

Ahhh, G!



Hundreds turn out for grand opening of the City's largest road project

\$18 million project on time and on budget



Jesse Gaine, top left, with four Merced youths who helped him cut the ribbon dedicating the pedestrian pathways that lead to three schools near the G Street Underpass. Mr. Gaines was a student on the bus that ran into a train in 1931, killing seven children. Tony Ramos of Merced, bottom left, became the first person to legally drive through the G Street Underpass in his 1965 Chevy Impala, carrying dignitaries that included Jess Gaines and Santa Claus. Above, a Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad train is stopped atop the G Street Underpass during the Dec. 3 dedication. The underpass was built to eliminate trains blocking traffic and opening up access for public safety vehicles and the community.

City refuse rates increase this year

The fees for collection of garbage, recycling and green waste went into effect in the month of January.

The rate for the average residential customer rose by 92 cents.

The fee increase was based on increases in the cost-of-living. The additional money helps offset the increases in fuel and materials.

Fuel is a huge expense in the refuse department. The increase also goes to offset the cost of dumping the trash at the landfill.

The City Public Works Department will be contracting for a rate study to determine if City rates recover their costs, and what the forecast is for future revenues.

Under state law, the cost of collecting the refuse must be completely covered with the fees paid by customers.

The City water bills did not increase this year, remaining the same as in 2011. Increased efficiency and cost savings helped keep that bill from going up.



Merced City Council

Mayor Stan Thurston
 Council Members:
 Bill Blake
 Tony Dossetti
 Noah Lor
 Mike Murphy
 Josh Pedrozo
 Mary-Michal Rawling

Contact the City Council by email at Citycouncil@cityofmerced.org, by calling 385-6834 or writing to Council members at the Civic Center address below.

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, 678 W. 18th St. When Monday is a holiday, Council meets the next day. The agenda is posted online at www.CityofMerced.org.

Contacting us

The Web site, www.CityofMerced.org, contains City Council information, the Muni Code, 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
 Attn: Public Information Office
 678 W. 18th St.
 Merced CA 95340

The Civic Center is open Monday-Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., except holidays.

Call us

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|------------------------------|----------|
| 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 | 385-6855 |
| Utility payments..... | 388-7289 |

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Fire Department..... | 385-6891 |
| Police Department | 385-6912 |

Ask the City: Parking permits sometimes required

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 just got a parking ticket for parking in a residential parking area without a permit. I didn't know you needed a permit to park I was just trying to go to get to my classes at school.

MN

There are a number of places throughout town that require special parking permits in order to park in front of a residence.

The City has a process for these special parking requests that begins at the Parking Committee and ends with City Council approval or denial.

Typically it is someone living in a home who has a handicapped parking permit and needs to have parking in front of the house.

The person requests to have a handicapped space designated in front of their home. If they meet the requirements, it is approved. This gives the resident a regular parking space out front and doesn't have a large impact on the neighborhood.

There are a few neighborhoods in the City that are impacted by a temporary influx of people that overwhelm the neighborhood and regularly prevent residents from finding a parking spot.

Some examples are next to Applegate Park, across from the County Administrative Building, and on several streets adjacent to Merced College.

Those neighborhoods see large groups of people coming in and parking for purposes other than visiting neighbors. In these cases, the City requires that a majority of neighbors on the block agree with the change in parking regulations.

City offices close on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

City offices will be closed Monday, Jan 16 to observe the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday. Trash collection will be delayed by one day for the entire week. People with Monday pickup will have it collected Tuesday.

City offices also are closed Monday, Jan. 2 for New Year's.

The closure will not affect trash collection in the City. Pickup will be your normal day of trash collection for the New Year's holiday weekend.

Think Green Grease is the (bad) word

Mom was right, don't put grease in the sink. That same grease that clogs your sink can clog the sewer lines all the way to the wastewater treatment plant.

In addition to household and business sewer lines clogging, cooking oil and grease in the wastewater can cause sewer lift station failures, wastewater treatment plant problems, and subsequently environmental concerns.

Grease has the potential to cause the City to violate its discharge requirements and affect the water quality of the San Joaquin River.

Grease is one waste that the sewer system cannot handle and therefore needs to be kept out of the system.

So how do you get rid of the gunk? It is better to put grease in the garbage instead of the drain. Grease and cooking oil can be placed in a jar, coffee can or other suitable container. After it has cooled, seal the container, wrap it in newspaper, then place it in the household trash.

Waste food products containing fats,

cooking oil or grease can be placed in a plastic bag or other container then disposed along with the household trash instead of down the garbage disposal.

Food service businesses are required to have a grease interceptor to properly dispose of oil and grease.

Chemicals used to undo sewer clogs flow along the bottom of the drain pipe. If used frequently, the chemicals can deteriorate the bottom of the sewer pipe creating problems later for the homeowner or business.

Detergents, hot water and chemicals do not remove grease. They merely allow grease to go into solution (emulsify it). When the emulsified solution contacts cooler water or piping, the grease re-coagulates causing problems downstream in the homeowner's or business's private sewer service line, the city sewer main and at the waste water treatment plant.

If you have questions please call the Public Works Environmental Control Division at 385-6800.