

John Bramble is new City Manager

He's a runner, a car racing fan, a baseball aficionado and the next Merced City Manager.

On Dec. 1, John Bramble, 62, becomes the new City Manager, replacing Jim Marshall.

Bramble has been the City Manager of Brighton, Colo., since 1996.

Bramble's 37 years in government service are as varied as his interests. He worked in Northern California's upscale Belmont, as well as the gritty Southern California City of Bell. He's worked in glitzy Las Vegas (Nevada, not to be confused with the other ones), and also in the university communities of Pueblo, Colo. and Cambridge, Mass.

That kind of range is found in his musical tastes, which run from rock 'n' roll's Bon Jovi to Italian pop and opera singer, Andrea Bocelli.

He enjoys almost all things automotive, from the Indy 500 to Formula 1 racing. He likes the idea that Merced isn't too far away from the racetracks at Laguna Seca and Sears Point.

But he doesn't spend all of his time on the couch watching the Speed Channel. He runs regu-

larly, a throw-back to his high school sprinter days.

Now he is more of an endurance runner, having competed in a number of 5K and 10K races, and the half marathon at the Denver Marathon this year.

"I run for exercise and to stay in shape," Bramble said. "But I also like my long Sunday morning run to help get focused."

It was the love of running that led him to become a Colorado High School Activities Association certified cross-country and track and field official. He officiates at 8 or 9 meets a year.

As would be expected of someone who lives about 20 minutes from downtown Denver, Bramble is a Broncos, Nuggets and Rockies fan.

His history with the Broncos goes back to his childhood.

He grew up in Oregon and his mother used to take him to see the exhibition games, usually between the Broncos and the Raiders, so being a Bronco fan comes naturally.

Baseball is another sport near to his heart. He played in high school and also in college until an injury benched him. But he

played competitive softball and baseball up until 2 years ago.

"Softball," he said wistfully, "that's where my competitive juices still flow."

He's married to JoAnn, who is a real estate agent. The couple has a son, Steven, a senior at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Steven, a journalism major, has written a futuristic novel about to be published.

JoAnn Bramble is a big fan of cycling and the Tour de France. "She follows it passionately," Bramble said.

She heard that Stage 5 of the Amgen Tour of California is coming to Merced, and bringing along Lance Armstrong. "My wife is going to be in seventh heaven," he said.

He's a self-described "workaholic, a typical Type A, with a high ethical standard."

But Bramble also said that he wants City staff to see him as "a friendly individual and somebody who wants to help them develop their skills and abilities. I want to help the organization grow."

"There are tough times ahead for all of us, it doesn't matter if it's Colorado or California," he



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John Bramble

said. On the plus side, "It speaks volumes that you have a brand new university."

Bramble practices what he preaches. "I don't ask people to do anything I wouldn't do."

And he proved it in the middle of winter when Colorado's new governor visited Brighton. After the chief of police told Bramble that the department was stretched too thin, he offered to help. Bramble ended up directing traffic in zero degree weather.

Sign up as Amgen Tour of California volunteer

Merced will be the start of Stage 5 of the Amgen Tour of California Feb. 18, and Lance Armstrong plans to race here.

The Amgen Tour of California is one of the nation's most prestigious bike races. Many participants will go on to race in the Tour de France.

Thousands of spectators are expected to line the streets to cheer on the racers, and hundreds of volunteers will be needed to make sure it is

a safe and fun event.

Volunteers will be helping with the stage course marshals, media, medical control, security, site decorations and lifestyle festival.

To volunteer, go to the City's website at www.cityofmerced.org and click on the Amgen Tour of California link. All volunteers must sign up online. A volunteer sign-up clinic is planned to help those without access to a computer.



Merced City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten
Mayor Pro Tem John Carlisle
Council members:
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 posted online 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: Don't dump grease in the sink

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.

Our folks in the Public Works Department regularly get calls from people asking how to dispose of cooking grease. So what are we supposed to do with it?

First off, don't dump it down a drain or sink or flush it down the toilet. It will only create problems for you and us.

That stuff can clog your pipes, causing

water to backup, and you don't want that water coming back up.

Put grease and cooking oil in a jar, coffee can or other sealable container. After it has cooled, wrap it in newspaper and put it in your gray garbage can.

(FYI, restaurants are required to have a special "grease interceptor" that removes grease and oil from their wastewater.)

And don't use those harsh chemicals to unclog the drain. They sink to the bottom of the pipe and can eat away at it, causing more (and expensive) problems.



Leaf Collection begins

Leaf collection season runs from Nov. 3 until late January in neighborhoods throughout the City.

Residents will get a map and schedule of collection dates for their area.

★Please don't park at the curb on collection days.

★Sweep leaves into rows at least four feet from the curb.

★Don't put brush or grass into the pile.

Collected leaves are turned into compost and mulch that is used on local farms.'

The leaf collection program is intended to reduce the pollutants that get into storm drains and keep leaves and other materials from entering storm drains and blocking the system.

Holiday refuse pickups

We're entering the holiday season and City offices will be having closures. City staff will get the Thanksgiving weekend off, Thursday, Nov. 27 and Friday, Nov. 28. City offices also will be closed for Christmas, Thursday, Dec. 25 and New Year's Day, Thursday, Jan. 1.

Refuse collection will not take place on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. On those holidays, customers with Thursday pickup will have trash collected Friday. Those with Friday service will have their collection day on Saturday.

Cut back sprinkler use

Fall and winter weather means cooler temperatures, and less water needed for landscaping. Cut back on outside watering, and be sure to reduce the time for automatic sprinklers. Many types of lawn go dormant in the winter, requiring little, if any, water beside what nature provides.

It's also a good time to make sure sprinklers are still aligned and spraying on plants, not sidewalks and driveways.

If you have exposed pipes, wrap them in insulating material before the winter freezes arrive.

Gang Awareness Workshops scheduled for schools

The Gang Awareness Workshops presented by the Merced Police Department and ComVIP will be held in area schools throughout the year.

The workshops help parents and the public recognize gang behavior, clothing and signs, along with discussion on gang activity in the area. Everyone is invited to attend any

of the presentations, and area businesses are encouraged to set up workshops on site for their employees by calling 385-6233.

All workshops are from 6 p.m.-7 p.m.
Nov. 5 Fremont Charter, 1120 W. 22nd St.
Nov. 19 Ada Givens, 2900 Green St.
Dec. 3 Gracey, 945 West Ave.
Dec. 17 John Muir, 300 W. 26th St.