

Amgen Tour of California's Merced Stage

February 18, 2009

For the latest news on street closures and delays, open parking lots, activities and other information on the Merced stage of the race, look under Public Information at www.cityofmerced.org.

Coming to compete in Merced
are the best riders in the world

Lance Armstrong and other top cyclists will come to Merced Feb. 18 for the start of Stage 4 of the Amgen Tour of California.

One of the world's top cycling events, the Tour not only attracts top riders, but a world-wide audience.

The race has been likened to the Tour de France, and the Merced to Clovis leg includes a stretch through the Sierras, with grueling climbs and dizzying drops.

More than 10,000 people are expected to come Downtown to watch the start of the race. Many people are expected to stay for the Lifestyle Festival and Cancer Awareness Village that will take place on N Street, between Main and 18th Streets.

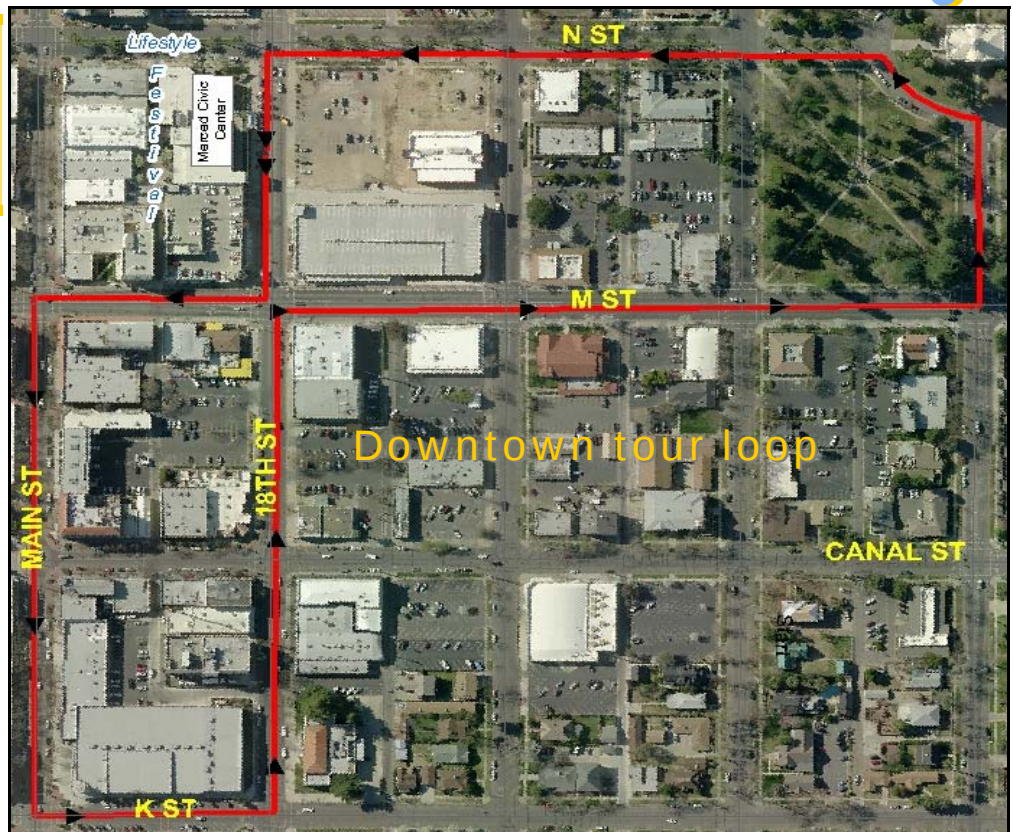
The day's racing will begin at the corner of N and 18th Streets, right outside the Merced Civic Center.

Racers will be announced and signed in nearby, and the public can rub elbows with the riders and their crews as they prepare.

At 11 a.m. the race begins with two laps through the Downtown area (see the map), before going down M Street and heading for the hills.

People can watch the race through out Downtown, but virtually every street and corner offer excellent views. See the Back Page for some viewing suggestions.

(See back page)



At 11 a.m., the racers will begin Stage 5 of the Amgen Tour of California by riding two loops through Downtown Merced, before heading out M Street. The pack will turn east on North Bear Creek Drive and at G Street switch to South Bear Creek Drive. Riders will continue past McKee Road, where the timed portion begins, down Cunningham Road to Highway 140 and connect to Highway 49 in Mariposa.

Lifestyle Festival offers family fun and more

Along with providing world-class cycling, one of the goals of the Amgen Tour of California is to promote healthier living.

The Merced Stage will include a Lifestyle Festival and Cancer Awareness Village on N Street between Main and 18th streets, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Festival will feature health and wellness expo, cancer awareness education, cycling information, a bike clinic, food, family activities and entertainment.

Right after the race, there will be a Fun Ride, where people one can ride bikes on the Downtown loop that the Tour riders take.

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. You can write to Council members at the Civic Center address listed below.

Offices closed

The City offices will be closed Feb. 16 to celebrate President's Day. There will be no change in refuse collection.

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. Due to the President's Day holiday the Council will meet Feb. 17. The agenda is at www.CityofMerced.org.

Contacting us

The Web site, www.CityofMerced.org, contains City Council information, the Municipal Code and General Plan and other information. To contact the Newsletter, e-mail newsletter@CityofMerced.org, call the Public Information Office at 385-6232 or 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	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/Parks	385-6855

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department	385-6891
Police Department	385-6912

Ask the City: A number to report graffiti?

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.

I can't find a phone number for a graffiti hotline. And when I asked a police officer, he couldn't tell me either. Joe.

If you see graffiti vandals in the act, call 911. If an area has already been defaced, call the police business line at 385-6912 or the

Tagbusters' Graffiti Hotline at 385-8807.

The Police Department has an officer assigned to graffiti, and he photographs and documents the incidents. Once a vandal is arrested, the person may be charged with previous incidents.

Police officers on patrol routinely report graffiti to dispatchers, who document it, and then call Tagbusters. Tagbusters has a contract with the City to remove graffiti from public property. Future newsletters will give tips on how to remove graffiti.

Tax help available at Merced Senior Center

Low and middle-income taxpayers can receive free tax help at the Merced Senior Center, 755 W. 15th St.

Starting Feb. 3, tax advisors will be at the Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. Spanish-speaking

advisors will be available, and taxpayers will be able to e-file.

There is no charge for this service, provided by the AARP in conjunction with the IRS. For more information, call 1-888-227-7669.

Amgen TOC: Plenty of good race viewing

N and 18th Streets: The starting point of Stage 4 will be filled with fans watching the 11 a.m. start of this epic race. Set in front of the Merced Civic Center with its stately palms, the street will be festooned with banners, arches and signs.

N Street, between 18th and 21st Streets: The riders will be finishing up the first part of the downtown loop, and the historic Merced County Courthouse will dominate the background.

M Street, between 18th and Bear

Creek: After making the loops through the downtown (Main and 18th Streets between K and M Streets, which offer great views of the racers close up), the riders hit the first straightaway of the race – 3/4 of a mile down M street. This gives riders an opportunity to test

their legs a bit more before heading out of town. There are plenty of curbs for people to line along this stretch, with the City's large U.S. flag in Applegate Park signaling the turn onto North Bear Creek Drive. (Due to narrow shoulders, the best place to watch the North Bear Creek Drive leg of the race is from across the creek on W. 28th Street.)

South Bear Creek Drive: Merced has

consistently been named a Tree City USA, and South Bear Creek Drive shows why. The teams will be riding under the canopy of hundreds of Valley and Live Oak trees that line the road. Running parallel to the road is one of the City's many Class I bike paths, providing plenty of viewing opportunities for the public, especially those who arrive on two wheels.

Bear Creek and McKee Road: Here is where the riders start burning rubber, as the timed portion of the race officially begins.

Watch as the riders continue along South Bear Creek Drive, jockeying for position to give their team the advantage. The almond orchards in this part of the county should be blossoming at this time, providing a scenic, and fragrant, backdrop for the riders, along with views of the snowy Sierra Nevada.



Stage 4, the so-called "Alpine Stage" of the Tour of California, offers plenty of other viewing opportunities. Any place along Highway 140 offers great views of the racers as they begin their climb to the Sierras. The loop through Mariposa gives fans another chance to see their favorites up-close. And any turnout along Highway 49 will offer fantastic race viewing.