the plant will get a new laboratory, new and expanded primary treatment facilities and expanded secondary treatment. The upgrades also will add tertiary treatment to the plant, and an added level of water purification.

The plant also will have ultraviolet light disinfection, which means that additional chemicals won't have to be added to purify



the water. Those chemicals would have been removed before discharging the water into nearby waterways, adding to the costs.

Don't let the sprinklers water the sidewalk, and other tips

During the summer water consumption climbs as people put more water on their lawns, gardens and trees.

Many of the plants need water to stay alive during the 100-plus degree days we can experience.

But it doesn't do the plants any good if the water runs off

onto the sidewalks and gutters. And it doesn't help the plants if the water is sprayed on during the heat of the day, and then evaporates before it can soak into letters from the City telling them the ground.

The City Water Conservation Ordinance has been in place since 1993, putting residents on the odd-even schedule shown

below. It was enacted to encourage people to save our valuable water resources.

Water wasters regularly get to adjust their timers, fix the sprinkler heads or not to water during off hours.

We know things happen, because they happen to us. A power failure can knock a timer out of adjustment, a bike ridden over a sprinkler can wreck it. And vandals can deliberately pull out sprinkler heads.

If you see City sprinklers outof-whack or gushing, please call us at 385-6800, extension 2. And you can use that number to report other water wasters.

Odd/Even Address Watering Schedule									
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
Midnight to 11 AM and 7PM to Midnight	ODD	DO NOT WATER ANYTIME	EVEN	ODD	EVEN	ODD	EVEN		
NO MIDDAY WATERING — 11 AM to 7 PM									



Merced City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten Mayor Pro Tem John Carlisle Joe Cortez Michele Gabriault-Acosta Noah Lor Jim Sanders Bill Spriggs

Contact the City Council by email at Citycouncil@cityofmerced.org, by calling 385-6834. Write to Council members at the Civic Center address listed 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. In September the Council will meet Tuesday, Sept. 8, due to the holiday. Go to www.CityofMerced.org for the agenda.

Holiday

City offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7 for the Labor Day holiday. Refuse collection will not be affected.

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

Write: Merced Civic Center 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	
City Attorney	
City Clerk	
Airport	
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/Parks	385-6855

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Ask the City: Beware of the bugs, and spiders

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

I've noticed some spiders that have been trying to live on the handles of my garbage cans. I am concerned that someone might get bitten and wanted to know if there is anything the City could do to warn people about the potential problem.

Spiders can be scary little critters in science fiction, and in real life. Spider bites have been known to do nasty, ghastly things to people, including kill them.

Now for the good news: Most spiders don't bite, and most spider bites don't cause anything more than a mild sting or itch.

Some simple precautions will protect you. Look before you stick your hands any-

Downtown SummerFest

The Downtown Merced SummerFest continues from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursdays through August 20.

The street faire, food festival, fun-a-thon will feature artisans, crafts, farmfresh produce, music, food booths and kids' stuff.

It takes place on Main and Canal streets, and Bob Hart Square.

where, including the handles of a garbage can. If it's dark and you can't see, wear gloves.

Prevent the spiders from hanging out where you don't want them.

Sweep the webs

away or vacuum them off the walls, eaves and corners.

Don't rely on pesticides to eliminate them. Unless you spray the spider directly, odds are the pesticide will pose a greater risk to you and your pets than the bugs.

The bottom line, there are few fatalities from spider bites. The California Poison Control System says there hasn't been a death from a black widow spider (shown above) in the U.S. in over 10 years.

Just be careful out there.

Low-interest loans available

The City of Merced Housing Division has low interest loan funding available for homeowners who reside within the city limits.

The loans, at 3 percent interest, could be used for minor repairs or the replacement of items such as carpet and vinyl flooring, roof, windows and air conditioning. The loans also can be used for minor plumbing and minor electrical work.

Loan eligibility is based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development income guidelines.

To find out if you qualify for assistance, call the City Housing Division at 385-6863, or visit the office on the first floor of the Merced Civic Center at 678 West 18th Street.

Think Green Summertime is a green time, too

 Setting your air conditioner 5 degrees higher will save up to 20 percent on cooling costs.

Use fans to make indoor temperatures feel cooler, most ceiling fans use less energy than a light bulb.
Have your air conditioning unit serviced to cut 15 percent of cooling costs.
Don't try to cool the great outdoors — Seal cracks, gaps, leaks and add insulation to save up to 20 percent on home cooling costs. • Keep windows and doors shut and shades closed during the day, to keep your house cool and reduce air conditioning needs.

 Have your heating and cooling ducts professionally sealed to save up to \$190 per year.

 Install a programmable thermostat and only cool the house when you're home — It can save up to \$160 per year and pays for itself in 6-9 months.

 Replace incandescent light bulbs with CFLs to save on lighting and cooling bills.
 90 percent of the energy used by incandescent bulbs produces heat, not light.
 If your old air conditioner breaks down, consider a high efficiency replacement. Replacing a 10-yearold central AC unit with an Energy Star qualified model can cut up to 40 percent of cooling costs.

