



City of Modesto

CITY PRIDE

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City Wide

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W I N T E R

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City's storm drain system needs continued work

If you've driven over a deep pothole lately, you know, firsthand, the problems with Modesto's unique storm drainage system. As storm drains fill, water pools up on city streets, the pavement erodes and potholes are formed.

The many deficiencies in Modesto's storm drain system are long-time issues. We live with decisions made 30-40 years ago. Clearly, as a community we have not invested the dollars in storm drainage needed to provide community-wide protection from street flooding.

So, what's the problem with our storm drains? Modesto depends on two types of systems, rockwells and positive systems.

Rockwells are designed to take one inch of rainwater into the ground over a 24-36 hour period. Positive systems, which are much more expensive to install, take the water immediately off the street and into either storage basins that are pumped to canals, to rivers, or to percolation basins.

Much of Modesto developed prior to 1990 uses rockwells to remove water



from the streets.

While newly-developed areas are required to have positive storm drainage systems, we live with more recent pay-as-you-go development practices, which left many areas such as Village I with incomplete storm drainage systems. Crews work hard to pump down these areas during major storms but it's not a long-term solution.

The City Council moved to correct the deficiencies in Village I over the next year by paying the \$5.2 million dollars that will complete this system.

In addition to incomplete systems, we also face chal-

lenges with our aging rockwells and storm basins. Although, we try to maximize their effectiveness.

Over the past three years, a major effort was undertaken to revitalize our rockwells and improve percolation in our permanent storm drain basins. The focus of these efforts is to be proactive rather than reactive.

This is a major challenge with rockwells. We are trying hard to make them work.

Unfortunately, this requires additional resources as time passes. Failure of the upcoming storm drainage fee increase would result in reduced rockwell maintenance.

All rockwells in the system (there are more than 10,500) are cleaned annually. Fifteen hundred rockwells were rejuvenated and 350 were added in key locations over the past three years. Permanent storm drain basins were cleaned and rehabilitated.

During the first major winter storm, we saw the benefits of this maintenance strategy. While localized flooding occurred on many streets, for the most part, streets are reasonably free of standing water within 24 hours of a storm. For the first time in many years, many chronically flooded streets such as Bridgeford Lane have functioning street drainage.

Complaint calls during storms dropped from 700 per day to less than 100 per day. Complaints can be made by calling 577-6200.

We have a long way to go to achieve a state-of-the-art storm drain system. Rates for storm draining have not increased since 1993. Voters will have an opportunity to vote on rate increases in April.

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David Paladini

THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR STUDENT REPORTER

Local 12-year old takes action to fix bike lanes

Many people can have a voice in our government. Taking action in the government can happen in a variety of ways, many people just naturally think of things like voting and going to political rallies.

Today I am going to tell you about a kid from right here in Modesto, who took action when he saw a problem and his action produced results!

Tyler Sobrio is twelve years old and has lived in

Modesto for almost his whole life. He is currently going to school at Somerset Middle School and is a very involved scout with Boy Scout Troop 86.

Tyler rides his bike to school every morning with his friend. They either ride down Sylvan Avenue or Coffee Road. Both are busy streets.

Tyler noticed that the bike lanes were beginning to fade and pretty soon cars actually started parking along the curb of the bike lane because drivers didn't realize it was a bike lane. Tyler realized the danger of going around the cars parked in the bike lanes

because then he would have to go into the street. He also knew he wasn't allowed to ride bikes on the sidewalk. That was his problem.

Then one day he received a boy scouts assignment to write to a city council member about a problem within the community. Tyler knew exactly what to write about — bike lanes. So he sent a letter to a council member to alert the city council about the problem.

He said he really didn't expect any response. Little did he know that his letter was being forwarded to different city departments within days after it was mailed!

Tyler sent this letter to the City of Modesto on October 22, 2001. He got a response letter back from the Streets & Traffic Operations Engineer on November 2, 2001. He said he was really excited when he actually got a response letter!

The letter he received informed him that because he had brought it to their attention, the lane lines would be painted by the time this letter got to him. The bike lane lines were repainted on November 1, 2001.

So because of action taken by a young citizen, the bike lanes on Coffee Road and Sylvan Avenue were repainted and the way to school was made safe for the young generation.

Tyler's success is a great accomplishment because it shows us all that an average citizen can make a difference. As Tyler Sobrio demonstrates, it doesn't matter

what age a person is; we can each work to change and improve our community.



Tyler Sobrio

Utility users tax refund available for low income Modesto residents

Utility users refunds are available to households with an annual income of less than \$8,700.

If you have been a resident of Modesto (within the city limits) for the past year, have qualified annual income, and have utility bills issued in your name for electric, gas, telephone and/or water service, you may qualify for a refund of up to \$30 in Utility Users' Taxes.

Claim forms are available in the city's Finance Department, 1010 Tenth Street on the second floor. These forms must be completed and filed with the city by April 15, 2002.

To qualify for a refund, you must be the person whose name appears on the utility bills. For more information about this refund, contact the City of Modesto Finance Department at 577-5207.

Dear Council member Friedman,

My name is Tyler Sobrio. I attend school at Somerset Middle School. Every day, I ride my bike to school. I have to do down Sylvan or Coffee Road. These roads are very busy in the morning with people on their way to work or school. My concern is for the safety of myself and others. The bike lanes are faded. Cars stop or park in the bike lanes. My friend and I have to ride on the sidewalk a lot, as do other bike riders. We are not supposed to ride on the sidewalk but there is no other place to ride safely.

What I would like you to do is take interest in getting the bike lanes repainted. Maybe they could be painted with the fluorescent color green that is now on the school crossing signs. I have another idea too. In Monterey, they have the bike lanes marked off with fencing like wrought iron in white. This looks very nice. I know it would be expensive but would make the bike lanes much safer especially around busy intersections. It would keep cars out of the bike lanes. Maybe this could be part of a renovation project for the city.

Could you please take the time to check on this before someone gets ran over by a car?

Sincerely,
Tyler Sobrio
Boy Scout
Troop 86

Modesto achieves major reduction in waste dumping

Thanks to a variety of programs and the help of Modesto residents and businesses, the City of Modesto achieved a 61% reduction in the amount of waste we dump in our landfills.

The report, delivered to the City Council last month, was part of the city's report to the state as required by Assembly Bill 939.

Passed in 1989, AB 939 requires all California cities and counties to reduce disposal of solid waste. The law mandated a 25% reduction by 1995, and a 50% reduction by December 31, 2000. The fine for not meeting these waste disposal reductions is up to \$10,000 a day.

The law also required cities and counties to adopt plans showing how they would use diversion programs to reduce disposal. Programs were given priority according to the "waste management hierarchy" of Source Reduction, Recycling and Composting, Environmentally Safe Transformation, and finally Landfill Disposal.

Because Transformation, or Waste-to-Energy, produces electricity and reduces the amount of waste that goes to the landfill, AB 939 allowed a 10% credit for cities and counties that use transformation.

When the City of Modesto adopted its 939 plan, it created specific goals and objectives, and set a schedule for the startup of programs



Gilton Resource Recovery Transfer Station.

that would help us get to 25% and 50% waste reduction. Unlike many cities in California, Modesto already had a number of source reduction and recycling programs in place when AB 939 went into effect.

In 1990 Modesto diverted 21.3% of its waste. The City met the 1995 goal, with a 28.8% diversion rate, as a result of increasing public education efforts and business assistance programs, and including diverted food-processing residues.

To get to the 2000 goal of 50% reduction, the City began implementing programs targeted for 1996-2000, including:

- a 2-can system, with blue bag recycling;
- development of the compost facility, where yard waste, pruned refuse, and biosolids could be turned into a soil amendment;
- tie-in events;
- a byway collection of tires;

- Bulky Item Pickup program; and
- enhanced Business Outreach program.

Due to some problems with the method used by the California Integrated Waste Management Board to calculate disposal reduction, and partly with inaccuracies in the city's original Waste Generation Study, the Waste Board allowed cities to conduct new Waste Generation Studies.

City staff began work on a new waste generation study and submitted only a partial report on its programs by the September 1, 2001 deadline and requested an

extension on the deadline until the study was completed.

Typically, 20% of the businesses within a community will generate 80% of the wastes so the new Generation Study targeted government and institutions such as schools, and businesses or industries because they generate more waste than the residential sector. Two hundred and sixty-five of the City's 11,000 businesses were surveyed on site. Based on these surveys, a new baseline for Disposal, Diversion, and Generation was calculated.

Using data on diversion and disposal provided by the haulers, the data from the 265 businesses surveyed, and the 10% credit for Waste-to-Energy, the City's diversion rate was calculated at 61% and disposal at 39%.

The city extends a big THANKS to the residents and businesses of Modesto. The results of this study speak loudly to the community you have shown Modesto to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost.

Where does our trash go?

We send 61% less trash to our landfill than we did in 1989. What makes up that 61% of diverted waste? Here's the breakdown:

Residential recycling	2%
Residential composting	10%
Non-residential source reduction	2%
Non-residential recycling	30%
Non-residential composting	7%
Waste to Energy credit	10%

Sidestep the sidewalk when placing your garbage can out for collection

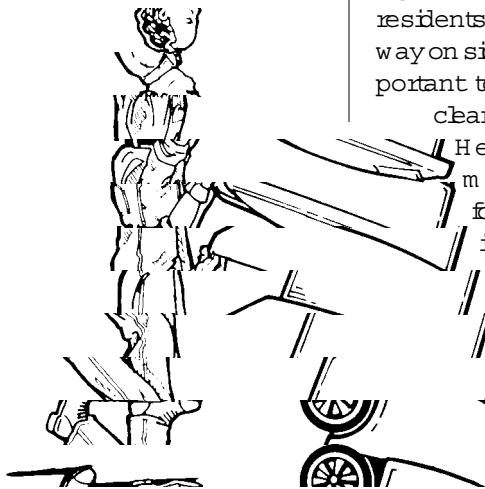
Please remember that garbage cans may not be placed on the sidewalk at any time.

The City of Modesto Municipal Code requires that garbage cans be placed in the street on the asphalt next

to the curb on the edge of the driveway apron in areas where alleys do not exist.

For safety reasons it is important that our sidewalks remain clear from obstructions. Pedestrians, parents pushing strollers and handicapped residents have the right-of-way on sidewalks, so it is important to keep sidewalks clear.

Help make our community a safer place for everyone by placing your garbage cans in the street. Call the City of Modesto, Solid Waste Office at 577-5493 for further information.



FREE BACKYARD COMPOSTING CLASSES

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

Wednesday Classes

March 6, April 24, Sept. 11, Oct. 30
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.



Earth Day Festival set for April 20

Mark your calendars! Earth Day in the Park Festival is coming Saturday, April 20 in Modesto's beloved Raceada Park. This year's theme: A clean today means a green tomorrow.

It promises to be a full day of learning, entertainment, delicious food and fun for the whole family! Earth Day in the Park is a wonderful chance to learn about conservation with your kids and play for lots of great prizes.

Got recycled products, arts, crafts? Are you earth-friendly and conservation-minded? If you have environmentally-friendly products or services and would like to join the Festival, please contact the Solid Waste Office at 577-5494 to request an application.

Business Recycling Awards

Applications for City of Modesto Business Recycling Awards 2002 are now available to any commercial business, organization, or nonprofit group located or operating within the City of Modesto. Last year's winners included Memorial Hospitals Association, American Medical Response, Save Mart Supermarkets, Modesto Junk Company and Gilton Resource Recovery/Transfer Facility.

Applications are available at the city's Solid Waste Office, 1010 Tenth Street, Suite 4100, at the Modesto Chamber of Commerce at 1114 J Street, or by calling 577-5495.



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Available at these local nurseries:

Scenic Nursery
1313 Scenic Drive

Westurf
1612 Chaus Road