

Kern COG Quarterly

BETTER PLANNING. BETTER TRANSPORTATION.



WINTER 2011

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State asks San Joaquin Valley to reduce vehicle emissions 5% by 2020

The Kern region, along with the rest of the San Joaquin Valley, will need to reduce its vehicle-related greenhouse gas emissions 5 percent by 2020 and 10 percent by 2035 to comply with state law aimed at reducing global warming.

achieve the goals set out in the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, which aimed to reduce 2035 projected emissions to 1990 levels. Fundamentally, the law uses both incentives for development density and greater regulation of the transportation planning process to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled in California each year.

Senate Bill 375 (2008) provides a mechanism to

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Kern COG celebrates 40th anniversary with art show



Best in Show, Steven Martinez



First place in Graphic Art Black and White, Canni Aguilar



First place in Graphic Art Color, Michael Sallee

Kern Council of Governments celebrated its 40th anniversary in October by honoring three local artists with \$2,000 in prizes during its first fall art competition, which highlighted bicycles as its theme.

Working closely with the Kern Arts Council, Kern COG issued a call to artists in August. Artists were asked to incorporate Kern COG's logo into each work. The contest was open to Kern County adults 18 years of age and older with submissions in photography, painting, graphic art and sculpture.

On Oct. 28 Kern COG recognized contest participants and winners during a ceremony at the Petroleum Club in Bakersfield. The audience included eight past Kern COG Board chairs and representatives from sponsoring companies or

organizations, including the Kern Wheelmen Club; Kern Transportation Foundation; Valley Clean Air Now; Wilson Paves and Associates, Castle & Cooke, Bike Bakersfield and the Arts Council of Kern.

Best of Show was presented to Steven Martinez, a Highland High School graduate who has more recently taken an interest in art. His sculpture piece, "Spin Your Time Wisely", stood out with its elegant mahogany design using Kern COG's logo as the base of a hand-made bicycle wheel clock. The idea that transportation and time are deeply intertwined is the fundamental theme in Martinez's work.

First place in Graphic Art Black and White was awarded to Canni Aguilar, a Bakersfield College graduate, and her piece

"Let's Ride to a Solution" and "Stop Driving to a Problem!" Aguilar was inspired by environmental issues and hoped to encourage the audience to contribute in a positive way toward the planet. First place in Graphic Art Color was received by Michael Sallee, a long-time artist and owner of Sallee Studios. His piece "Three Miles to Go" is reminiscent of bicycle riding as a youth and the smell of fields and dusty roads as he sped along.

During 2011 the winning art will be displayed in public buildings throughout Kern County, used at Kern COG outreach events and posted on the agency's website at www.kerncog.org. They have already been showcased at Kern Transportation Foundation's Forum 2010 and Tehachapi's City Council meeting. ■

Blueprint Visualization Project opens second round

Communities throughout the region have the opportunity to see what future development might look like and how it will interact with the rest of the neighborhood under the second round of the Kern Regional Blueprint's Visualization Project.

The Blueprint Visualization Project uses two- and three-dimensional imagery to strengthen public participation in the planning and project delivery process. Using these graphic display tools, viewers are able to see what a neighborhood, vacant lot or development area might look like with additional foliage and decorative lighting; wider sidewalks and crosswalks; on-street parking; more transit availability and other amenities.

Two-dimensional visualizations depict the project area's transformation by showing

multiple images, beginning with a look at existing development and ending with the final conceptual building or buildings. Three-dimensional animations are conceptual flythrough/walkthrough video clips that help the viewer visualize what the area could be like if the plans and principles of the Regional Blueprint are implemented.

During the first call for projects in fall 2009, the cities of Bakersfield, California City, Delano, Ridgecrest, and the proposed High-Speed Rail Heavy Maintenance Facility were awarded grants. City officials have already used the visualizations to demonstrate concepts of specific, general or redevelopment plans and to attract interest in future development. All completed visualizations can be viewed on the Kern COG webpage under the

Regional Blueprints section.

The second round of call for projects is under way, with applications accepted until Jan. 5, 2011. The Blueprint Visualization Project is open to municipalities and communities in Kern County that have developed planning documents or have planned development projects which demonstrate the principles of the Kern Regional Blueprint, which include a greater variety of housing types; mixed-use development and resource conservation. City or County officials may submit a project/plan area for which they would like to have a conceptual visualization developed. ■

Application forms and more information can be found at: www.kerncog.org/cms/blueprints



Emissions: State develops new targets for Kern region

(continued from page 1)

SB 375 required the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to establish emissions targets for each region in California. Through its Regional Technical Advisory Committee, CARB developed an interim percentage reduction for 2020 and a final target for 2035.

Based on results of its air quality, transportation and land use models, Kern COG staff recommended an 8 percent increase in vehicle emissions by 2035 largely owing to projected trips into the region by commuters from economic growth industries such as alternative energy and the military. CARB set the targets at a 5 percent reduction by 2020 and 10 percent by 2035 for the entire San Joaquin Valley.



Under SB 375, Kern COG is required to develop a sustainable communities strategy for all 11 incorporated cities and the County as a whole that spells out how the new emissions targets are to be met. Some of those strategies might include requiring greater housing density, which would make public transit a more viable commute option; more walkable neighborhoods; additional bicycle facilities; and a broader mix of housing types and mixed-use development to help achieve greater densities and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips.

CARB has indicated its willingness to renegotiate the emissions targets as early as 2012 based on new modeling data that regions may generate in the interim. ■



Kern COG awards \$1.6 million for bicycle, pedestrian projects

Kern Council of Governments awarded \$1.16 million to seven new bicycle and pedestrian projects and five continuing projects throughout the region.

Kern COG administers the Transportation Development Act Article 3 program, which provides funding for bicycle and pedestrian safety programs, bicycle parking facilities and bicycle and pedestrian travel facilities. Article 3 projects are funded through retail sales taxes collected within the county.

The County of Kern will use \$175,000 to design and install a pedestrian path along the east side of State Highway 184 between DiGiorgio Road and Collison Street. This section of highway had nine pedestrian/vehicle accidents in the last three years.

Near Tehachapi, Kern County officials will widen Woodford-Tehachapi Road between Country Club Drive and White Pine Drive to provide space for bicycle travel. The project will connect bicycle lanes on Country Club Drive all the way to Tucker Road (SR 202). Additional work will include pavement striping and signs on Mariposa Drive and Country

Club Road. The total project cost is \$160,000, with \$140,000 coming from the Article 3 program. Project completion is anticipated in 2011.

Wasco was awarded funding to connect existing sidewalks in two locations, including \$40,579 at Thomas Jefferson Middle School and \$30,750 on Ninth Place. Both projects will be completed in 2011.

The city of Tehachapi will add sidewalks on the west side of Davis Street between Tehachapi Boulevard and "E" Street with \$55,000 in Article 3 funding. City officials will provide an additional \$107,000 to install street lamps, landscaping and irrigation. The project will be completed within the next three years.

California City will widen Hacienda Boulevard and install sidewalks and a bicycle lane from just north of the police station to North Loop Road with \$175,000 in Article 3 funding to help with the project's total cost of \$336,355.

County officials will begin construction on two bicycle projects in 2011. The Oildale Bike Loop project will install bicycle lanes



on Manor Street, Norris Road, Airport Drive, Roberts Land and a portion of North Chester Avenue. Near Delano, an 8-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian path will be built on Browning Road from 9th Avenue to 20th Avenue.

Taft was awarded additional funding to extend the Sunset Railway Rails to Trails bicycle and pedestrian project northwest of the existing facility.

California City will begin construction on pedestrian improvements along Hacienda Blvd in the central area of the city. Completion is anticipated in fall 2011. ■

Arvin opens commuter bus service to Tejon Industrial Complex

Arvin officials opened their first commuter bus service from the city to the Tejon Industrial Complex at Laval Road on Interstate 5 in October, providing workers and employers a reliable, clean-burning and affordable commute service.

In January 2008, Arvin, Kern COG and Tejon staff began working toward a commuter express service from Arvin/Lamont to the Tejon Industrial Complex. At the time, Tejon staff estimated 260 employees live in or near Arvin and Lamont. Arvin and Kern COG staff prepared a grant application for the Federal Transportation Administration's rural Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program to fund four new 22-passenger buses for daily commuter service.

On Oct. 4, Arvin opened its first commuter bus service to the Tejon Complex at 4 a.m. with a second trip at 1:30 p.m. The fare to the complex is \$2 one-way and \$40 for a monthly pass, both of which are subsidized by Tejon Industrial Complex.

Arvin received funding to provide operational assistance and keep ridership costs at a minimum.

Between Arvin's new route and Golden Empire Transit District's Tejon Industrial Complex express bus service, which began in 2009, more than 300 cars traveling from Arvin, Bakersfield, and Lamont are being taken off of State Route 99 and be replaced by clean-fuel buses. ■



New studies suggest larger role for regional freight rail

Two separate studies examining Kern's freight rail lines will provide a clearer picture of which crossings are the best candidates for future grade separations as well as who owns and operates smaller lines that could play a major role in getting more trucks off the roads.

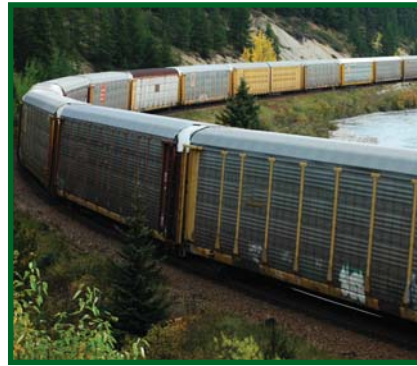
Kern Council of Governments commissioned the twin studies in March with the goal of revitalizing short-haul rail service as an economically viable way for manufacturers to get their products to market while reducing the need for additional trucks on already congested roadways.

The railroad grade separation study includes an inventory of railroad grade crossings; current maintenance conditions; GPS locations; and photographs for each crossing. This inventory and other data will be used to rank the crossings for future grade

separations, which improve safety and reduce traffic congestion, allowing trains to move more freely. The final study is expected in early 2011.

The short-haul rail study is an inventory of Class II and smaller rail ownership and

operation in Kern County. These smaller railways connect to and feed the larger Class I railroads, which act as major arteries connecting rail to metropolitan areas nationwide. Every year the nation loses more of these smaller lines to abandonment, which damages local shippers' ability to get products to retailers.



Short-haul rail accounts for approximately 25 percent of all lines in the region. The study is designed to identify where these lines run, who runs them, who owns them, and the condition of the track. Preliminary data suggests that short-haul track conditions in Kern County only allow for average speeds of 10-20 mph, whereas most Class I Railroads run on track fit for 50-70 mph speeds. The study, due in December 2010, will also include potential strategies for the short-haul lines that can help preserve these important transportation corridors. ■

Million-dollar grant funds community energy plans

Kern COG will use a \$1.17 million grant from Southern California Edison (SCE) to develop a baseline inventory of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions for five Kern County cities and the County itself, along with comprehensive energy plans for each community.

The emissions inventory will provide valuable data for local energy plans and also feed into the Kern Regional Blueprint program, which encourages preservation of natural resources.

The grant will include greenhouse gas emission inventories and energy action plans for all SCE service areas in the Kern region, including parts of unincorporated Kern County, California City, Delano, McFarland, Ridgecrest and Tehachapi.

Final energy action plans may be adopted by the jurisdictions as independent documents, as part of a climate action plan to help reduce global warming, or within a general plan.

Kern COG's Board approved a contract with SCE for the grant funding in November 2010. The scope of work must be completed by October 2012. Memorandums of Understanding with the participating communities will need to be approved by the cities in February 2011 and then taken to the Kern COG Board for approval in March. ■

