

“Old Betsy” was a first for Merced’s firefighters

“Old Betsy” was the technological marvel that took Merced firefighters from the bucket brigades to modern firefighting techniques.

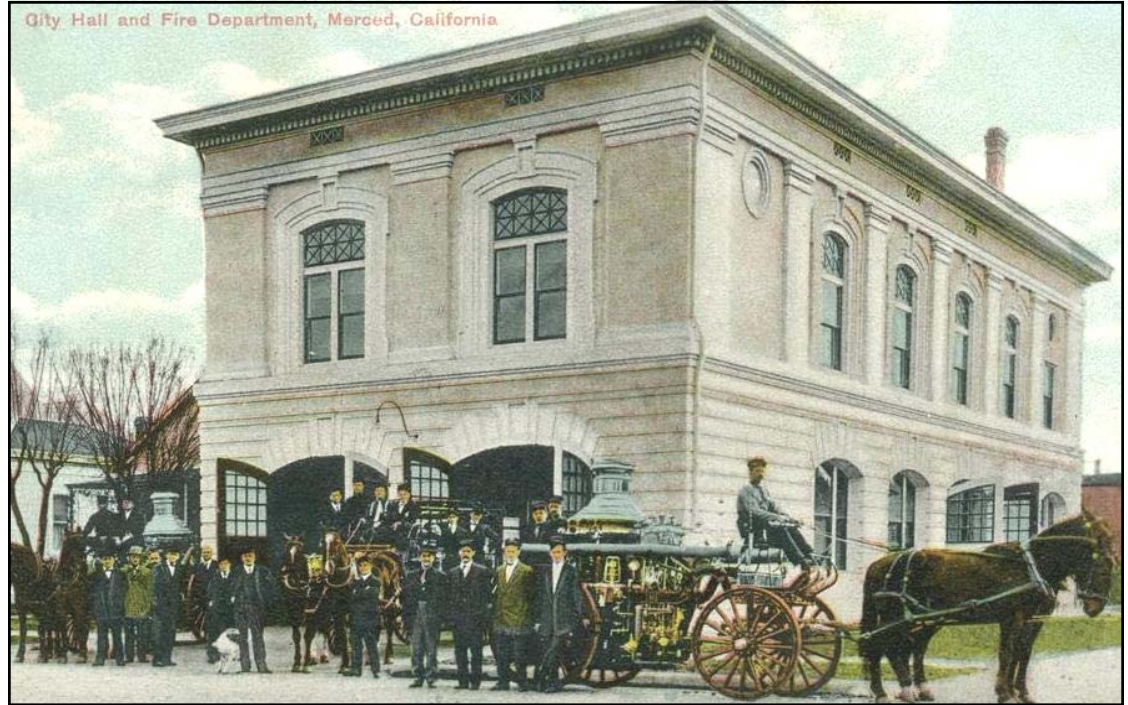
She was the first fire engine of the budding Merced City Fire Department, but she had a few other homes before she arrived in the community.

Merced City Fire Department History: ‘Old Betsy’s Legacy’

Through October 31, 2010
Museum Hours 1-4 p.m.
Wednesday-Sunday
Located at 21st & N Streets

Built in Rhode Island in 1859, she was shipped around Cape Horn and purchased by Merced from Stockton Eureka Engine Company No. 2 in 1874.

Having been with the fire department since its inception, “Old Betsy” has witnessed more



This 1914 photo shows “Old Betsy” in front of the City’s second fire house, used from 1907 to 1952. A new station was built on this site at M and 18th Streets where Big Bubba’s is now.

than a century of changes and challenges.

This exhibit is a joint project

of the Courthouse Museum and Merced City Fire Department.

For more information, please

call 723-2401 or visit the Courthouse Museum website at

www.mercedmuseum.org.



Road is closed, businesses open

G Street may be closed to through traffic, but the businesses along that road are still open and need your support. Construction continues on the four-lane undercrossing at the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad tracks until December 2011. The \$18 million project is funded by the State, the Merced Redevelopment Agency, City funds and the BNSF Railroad.

Merced City Council

Mayor Bill Spriggs
 Council Members:
 Bill Blake
 John Carlisle
 Michele Gabriault-Acosta
 Noah Lor
 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 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, 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 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
Parks/CommServices	385-6855
Utility payments.....	388-7289

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

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

Ask the City: Comcast gives wrong number

Ask the City is an ongoing column answering questions submitted to us by mail, email or phone. Readers can submit their questions to the addresses in the column on the left.

I have a complaint about my Comcast bill...

Numerous callers

The calls come into the City Manager's office daily: people complaining about service outages, program issues or billing errors.

The calls come from Merced residents and San Jose, Sacramento, Visalia, even Santa Maria. (More about those later.)

Comcast cable bills list

the City phone number as the franchise holder. The idea is that the franchise holder can help people with their complaints and that was true until 2006. That year the State took over the franchising of cable TV companies.

We still get a part of the franchise fee but the State is really the franchise holder.

We just have our phone number on the bill.

When people call, we tell them the same thing: "Call the Comcast 800 number, **1-800-COMCAST.**"

Under the new franchise agreement, there's little we can do to help Comcast customers without running up

big attorney's fees for a \$100 payoff.

As to the callers from outside the City limits, and well beyond our area code... It seems somewhere along the line somebody screwed up and listed the City of Merced as the franchise holder for just about all of Northern California.

That wouldn't be so bad if we got the franchise fees, but we only get the complaint calls from customers.

When the City contacted Comcast about the printing error the representative said, "Let me look into it."

We are still getting the calls from outside the area.

Think Green

Green is always in style, even in the fall

Browns, golds and oranges are the colors most associated with autumn, but this Fall you can add green.

When shopping for school supplies, look for items that are made with recycled materials. The list keeps growing, and the product quality keeps improving.

Clean and properly store that equipment and furniture you used during the summer. When it is finally too cold for lounge chairs clean them and store them properly. The more years of use you get out of the item, the longer it takes before they end up in the landfill. And think of the money you save by not replacing it.

Walk your kids to school. OK, this

won't work once your kids are teenagers, but before then walk them to school. You and your children get some needed exercise, you produce fewer carbon emissions from your cars and you avoid the traffic tie-up that happens in front of the school every morning.

Remember that many of the foods rich in antioxidants and vitamins are harvested in the fall. Pumpkins and sweet potatoes are loaded with Vitamin A and pomegranates are rich with antioxidants. Broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, collards and turnips contain an ingredient believed to fight cancer called indole alkaloids.

Airport gets more funding

The Merced City Council recently approved an application to the Federal Aviation Administration for funding to expand the aircraft parking ramp.

The capital improvement grant would provide better aircraft maneuvering space and increased safety.

The FAA ultimately approved a grant award of \$1,047,500 after reviewing bids from local and non-local contractors.

Combined with a 5 percent City match of \$55,132, the project can be completed in one phase for a total of \$1,102,632.

Without the increase in funds the project



would have been spread over two years. This was avoided with the FAA's support and the increased funding.

Rolfe Construction, a local Merced contractor, has been awarded the construction contract. On Aug. 4, the FAA issued a "notice to proceed" letter.

The estimated completion time for the parking ramp project is this November.