

City of Merced *Your City Connection* www.cityofmerced.org

MARCH 2011

Enterprise funds are our way of doing business

The City budget can get confusing because it includes more than 110 budget categories.

The goal of having all these categories, or funds, is to be able to track expenses.

If people want to know where the Measure C money goes, it is tracked in a separate fund.

The largest part of the City budget is a category called "Enterprise Funds."

The majority of the enterprise funds are used to pay for sewer, water, storm drain and refuse services.

Those four funds make up 45 percent of the City's \$274 million budget. These are different than the more commonly discussed "General Funds."

The General Fund monies are those that the City Council can spend on just about anything.

Police and fire expenses account for 72 percent of the gen-

eral funds, but it also is used to pay for street tree and parks maintenance, economic development and some administrative areas such as City Attorney and

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State law says we can't.

the City Manager's office.

Enterprise fund activities are meant to be handled as if they were business enterprises. The full cost of the operations and construction are paid for by the users.

Water users pay for the pipes, pumps, water towers and other equipment that gets the water out of the ground and delivered to homes and businesses.

Enterprise funds are not intended to make a profit, but to



cover the costs. However, the ratepayers are charged for future costs, such as upgrading a facility that is ordered by the state or federal governments.

That happened with the sewer rate. Users started paying for the upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant ordered by the State Regional Water Quality Control Board before construction began.

The biggest difference with enterprise funds is that the money has severe limitations on how it can be spent.

Enterprise funds can only be spent on providing those specific services.

For example, money collected for garbage service can only be spent on supporting those services. The resident paying to have his green waste hauled away is not paying for somebody's sewer service.

State law says that enterprise fund money can be spent to buy equipment and maintain it and it

can be spent on employees who use the equipment.

That money also can be used to pay the people who support the service, like the people who answer the phones, send out the bills and oversee the operations.

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State law says we can't.

State law is very specific in saying that the money collected from your utility bill can only be spent to cover costs associated with the services you paid for.

Money collected as part of your sewer bill can only be used for sewer-related expenses.

It also means that no one will get those services for free. Everybody who uses them, must pay their fair share.

For more information on the budget visit our website at www.cityofmerced.org.



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 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 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: What is happening on 18th Street?

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.

When will 18th Street get cleaned up and the road replaced?

Asked in a local grocery store

The speaker was referring to the construction project on 18th Street between N and G

streets that is undergoing resurfacing and reconstruction.

The project will include reconstructing Canal Street between 18th and 16th streets and replacing the water line in the alley that runs between Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Canal Street from 18th Street to 19th Street.

The City will use \$2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to complete the work. While the road is being replaced, the storm

drainage system will be replaced.

The road work is expected to last until mid-July. The completed project will be landscaped and include diagonal parking along the street.

Businesses are open

The businesses along 18th Street, and in the surrounding area, are open. Directional signs are in place to guide patrons to the stores and nearby parking. Please pardon our dust and keep shopping at these businesses.

Spring Clean-up coming in April

The City's annual Spring Clean-up is coming to Merced the first two weekends in April.

Only City residents and property owners can participate. (IDs are checked!)

This is the opportunity to get rid of that old mattress, trim those trees or unload that fridge. There also will be an e-waste collection, so dump those old electronics.

Collection sites will be around the City. A flier with more information will be mailed to your home.

Website changes under way

The City's website continues to be updated, as we add content and features.

We want to make it a wealth of information that is easy to use and navigate.

Some features recently added

include a link to The Bus, so people can look up schedules, a link to current weather and forecasts, and the ever-popular G Street construction camera. Check it out at www.cityofmerced.org.



Think Green

Be a good neighbor, help conserve our water

The City's Water division reminds you that as the seasons change and you think of watering your lawn, to check your sprinkler timers to ensure that you are following the odd/even schedule.

Addresses ending in an odd number can water on Sundays, Wednesday, and Fridays.

Addresses ending in an even number can water on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Water only in the morn-

ing or in the evening; no mid-day watering between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. And never on Monday. Call 385-6800 for more information.

The typical single-family household uses at least 30% of their water for irrigation. Some experts estimate that more than 50% of landscape water goes to waste due to evaporation or runoff caused by overwatering.

Solve this problem by using drip irrigation systems. They use between 20% to 50% less water than

conventional sprinklers.

They are much more efficient than sprinklers because no water is lost to wind, runoff or evaporation.

If your in-ground system uses 100,000 gallons annually, you could potentially save more than 200,000 gallons over the lifetime of a drip irrigation system should you choose to install it.

Shrubs and trees need less watering than lawns. Check soil moisture below the surface with a soil probe or large screwdriver.