

City is going green out of need and desire

The City of Merced has numerous on-going efforts to reduce our impact on the environment, leading to a better quality of life for our residents and neighbors.

It's a wide-ranging list, from the LED traffic signals that save energy and money, to the computer-controlled municipal water system that improves efficiency and saves drive time and personnel.

Some of our green efforts are statewide efforts, such as the reduction of material going into the landfill. Many ideas have been generated locally.

The green movement has prompted a shift in the way we think, to actively look for those options and choose green when available and feasible. Here are some highlights of our green efforts:

At least 50 percent of the trash and other waste material generated in the City is diverted and does not end up in the landfill.

Since the program started May 2003:

- ✓ More than 49,000 tons of green waste diverted
- ✓ Approximately 22,000 tons of materials recycled
- ✓ Construction & Demolition recycling program began May 2006
- ✓ More than 3,500 tons diverted since it began



Upgrades to the City's wastewater treatment plant will improve the quality of water discharged back into the local environment.

The electronic waste program with Merced County Fair saw 58 tons of E-waste diverted for recycling during the Spring Clean Up.

Our General Plan created in 1997 included the Village Concept for compact growth. The plan reduces air emissions by 13 percent over conventional developments.

We have 65,000 trees in our urban forest and have been a Tree City USA for more than 25 years. The City continues to require tree planting for developments.

The City has dual-pane windows in the Merced Civic Center, and is exploring additional energy-saving measures.

Our CP 42 Park, the large regional park in southern Merced, is seeking Master Plan bids and the City is requiring a green design.

We are moving toward electronic information transfers to save fuel costs in delivering materials and paper.

The City has switched to digital faxing, reducing paper use and power consumption.

Whenever possible, online training is being used in City departments to improve skills and expand employee knowledge and reduce driving.

The City is trying to encourage greater use of the Web site to convey information to the public. That means the information is available 24/7, we reduce paper consumption and people don't have to drive anywhere.

- ✓ Electronic building plans
- ✓ Electronic banking for utility bills
- ✓ All Council and Planning Commission agendas are online to improve access and reduce printing needs.
- ✓ People can register and pay for our recreation programs online.
- ✓ Post job openings and applications.
- ✓ Bids and requests for proposals online.

We have expanded our fleet to include alternate-fueled vehicles:

CNG trucks for building inspectors
Electric carts at the Police Department, wastewater treatment plant and the airport.
We are in the process of buying two garbage trucks operating on compressed natural gas.



The City's recycling program has prevented thousands of tons of materials from ending up in landfills. The City has retrofitted its diesel fleet to reduce emissions.

The Fleet Division is researching hybrid vehicles and alternative fueled vehicles for the City's fleet.

Our refuse trucks and other diesel vehicles have special filter and trap systems to reduce emissions.

The street sweeping program is designed to reduce the PM-10 particulate matter polluting the air. The sweepers also have been modified to reduce emissions.

Water meters are installed in all commercial and many residential buildings to reduce water waste. This preserves groundwater and also saves on electricity needed for pumping.

We also are committed to a year-round water conservation program in place to conserve water. The program has helped us keep the water table stable.

Upgrading the wastewater treatment plant to provide tertiary treatment of the effluent, helps us create a higher quality of water entering our waterways. We are also improving the energy efficiency of the plant, originally built in the 1970s.

We have a methane-fueled generator at the wastewater treatment plant that can offset need to purchase electricity.

The City is in the design phase of a project to create a solar sludge drying facility for the wastewater treatment plant.

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.

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 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. Contact the Newsletter at 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: I want a marriage license

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 in the column on the left.

I would like to get a marriage license, please
Asked at the front counter at the Civic Center
On a regular basis people

call or come to the Civic Center seeking a Marriage License, birth certificate, or to register to vote. We even got a call from someone trying to arrange to get a Public Defender.

In "Romeo and Juliet" Shakespeare asked, "What's in a name?" We wonder, too.

People often confuse "the City of Merced" with "the County of Merced." It's

understandable because we are both government agencies, and we are located pretty close to one another.

Some of the most requested County numbers: Birth and death certificates, 385-7627.

Marriage license and voter forms, 385-7501

Public defender, 385-7692

Animal shelter, 385-7436

Be sure to water wisely

The weather is getting warmer and more folks are turning their sprinklers on for the growing season.

This is a good time to check your entire irrigation system for breaks, cracks or leaks. Fix the leaks so they don't erode your soil, drown your plants and waste our water.

Also, make sure that the sprinkler heads are aimed at your plants, and that you are not watering sidewalks, driveways and roads. Please don't waste water.

Remember that Merced has had the Water Conservation Ordinance in effect since 1993 that promotes wise water use and discourages wasting water.

The heart of the ordinance is the odd/even watering schedule.



Residents living at even numbered addresses can water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Residents living at odd numbered addresses can water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Water only before 11 a.m. and after 7 p.m.

No watering is permitted on Mondays and there is no midday watering.

Think Green

CFLs save energy, cash

CFLs are those spiral light bulbs known as compact fluorescent lights. In most lighting situations they are better than the standard incandescent bulbs because they are more efficient and can save money.

They save money by using less electricity and generating less heat. During the warm summer months, all the lights in the home increase the use of the air conditioner, so CFLs can reduce your cooling bill.

CFLs use one-fifth to one-third the energy of an incandescent bulb to produce the same amount of

light.

CFLs tend to be more expensive than regular bulbs unless they are bought on sale or with a discount. But the bulbs tend to last three to 10 times longer than regular bulbs.

The bulbs were originally developed by a General Electric engineer to deal with the 1973 oil crisis. Because the CFL bulbs contain a small amount of mercury, they should not be thrown in the trash.

CFLs can be taken to The Home Depot, 1735 Highway 140, for disposal at no charge.

City offices closed May 25

City offices will be closed Monday, May 25, in commemoration of Memorial Day. There will be no change in the refuse collection schedule.

G St. underpass meetings clarified

The G Street/BNSF Railroad Undercrossing Citizens Advisory Committee meets on the fourth Thursday of the month to review different aspects of the project. The meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the Senior Center Conference Room, 755 W. 15th St. The meeting days listed in an earlier newsletter were not clear.