



# City of Modesto

## CITY PRIDE

September 2001

City Wide

CITY OF MODESTO SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO CITY RESIDENTS ONLY

## Sewer rate hike to help close deferred maintenance gap

Beginning October 1, Modesto residents will pay 61 cents more each month for sewer services. Modesto households currently pay \$12.19 a month for the service. The rate will increase to \$12.80 a month.

The five percent increase is the first of four to be spread out over the next four years. The rate increase will pay for much-needed repair and maintenance of the City's sewer system.

In 1999, a City report estimated that the wastewater system had \$14.3 million in deferred maintenance and repairs. That estimate has now grown to about \$16.5 million today.

### An informal survey of monthly sewer rates in other valley towns shows the average is \$13.25 each month.

Sacramento	\$ 8.70
Lodi	\$ 8.90
Manteca	\$11.05
Merced	\$12.03
Modesto	\$12.80
Turlock	\$16.70
Tracy	\$17.50
<u>Stockton</u>	<u>\$18.33</u>
Average	\$13.25

The rate increase will enable the City to begin catching up on those deferred projects in order to prevent failures in the City's sewer system. Last spring, for example, the nearly 100-year old sewer under Washington Street collapsed. It often is more costly to force crews to respond to emergency sewer failures such as the Washington Street collapse, than it is to complete preventive, maintenance repairs.

City officials believe that a series of small rate increases provides the funding necessary to build a maintenance program that will correct the deficiencies before they become emergencies.

In order to give Modesto residents a chance to comment and oppose the rate hike, Modesto officials sent forms to property owners to explain the increase. The mailer included a protest form for residents to return to City Hall prior to the public hearing last month. Less than 10 percent of the property owners sent in protest forms.

Following the public hearing, the Modesto City Council voted 5-2 to follow the recommended schedule of rate increases.

Modesto City Council -- 571-5169

Mayor Carmen Sabatino

Vice Mayor Tim Fisher

Councilmember Bill Conrad

Councilmember Bruce Frohman

Councilmember Kenni Friedman

Councilmember Mike Serpa

Councilmember Armour Smith



F A L L



The approved sewer rate increase will help fund maintenance for troubled areas such as the Emerald trunk sewer line.

### Sewer Rate Increase Schedule

Modesto's current rate is \$12.19 monthly

October 1, 2001 5% to \$12.80

October 1, 2002 4% to \$13.31

October 1, 2003 4% to \$13.84

October 1, 2004 3% to \$14.26

# Overwatering kills hundreds of Modesto trees

Now is a good time to check the amount of water your automatic sprinklers are spraying on your grass.

If you live in a new subdivision and your automatic sprinkler timers were preset for you, please check to make sure you are not overwatering your yard.

This summer alone, about 200 trees have died in Modesto as a result of overwatering.

Here's an easy way for you to check to see if you are overwatering your lawn.

1. Set five flat-bottomed cans or coffee mugs at various places on your lawn. Try to place them halfway between the sprinklers or in areas that generally receive the least water. For especially large lawns, more than five cans may be required.
2. Turn on your sprinklers for exactly 15 minutes.
3. Measure the depth of water in each can and determine the average water depth of the five cans.
4. Consult one of the charts at right to determine how long to water your lawn every third day.

These times may be reduced 20 percent for Bermuda grass lawns. For more information about saving water, please call the City of Modesto's Water Division at 342-4560.

number of minutes	Avg. water depth in cans:inches				
	1 1/4"	1"	3/4"	5/8"	1/2"
SPRING	6	8	11	13	16
SUMMER	10	13	17	21	26
FALL	4	5	7	9	11

number of minutes	Average water depth in cans:inches			
	3/8"	5/16"	1/4"	3/16"
SPRING	22	22	23	44
SUMMER	35	41	42	43
FALL	15	30	18	23

## Did you know . . .

On your garbage day

- It is illegal (Municipal Code Section 5-5.11) to place garbage cans on the sidewalk blocking public access?
- That where alleys do not exist, garbage cans may only be placed in the street against the curb or on the driveway apron next to the curb?



- That violations may result in fines up to \$100.00? If you have questions about placement of garbage cans for your service day, call the City of Modesto's Solid Waste Management at 577-5494.

## Re-refined oil a good choice

Did you know..... It takes 42 gallons of crude oil to produce 2-1/2 quarts of refined oil? However, it only takes one gallon of used oil to produce 2-1/2 quarts of re-refined oil! Unlike glass,

paper, or plastics, oil can be re-refined indefinitely. The City of Modesto uses re-refined oil in all of its fleet vehicles, including its buses and police cars.



## GOT TIRES?



The City of Modesto is hosting a **FREE TIRE COLLECTION EVENT** where residents are invited to drop off waste tires.

**Saturday, November 3, 2001**  
**Beyer High School Parking Lot**  
**8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**Eight tires per coupon -- no size limit**  
**One coupon per household.**  
**Tires with or without rims OK**  
**Eight tires per vehicle**

**Limits will be strictly enforced.**  
**NO tires will be accepted without this coupon.**

**This event is for City of Modesto residents only!**  
**Proof of residency is required.**  
**NO BUSINESSES OR DEALERS ALLOWED**

**Questions?**  
**Call the City of Modesto Solid Waste Office at**  
**577-5494**

Funded by the California Integrated Waste Management Board



David Paladini

## THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR STUDENT REPORTER

### Drain cleaning an 'awesome' sight

As you may recall, last month I wrote about how our city's storm drain system works. I got to wondering how the city cleans out storm drains when they get plugged up. I made an appointment with Tony Souza, who is a Supervisor in the Operations & Maintenance Department, Stormwater Collection Division. He offered to show me the actual cleaning out of a rockwell storm drain, and the re-drilling of another one.

My mom and I drove to a site near Mt. Vernon Drive. When I saw the large drilling truck I knew it was going to be an awesome experience!

Tony explained that they were rejuvenating and re-drilling the drain, and then they would do a routine cleaning on another drain down the street.

The storm drain cleaning crews go around the city from drain to drain on a regular rotation. When a drain is cleaned, the workers paint a colored dot on the cover of the drain to show that it has been cleaned. On each rotation they use a different color.

The storm drain is cleaned with a vacuum truck. The vacuum is so strong that it can pick up a manhole cover. (My mom suggested that this would be a good thing for me to use in my bedroom.)

First the crews spray water down into the catch basin, which is in the gutter of

the street. They fill it up to the top with water to loosen the junk that is in there. Then they lower the vacuum into the catch basin and suck out all the water and loosened leaves and trash.

They remove the drain cover, which is on the sidewalk near the catch basin, and repeat the procedure. Then they take a sounding of the core. This means that they drop a line into the core pipe and see if there is anything obstructing it deep down.

If there is an obstruction, the crews suck it out using extra pipes attached to a vacuum.

A couple of blocks away a crew was hard at work re-drilling another drain. A well needs to be re-drilled when it gets so plugged up that the regular cleaning doesn't work.

Oil in the storm drain is one of the main reasons for a re-drilling. The oil makes a film layer of gunk on the top of the sand and rock filter, making it impossible for the water to absorb into the ground. As a result, water does not absorb and it floods the area around the drain. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 60 percent of all Americans change their own oil, but only 10 percent recycle it.

A few years ago the City's

staff developed a successful way to re-drill plugged up storm drains.

First they park the truck over the drain. Then they use a large hose to soak the drain so that the ground becomes soft. Then the truck pulls out the old core pipe. Sometimes the extreme



pressure on the core pipe is so strong that it unravels and looks like a cork screw. When it is finally out they attach a huge bucket-like drill bit to a long pole. The long pole pushes down into the drain and bores deeper. It continues drilling until it reaches its maximum depth. This process is about 97 percent successful.

The streets of Modesto have flooded many times in past years, but since the new method of rockwell storm drain rejuvenation has been in use, our storm drain system has improved. Modesto can now have less anxiety during the rainy season knowing that the City of Modesto workers are on the job to maintain and improve the storm drain system.

### Local volunteers spread the word

The City of Modesto thanks the many volunteers who helped install storm drain markers and distribute pollution prevention door hangers: Carolyn Conser, Mae Stevenot, Bethany Vigers, Joshua Vigers, Elisha Vigers, Marian Barr, Ethan Barr and Briana Barr.

Explorers from the Modesto Police Department helped, too: Ben Brandvold, Christina Sendejo, Sophy Yonn, Junior Madrigal, Adalberto Alberto, Victor Garcia, Alex Magana and Nolan Thomason.

The City of Modesto also thanks the California Conservation Corps: Brandon Torigian, Damorin Malone, Kyla Taylor, Chris Pennington, Anthony McLaughlin, Esmeralda Delgado, Kenneth Roark and Mauro Vicuria.

Cub Scout Troop and Pack 117 members and their families also volunteered: Travis Hunt, Brittney Hunt, Ilene Hunt, Jeff Hunt, Josiah Moncrieff, Bobby Moncrieff, Shamus Moncrieff, Elijah Moncrieff, Robert Moncrieff, Mark Bigelow, Lloyd Bigelow, Jeff Sadler, Paul Brown, Audrey Brown, Halston Anhar, Chanel Anhar, Catherine Anhar, Daniel Norton, Michael Norton, Justin Webb, and Tyler Halderman.

To volunteer, or for further information, please call Cheryl Heller, storm drain stenciling coordinator, at 577-6257.



## Get involved in your city

The City of Modesto is seeking interested applicants for appointment to the following Modesto City Council Citizens' Advisory Group:

- Airport Advisory Committee (non provider user-general aviation side)
- Board of Building Appeals
- Citizens Advisory Committee on Recycling
- Disabled Access Appeals Board
- Economic Development Loan Committee (low income or minority)
- Equal Opportunity/Disability Commission
- Human Relations Commission
- Landmark Preservation Commission
- Planning Commission

Applications are available in the City Manager's Office, 1010 10th Street, Modesto. **Application deadline is October 5, 2001.**

## FREE BACKYARD COMPOSTING CLASSES

The City of Modesto is offering free backyard composting classes to Modesto residents.

### Wednesday Class

October 24

Modesto Junior College • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

To register call 575-6063

**BACKYARD COMPOST BINS - \$26.30 each**  
To order call the Solid Waste Office at 577-5495.



## 11th Annual International Festival scheduled for October 6 & 7

The 11th Annual International Festival will be held Saturday October 6 and Sunday October 7 at Graceada Park in Modesto. The festival is free of charge.

The festival kicks off Saturday morning at 11:00 with an Americana opening at Mancini Bowl. It concludes Sunday evening at 5:30 with a performance of Galaxy, the U.S. Air Force band.

The Global Village, the educational component of the fair is open from noon to 5 p.m. both days.

The City of Modesto's Solid Waste division will be on hand Saturday to distribute free blue bags and information about recycling.

The family-oriented celebration is dedicated to showcasing the talents,

traditions, native foods and artists of more than 50 cultural groups.

Last year, the one-day festival drew between 40,000 and 45,000 guests, prompting event organizers to lengthen this year's festival to two days. Nearly 70,000 people are expected to attend this year's festival.

The event is staged with the help of 50 non-profit organizations, 15 youth groups, 45 art groups, 500 volunteers, and 500 performers.

For more information about the festival or to volunteer at the event, visit the organization's website at [www.internationalfestivalmodesto.org](http://www.internationalfestivalmodesto.org).



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*Westurf*  
1612 Claus Road

*Scenic Nursery*  
1313 Scenic Drive