

City awarded \$9 million state grant for G St. RR crossing

Underpass will eliminate stopping for trains

It took a lot of staff time to fine-tune the application and it took a number of trips to advocate for the project, but last month the effort paid off for the City of Merced.

The California Transportation Commission unanimously approved funding for the G Street underpass at the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad tracks.

The Commission approved a \$9 million grant for G Street, which will fund half of the project.

The other half will be paid for using impact fees, Redevelopment Agency bonds and funds from the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad.

The vote was the result of a collaborative effort between the City, Merced County, UC Merced and Assembly Member Cathleen Galgiani.

The G Street project also has

the backing of the Merced-Mariposa Asthma Coalition and many other members of the community.

In its application to the CTC, the City noted that the underpass would help improve air quality by reducing the number of cars waiting at the rail crossing.

The City already has an engineering firm drawing up plans for the undercrossing.

Construction is expected to begin by March 2010 and work is projected to be completed by September 2011.

There are more than 70 passenger and freight trains traveling along the BNSF tracks each day.

Police, fire and other public safety personnel spend approximately two hours each day waiting for the tracks to clear.

The funds come from the Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Account Program.



Every day, more than 70 trains tie up traffic in Merced.

Campus Parkway also gets funding

The California Transportation Commission also approved \$12 million for Campus Parkway to pay for construction of the stretch of expressway from the Mission Interchange to Childs Avenue. Those funds, subject to approval of the state budget, will be issued on a first-come, first-served ba-

sis.

The City and Merced County worked with UC Merced and Assembly member Cathleen Galgiani to obtain the funds.

The Parkway will improve north-south access for Merced and also serve as a link to the campus.



Dr. Art Kamangar talks about his donation to the Merced Theatre.

Donor gives \$1 million to Merced Theatre project

Merced has been good to Art Kamangar. The retired doctor raised three children here and the community was good for them. Last month Dr. Kamangar decided to repay the community.

He donated \$1 million to the Merced Theatre Foundation, to be used in its restoration efforts.

Dr. Kamangar is a retired orthopedic surgeon who moved to Merced to operate Kamangar Ranches. He is on the Board of Directors of the Merced Theatre Foundation and has been active in raising funds to restore the historic theater.

The Foundation is working to restore the Art Kamangar Center at the Merced Theatre to its 1931 glory.

The restoration project will recapture the Spanish castle courtyard theme that charmed

Merced residents for generations. When it opened, the theater was the first air-conditioned building in Merced County.

The donation by Dr. Kamangar puts the Foundation closer to its \$6 million fundraising goal. With cash and pledges, the Foundation is only \$1.83 million away from its goal.

Dr. Kamangar said he made the donation "to give back to the community." His other philanthropic activities include serving on the UC Merced Foundation Board of Trustees.

The restored Theatre will have 1,100 seats and state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems. The Theatre will be available for concerts, movies, theater productions, graduations and other community events.

Merced City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten
Mayor Pro Tem John Carlisle
Council members:
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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

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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
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IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department.....385-6891
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Ask the City: Be safe on the streets

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.

There are a lot more people riding bikes these days. Can you put some bicycle safety tips into the Newsletter?

Tom, Merced

Whether it is because gas prices are high, people are exercising more, or because there is a conscious effort to be environmentally-friendly, there are more cyclists out.

Motorists need to remember that bike riders do have rights, and do belong on the roads, too. And drivers need to remember that their cars are bigger than the bikes.

But bicylists need to exercise safety, too:

- ★ Always wear a bike helmet.
- ★ Stop and check traffic before riding into a street.
- ★ Avoid riding at night.
- ★ Obey traffic signs and signals.



Ride with the flow of traffic on the right side of the road, not into the traffic.

- ★ Ride on the right-hand side of the road.
- ★ Check your brakes before riding.
- ★ Give cars and pedestrians the right-of-way.
- ★ Wear light or bright-colored clothing so that motorists can see you.
- ★ Be extra careful turning left - motorists don't expect it.
- ★ Don't wear earphones while riding.

Great Lakes Airlines starts Merced air service



The first Great Lakes Airlines flight arrives at the Merced Airport on the morning of Sept. 8. Flights to Ontario International Airport leave at 6 a.m. and 1:17 p.m. Flights from Ontario arrive at 11:30 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. For more information, Visit www.flygreatlakes.com or call 1-800-554-5111. Photo by Jon Kwiatkowski

Gang Awareness Workshops resume at local schools

The Gang Awareness Workshops presented by the Merced Police Department and ComVIP have resumed for the school year. The workshops help parents and the public recognize gang behavior, clothing and signs, along with discussion on gang activity in the area. Parents who have had children in gangs, or been members of gangs, will talk about their experiences. Resources are offered to help redirect teens away from gangs. Everyone is invited to attend any of

the presentations, and area businesses are encouraged to set up workshops on site for their employees.

All workshops are from 6 p.m.-7 p.m.

Oct. 1	Chenoweth, 3200 Parsons Ave.
Oct. 22	Franklin/Stefani, 2768 Ranchero
Nov. 5	Fremont Charter, 1120 W. 22 nd St.
Nov. 19	Ada Givens, 2900 Green St.
Dec. 3	Gracey, 945 West Ave.
Dec. 17	John Muir, 300 W. 26 th St.