

City seeking underpass for RR at G Street

State grant sought to provide help

Every day hundreds of Merced drivers – from soccer moms to school bus drivers to firefighters responding to emergency calls -- experience delays at the railroad tracks that slice through the community.

The situation in Merced is even worse because the town's only hospital is on one side of two railroad lines, while the majority of the population lives on the other side.

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad alone has more than 55 trains a day running through town, causing significant delays to traffic.

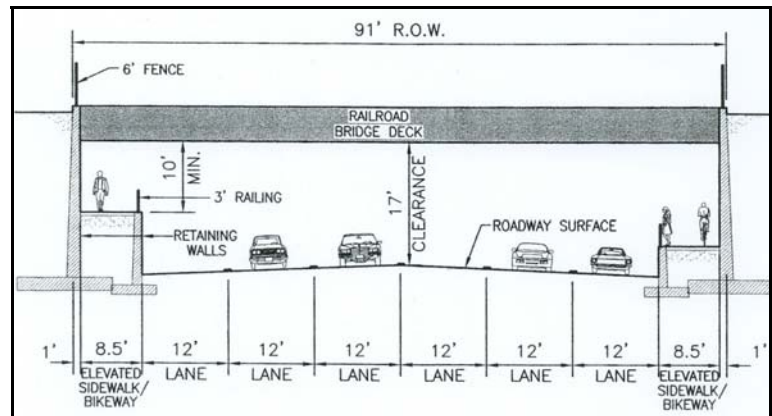
Police and fire personnel responding to calls are delayed by trains on an average of once every three days.

The City of Merced has applied to the California Public Utilities Commission for \$10 million in grant funding to pay for an underpass on G Street at the BNSF tracks.

The project is estimated to cost \$12.5 million, with the City and the BNSF each contributing funds to the project.

The Merced Railroad Crossing Task Force, made up of City, County and State representatives met in Merced to discuss problems created by having the tracks cut through town. Public safety officials told of the dangers the tracks pose for first responders.

State officials at the meeting sounded sympathetic, and made some suggestions on how to enhance the grant application.



A cross-section look at the proposed undercrossing, above. Greg Bonifay of Riggs Ambulance, below, tells the Task Force about railroad problems encountered by the company.

It would take about 2 years to build the underpass.

If you are delayed by train traffic, please report it on our Web site, www.CityofMerced.org under "I Want to... Report a Railroad Delay."



Great Lakes Airlines has been selected to serve the Merced Airport

The U.S. Department of Transportation was expected to announce soon that Great Lakes Airlines has been awarded the Essential Air Service subsidy for Merced.

Great Lakes will have 14 non-stop flights a week to Las Vegas/McCarran International Airport. Great Lakes has indicated it expects to take over air service to Merced in mid-November.

The City continued to be served by Mesa Airlines, flying U.S. Airways planes. In May Mesa asked to get out of their existing EAS contract because of the soaring cost of fuel.

The EAS contract also has Great Lakes providing 14 flights to Las Vegas from the City of Visalia. The annual subsidy to provide service to the two cities is \$1,835,453.

By flying into McCarran, City residents will be able to transfer to flights across the

nation and around the world.

Great Lakes has code share agreements with United Air Lines and Frontier Airlines. Code sharing means that Great Lakes' flights to Merced will show up on United and Fron-

tier ticketing computers.

The airline, based in Cheyenne, Wyo., will be flying 19-passenger Beech 1900D turboprops. Great Lakes currently provides air service to 39 airports located in nine states.



Great Lakes Airlines will be flying Beechcraft 1900s like this to Merced.

Merced City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten
Mayor Pro Tem Joe Cortez
Council members:
Michele Gabriault-Acosta
Rick Osorio
Carl Pollard
Jim Sanders
Bill Spriggs

Council meetings

The Council 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 City of Merced 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	385-6866
Airport	385-6873
Code Enforcement	385-6855
Finance	385-4718
Inspection Services	385-6861
Personnel	385-6839
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

Don't drink and drive!

Help keep the Valley's air clean

Fireplace program starts Nov. 1

To keep our air quality healthy, the use of many types of fireplaces is regulated by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

From November through February the District's Check Before You Burn Program regulates the use of fireplaces and wood-stoves that burn wood, pellets or manufactured logs. Gas-fired fireplaces are not affected.

When air quality is expected to be unhealthy to the general public, wood burning is prohibited and fines can be levied against



violators. The burn day status is broadcast on local radio and TV stations, printed in newspapers and it is on the District's Web site at www.valleyair.org.

City leaf collection program is under way

The City of Merced began collecting leaves Nov. 5 and will end Jan. 26.

Residents have been mailed a map and information about the program.

Please remember:

- ♦ Do not park at the curb on collection days.
- ♦ Sweep leaves into rows at least four feet from the curb.
- ♦ No brush or grass will be

collected.

- ♦ The City of Merced is divided into four areas for leaf collection.
- ♦ The program will operate six days a week.
- ♦ You will find your area service dates next to the corresponding colored map that was mailed.
- ♦ Each area will be allotted three days every two weeks for collection.

- ♦ Street Sweepers will follow the leaf collection schedule.

Collected leaves are used for mulch and compost on local farms.

This program is available only to residents of the City of Merced.

If you have questions regarding this program, please call the Public Works Department at 385-6800.

MLK project finished, Coffee light on

The Martin Luther King Jr. Way beautification project between the tracks and 14th Street is done.

The \$1.7 million project included a complete road reconstruction, installation of

medians, decorative lights and landscaping and traffic signals on 15th Street.

Work on the traffic signal at Childs Avenue and Coffee Street adjacent to Weaver School also is completed.

General Plan Update draft due soon

The next step of the General Plan Update will be the release of a draft version of the plan early next year.

The Plan EIR is expected in spring. Both documents

are public and will be subjects of public hearings in early summer. Information on the Update is available at www.CityofMerced.org under General Plan Update.

Veterans Day, Thanksgiving holidays

City offices will be closed Monday, Nov. 12 for Veterans Day. Refuse collection that Monday is on the regular schedule.

City offices also will be closed Nov. 22 and 23 for

Thanksgiving.

There will be no trash collection Thanksgiving Day. Thursday refuse pickup will be on Friday, and Friday's collection will be on Saturday.

Seniors: Get tax help

Senior Citizens can get tax help at the Merced Senior Center, 755 W. 15th St. during Tax Season. For information, or to become a volunteer, call 358-9636.



Rhonda Ponce of Merced shows the key chain she received during the Employer Spotlight at the UC Merced campus. City staff had contacts with about 400 students while on campus talking about internships and careers.