



*Better Planning, Better Transportation*



# Annual Report | 2012 - 2013



## Member Agencies & Representatives

**Harold Hanson**  
Kern COG Chairman  
Bakersfield



Arvin  
Bakersfield  
California City  
Delano  
Maricopa  
McFarland  
Ridgecrest  
Shafter  
Taft  
Tehachapi  
Wasco  
Kern County  
Kern County

Caltrans  
GET  
Joint Planning  
Policy Board

José Flores  
Harold Hanson  
Jennifer Wood  
Joe Aguirre  
John Wilke  
Manuel Cantu  
Marshall “Chip” Holloway  
Jon Johnston  
Paul Linder, Vice Chair  
Philip A. Smith  
Cheryl Wegman  
David Couch  
Zach Scrivner

Gail Miller  
Howard Silver  
Scott Kiernan

## Staff

### Administration

**Ahron Hakimi** / Executive Director

**Angelica Banuelos**  
Administrative Assistant

**Susanne Campbell**  
Regional Planner

**Laurie Collins**  
Executive Secretary

**Michael Heimer**  
Regional Planner

**Rebecca Napier**  
Regional Planner

**Greg Palomo**  
Financial Services Officer

**Robert Phipps**  
Director of Administrative  
Services

**Tami Popok**  
Office Services Assistant

**Fasika Stowe**  
Administrative Assistant

**Linda Urata**  
Regional Planner

### Project Delivery

**Raquel Pacheco** | Regional Planner

**Robert Snoddy** | Regional Planner

**Joe Stramaglia** | Regional Planner

### Technical Services

**Rob Ball** | Planning Division Director

**Brad DeBranch** | Regional Planner

**Ed Flickinger** | Regional Planner

**Troy Hightower** | Regional Planner

**Rochelle Invina** | Regional Planner

**Vincent Liu** | Regional Planner

**Ben Raymond** | Regional Planner

### Data Management

**Peter Smith** | Regional Planner

## Kern Council of Governments

Kern Council of Governments is a state-designated regional transportation planning agency and federally recognized metropolitan planning organization comprising elected officials and selected representatives from Kern County and the cities of Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Delano, McFarland, Maricopa, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi and Wasco through a joint powers agreement.

Kern COG sets transportation priorities, selects projects and distributes state and federal monies to its members to maintain, repair and support operations of local roadways, public transportation and other transportation systems. The agency works with Caltrans to plan, select and construct major highway projects.

Kern COG also offers its members various services such as computer modeling and support, data gathering and population projections, as well as assistance applying for federal and state funds. The following is a summary, by section, of the agency's major activities during fiscal year 2012-2013.



## PRELIMINARY 2014 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**K**ern Council of Governments' proposal for its new, long-range transportation plan balances road maintenance, larger investments in public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure without sacrificing new capital improvements that will help drive economic development.

The RTP is a 26-year master plan for transportation throughout the Kern region that includes all federal investment in new projects across different modes, including highways and freeways; public transportation; bicycle lanes and paths; walkways and sidewalks; and some local road maintenance.

In February 2013, Kern COG's Board approved a preliminary financial plan for the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that recommends more than \$750 million for transit, bike and "complete streets" infrastructure over the existing plan.

Proposed funding levels include almost a 700 percent increase in bike and walk infrastructure over the prior plan, while delaying funding for a South Beltway project near Bakersfield.

"A greater variety of transportation infrastructure investments will help keep our communities bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly, which will ultimately help control costs for other government services," said Kern COG Executive Director Ahron Hakimi. "Bicycle and walking paths and better public transportation will make it easier for people to live closer to where they work. Ultimately, that will help lower the cost of living for all of us."

The current plan targeted less than 4 percent of its proposed funding for transit and less than 1 percent for bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Approximately \$1 billion of the new funding would go toward operations and maintenance.

This preliminary financial plan also assumes \$1.3 billion in new revenue resulting in an 11 percent increase in transportation funding from one or more of the following potential sources: a local transportation sales tax measure; odometer-based user fee; state/federal excise tax increase on fuel; e-commerce; freight fee/national freight program; and/or state cap-and-trade revenue.

The RTP's planned expenditures are based on an analysis of different land use scenarios that produce the best match. The plan is still under development and these preliminary numbers may change between now and the final adoption scheduled for March 2014.

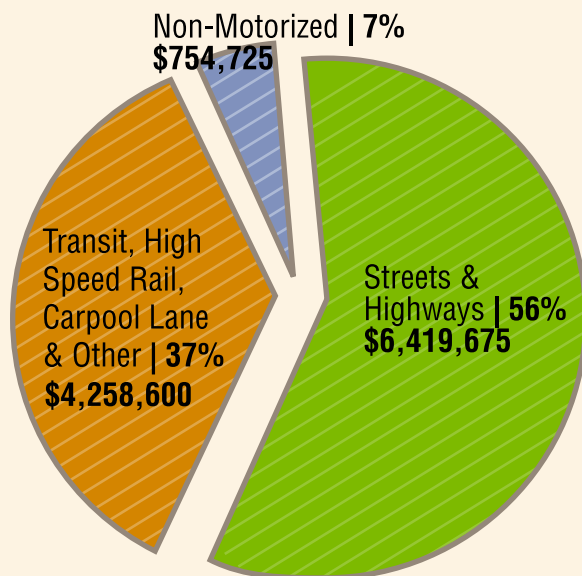
Since 2011, Kern COG outreach efforts surrounding the RTP have engaged more than 5,000 people or 1 percent of the region's adult population.

Public input has resulted in significant changes to the expenditure plan of the next RTP. To further stakeholder and public input on the 2014 RTP and the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) Kern COG is providing access to the administrative drafts in the form of a Preliminary RTP and Sustainable Community Strategy.

Copies of chapters as they are developed are available online at: <http://www.kerncog.org/regional-transportation-plan>

*The preliminary RTP contains a 26-year, \$11.4 billion capital, operations & maintenance expenditure proposal with the following funding breakdown:*

**Preliminary 2014 RTP proposed funding (in millions) by mode**





## 2012-2013 LONG-RANGE PLANNING

### SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY INTERREGIONAL GOODS MOVEMENT STUDY

The Centennial Corridor in Bakersfield and truck lanes on State Route 58 east topped the list of highway projects in Kern that would most improve freight movement in the years to come, according to a new study that examined freight logistics throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Kern has three major highway projects and a handful of rail facilities listed as key goods movement projects in the San Joaquin Valley Interregional Goods Movement Study. The Centennial Corridor is the crown jewel in Bakersfield's Thomas Roads Improvement Program and would connect State Route 58 where it dead-ends at Real Road to the newly opened Westside Parkway. Together, the Centennial Corridor and Westside Parkway create the first true east-west thoroughfare in the city's history.

The new study is the result of a two-year data-gathering process to create a prioritized goods movement infrastructure investment plan, including highways and roadways; rail facilities; air cargo facilities; intermodal centers and ties to inland and marine ports.

The draft report is available at [www.sjvcogs.org](http://www.sjvcogs.org) and the final report is expected to be presented to Kern COG Board in September 2013.

Kern's top project contenders for improving goods movement in the San Joaquin Valley include:

#### HIGHWAY PROJECTS:

- State Route 58 – Centennial Corridor: upgrade I-5 to State Route 99 connection.
- State Route 58 – Add lane capacity for trucks east of Bakersfield.
- State Route 99 – Widening from Beardsley Canal to 7th Standard Road.

#### RAIL/MULTI-MODAL:

- Delano RailEx Facility – Expand capacity and increase rail access to industrial center.
- Shafter Inland Port – Phase II and Phase III
- Mojave Airport – Rail access improvements.
- San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVR) – Short-line rail improvements.
- SJVR Bakersfield Yard – expand capacity

#### OTHER PROJECTS:

- State Route 58 – New truck weigh station
- All routes – Improve truck route signage

### PUBLIC OUTREACH/INVOLVEMENT

More than 5,000 Kern County residents representing more than 1 percent of the adult population have commented to date on Kern COG's 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a comprehensive, 25-year master plan for all forms of transportation investment.

Through dozens of community workshops, fairs, festivals, online games and a telephone survey, the outreach program was designed to be interactive and build on the visions and growth principles developed for the Kern Regional Blueprint in 2008 to better link transportation and land use planning for expected population increases. The outreach for the 2014 RTP was broken into two distinct cycles, the first of which asked residents whether their growth priorities were the same as they were in 2008. Topics included education, economic vitality, equitable services, open space and natural resource conservation, housing choice,

transportation, energy and improved air quality. Participants identified the following principles as the top three priorities for the region and their community's future: improve the economy; provide adequate and equitable services; and conserve energy and natural resources.

A second round of meetings began in August 2012 and expanded on information gathered during the first. Participants were given the opportunity to provide their opinions on future transportation project priorities and to better understand the RTP process. Although there were some differences from community to community, participants named their transportation priorities: maintain local streets and roads (51 percent); increase bicycle lanes, paths and sidewalks (18 percent); easy access to transit from housing and jobs (14 percent); encourage carpools and bus trips (9 percent); and add highway lanes (8 percent).

Two meetings each were held in Arvin, California City, Delano, Frazier Park, Greenfield, Lake Isabella, McFarland, Ridgecrest, Rosamond, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi and Wasco. Five meetings were held in the Metro Bakersfield area and one meeting in Lamont. All outreach materials were provided in both English and Spanish and meetings in primarily Spanish speaking communities were conducted with translation services.

Kern COG also provided information and gathered input at community events including the Tehachapi Mountain Festival, the Ridgecrest Desert Empire Fair and the Kern County Fair. In addition to the community meetings and festivals, Kern COG developed an interactive website so that people could participate in the process even if they couldn't attend a meeting. The website offered an interactive budgeting game whose results were organized by zip code.

### 2013 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Eighty-three percent of Kern County residents are at least “somewhat satisfied” with the quality of life in their communities and hold a generally positive attitude about their futures, according to the most recent Kern COG community survey. That’s up 5 percent over 2012.

Since 2007, the 1,200-person, random telephone survey has annually examined attitudes about community growth, traffic, housing, government services and other quality-of-life issues throughout Kern County. With Kern’s population expected to double to nearly 1.5 million people by 2040, Kern COG has conducted the surveys to determine residents’ attitudes about how that growth should be addressed and what impact it will have on the region in general. The 2013 survey assessed the importance of 40 issues in improving the future quality of life in Kern County. The information will be used to inform Kern COG’s long-range

Regional Transportation Plan. Some of the more notable findings include:

Looking ahead to the next 20 years, 41 percent of the residents surveyed think the quality of life in their city or town will be “better,” 25 percent think it will “stay about the same,” and 28 percent think it will be “worse.” Consistent with the results of studies conducted since 2007, roughly 3 out of 4 residents typically drive alone in their commute to work or school. Although, 2013 and 2012 data was the lowest seen at 71 percent compared to a

high of 77 percent in 2011, 2010 and 2008. Across regions, as in previous years, two-thirds of residents or more reported that they commute by automobile. Also, as in previous years, public transit usage was strongly related to household income.

Approximately 82 percent of the residents would consider a single-family home with a large yard and 70 percent would consider one with a small yard. In contrast, 49 percent of the residents would consider a townhouse or condominium, and only 27 percent and 16 percent would consider an apartment or housing in a mixed-use building, respectively.



### REGIONAL HOUSING REPORT

The Kern region is expected to add 260,000 people or 31 percent more households requiring more than 83,000 new housing units by 2023, according to Kern COG’s preliminary Regional Housing Data Report released in June.

The report provides a statistical basis for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan (RHNA) that Kern COG is scheduled to adopt in March 2014, which is used to update local general plan housing elements.

Cities in the region can use the RHNA in their land use planning to prioritize local resources and to decide

how to address existing and future housing needs resulting from household, population, and employment growth. By 2023, more than 44,100 jobs are expected to be added to the region.



Based on California’s Housing Element law, the RHNA must:

- increase the housing supply and the mix of housing types, tenure and affordability in all cities and counties within the region in an equitable manner;
- promote infill development and socioeconomic equity, the protection of environmental and agricultural resources, and the encouragement of efficient development patterns; and
- promote an improved intraregional relationship between jobs and housing.

## 2012-2013 SHORT-RANGE PLANNING

### PROJECT DELIVERY

Kern COG programmed nearly \$533 million for transportation projects during 2012-2013, almost half of which was set aside for right-of-way purchases and engineering work on the Centennial Corridor in Bakersfield, a two-and-a-half mile project to connect State Route 58 to the new West-side Parkway.

The Centennial Corridor accounted for \$234 million or 44 percent of funds in Kern COG's Federal Transportation Improvement Program, a short-range planning document that anticipates up to five years of transportation projects using federal, state and local funds. About \$355.5 million of the total comes from federal fuel taxes returned to the region, with another \$110.5 million from state fuel taxes and the remaining

\$66.7 million in local, matching shares.

Two other big-ticket projects included additional lanes on State Route 99 in Bakersfield, from Wilson Road to State Route 119 and from Olive Drive to the Beardsley Canal. In both cases, the freeway will widen from six to eight lanes at a combined cost of \$42 million. Other widening projects scheduled for construction include West Ridgecrest Boulevard in Ridgecrest and Tehachapi's Challenger Drive Extension.

Approximately \$9.2 million was dedicated to street and roads rehabilitation and new highway improvements. Nearly \$24 million was programmed for maintenance on the state highway system.

Project details may be found in the latest version of the 2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Program and its amendments at: <http://www.kerncog.org/federal-transportation-improvement-program>. A progress report of all projects listed in the FTIP may be found at [http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/progress\\_report\\_201307.pdf](http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/progress_report_201307.pdf).

Construction jobs that began throughout the region in 2012-13 included:

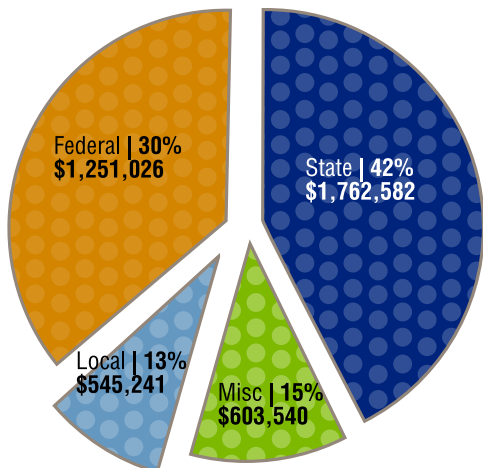
- 55 air quality-related / transit projects
- 18 local street and roads rehabilitation projects
- 15 state highway-related safety and maintenance projects
- 34 local and highway capacity improvements

## 2012-2013 ADMINISTRATION

## Budgeted Revenues & Expenditures

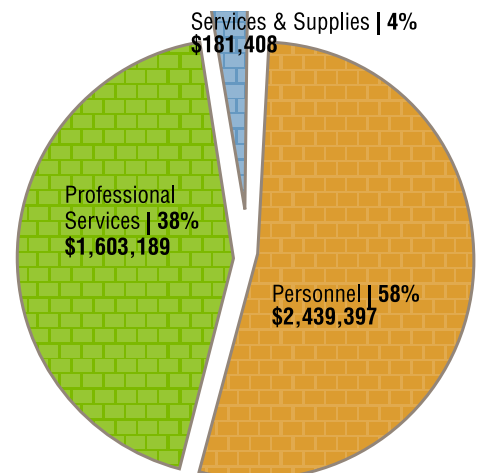
### REVENUES

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	% of TOTAL
Federal	\$1,251,026.18	30.06%
State	\$1,762,582.01	42.35%
Local	\$545,240.57	13.10%
Misc	\$603,539.63	15.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,162,388.39</b>	<b>100%</b>



### EXPENDITURES

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	% of TOTAL
Personnel	\$2,439,396.66	57.75%
Professional Services	\$1,603,189.22	37.95%
Services & Supplies	\$181,407.51	4.29%
Capital	\$0.00	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,223,993.39</b>	<b>100%</b>







# 2012-2013 ADMINISTRATION

## LITTER REMOVAL

In May and June 2013, workers with the City of Bakersfield and the Bakersfield Homeless Center cleaned an average of more than 1,400 pounds of trash a day from local freeways, in part through Kern Motorist Aid Authority funding.

As state transportation funding has diminished over the past decade, traditional litter removal programs in Kern County that rely on state or county inmate labor have also been severely curtailed. The City of Bakersfield, Caltrans and the Kern County Sheriff's Department have been working together to help fund litter removal of debris and litter in all of Kern County.

In April, May and June, Kern COG's Board approved three separate agreements with the City of Bakersfield and the Kern County Sheriff's Department (KCSD) for litter removal in the metropolitan area, throughout the balance of Kern County and for regional enforcement against littering. The KCSD agreement for litter and debris removal includes state highways throughout Kern including Arvin, California City, Delano, Maricopa, McFarland, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi and Wasco. All three contracts total a maximum of \$300,000.

During May and June, the City of Bakersfield's Solid Waste Department, using clients from the Bakersfield Homeless Center, cleaned 68 miles of

freeway, collected 2,666 bags of debris equivalent to more than 26 tons. The daily average for May and June was 70 bags or three-quarters of a ton per day.



Kern COG also serves as the Kern Motorist Aid Authority (KMAA). KMAA provides a call box motorist communication system to areas of the county not heavily patrolled and where traditional communication services do not exist.

Operating since 1992, KMAA's call box network includes over 500 units located one mile apart in urban areas and in two-mile intervals in rural areas on nearly every state-designated highway or freeway in Kern County. Call boxes are also located on one county road, Tehachapi-Willow Springs.

Program funding is derived from a \$1 fee on each vehicle registration within the county. State regulations allow for excess funds to be used for other motorist aid projects, such as changeable message signs or freeway tow-truck patrols. Because studies show that litter and debris on the roadway creates a safety hazard, litter removal is eligible for KMAA funding.

■ KERN ENERGY WATCH PROGRAM

# KERN energy watch

Local governments and more than 700 businesses throughout the Kern region saved more than 23 million kilowatt hours in 2012-13 through a unique partnership among Kern COG and three major California utilities.

Kern Energy Watch (KEW) is a joint partnership that includes Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Gas Company, and Southern California Edison, the County of Kern, the cities and special districts within Kern County and Staples Energy and Marketing Services. Additionally, in 2012, the partners coordinated program activities with the Kern Economic Development Corporation and the Great Valley Center. The program's goals are to reduce energy consumption and energy expenses, while conserving natural resources and diminishing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### IN 2012-13 ALONE:

- Eight government partners engaged in 77 energy-efficiency projects by combining local funding, Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, on-bill financing and utility rebates to complete pump updates, lighting retrofits, and HVAC system upgrades.
- The Plug-Load Occupancy Sensors Program installed more than 3,600 units in local government facilities in every community.
- Staples Energy served more than 717 business customers, who will save 16,141,867 kWh of electricity in nine communities.
- Building Safety Month celebrations continue to grow in each community.
- Energy Awareness Month was proclaimed widely throughout Kern County, increasing public awareness of energy efficiency.
- Several cities completed energy use inventories and adopted Energy Action Plans addressing electricity use.



■ COMMUTEKERN



Kern Council of Governments' Rideshare program experienced both a facelift and a 33 percent membership boost in 2012-13 to complement its new name.

Now known as CommuteKern, the program updated its marketing materials with a new logo, as well as a new, easier-to-manuever website. Businesses throughout the county are doing their part by promoting ridesharing as a great alternative to battling the traffic and parking frustrations commuters face as the region's communities continue to grow.

In October, CommuteKern's 2012 Rideshare Week promoted sustainable transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, walking and telecommuting.

Staff worked with local media and businesses to help promote Rideshare Week activities and to educate commuters about the great prizes they could win. More than 400 participants pledged to rideshare at least one day during the week to help save money, reduce traffic headaches and clean the air. Approximately half of all participants continue to rideshare after their pledge has ended.

CommuteKern staff attended more than two dozen outreach events throughout the county, talking to local businesses and community organizations about the importance of sharing alternative commute strategies.

CommuteKern met with more than 45 of the region's largest employers (100 employees or more) to assist with employee trip reduction requirements from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. CommuteKern shared Rideshare brochures and flyers as well as an introduction to [commutekern.org](http://commutekern.org), a FREE carpool matching software program.



## 2012-2013 NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

**K**ern Council of Governments programmed more than \$707,000 for new, non-motorized transportation projects, including new bicycle lanes, sidewalks and safety programs.

Kern COG administers Transportation Development Act Article 3 program (Article 3), which pays for bicycle parking and bicycle safety training; bicycle travel facilities; and pedestrian travel facilities.

Bakersfield was awarded \$223,000 to install bike lanes on Akers Road between McKee and Wilson Road. This project is expected in early 2014. Bakersfield will also stripe short bike lane segments on Haggin Oaks between Ming Avenue and Camino Media; on Stockdale Highway from Renfro to Allen Road and on Panama Lane between Buena Vista Road and Mountain View Road.

Arvin officials will install a bicycle rack on Bear Mountain Boulevard near Derby

Street, while Taft will install a bike rack at the end of the Rails-to-Trails project. City officials in Tehachapi will purchase and install a bicycle locker at the Tehachapi Airport.

Kern County will complete work on pedestrian improvements on SR 184 from DiGiorgio Road to Collison, while Shafter will construct sidewalks on State Route 43 from Meyer Avenue to Tulare. Wasco will complete pedestrian improvements on 7th Street using Article 3 money as a match for federal funding



Kern County was allocated \$115,000 to construct pedestrian improvements along Niles Street from Morning Drive to Lynwood Street in unincorporated East Bakersfield. This project improved pedestrian safety along a heavily traveled roadway.

Funding for the projects comes from California's Transportation Development Act Article 3 Program, which uses a fraction of state sales tax dollars to pay for bicycle- and pedestrian-related improvements.

## 2012-2013 TECHNICAL SERVICES

### ■ KERN DATA MANAGEMENT

**K**ern Council of Governments is the state-designated Census Data Center for Kern County, distributing social and economic data to other government agencies, private businesses and the general public. During 2012-13, staff answered more than 1,500 requests for information.

Staff uses a variety of data sources to garner demographic information, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, California State Department of Finance, Employment Development Department and the U.S. Census. Kern COG uses the demographic data in producing population forecasts, which are the basis for transportation planning.

In addition, staff typically answers more than 1,000 requests for information each year from simple community or neighborhood population counts to multilayered questions involving deeper analysis. Examples have included

determining the population of existing and proposed library branches; projecting revenue from proposed sales tax increases to help pay for transportation funding; and helping schools and universities predict future enrollment by researching the birth rates in school areas.



Kern COG also serves as the federally designated Home Mortgage Disclosure Repository for the region. In this capacity, the agency maintains records of mortgage customers' social characteristics to ensure lenders don't refuse loans or "redline" entire neighborhoods because of racial or income considerations.

Much of the agency's information resources are available through [www.kerncog.org](http://www.kerncog.org), including links to other information sources.



## ■ TRANSPORTATION MODEL

**K**ern COG uses computerized transportation modeling to more accurately predict traffic volumes during morning, noon, and evening rush hours, as well as off-peak times of day.

Kern COG staff uses multiple traffic scenarios of the Kern COG Regional Travel Demand Model for its Air Quality Conformity process, which is required by the federal government to ensure planned transportation projects will not make air pollution worse.

The predicted traffic volumes are used to determine potential air pollution, including oxides of carbon, ozone and particulate matter.

## ■ GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

**S**ince 1990, Kern COG has been working to integrate Geographic Information System tools into the region's transportation, land use and air quality planning efforts.

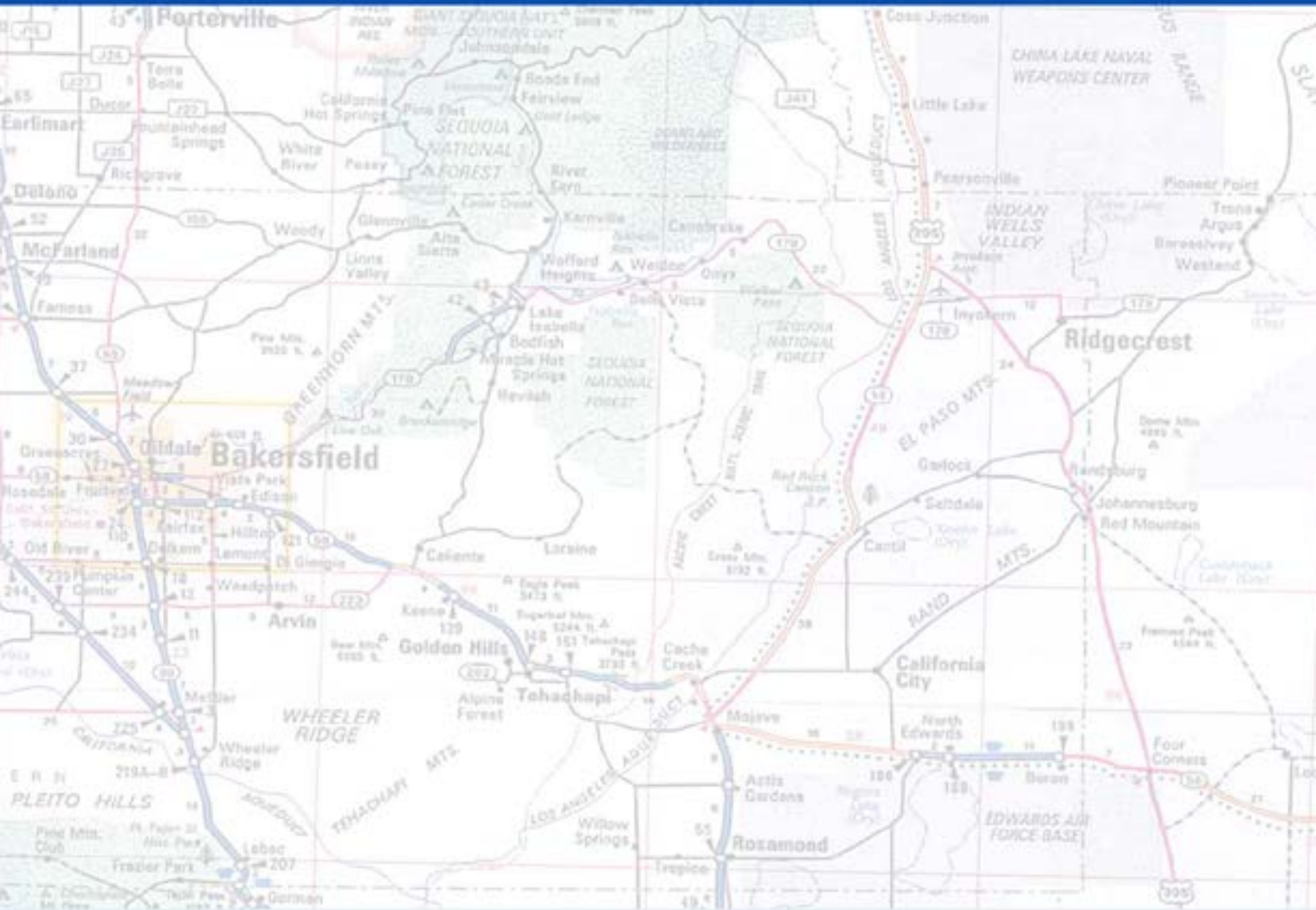
Beginning in 1994, Kern COG has administered the Kern Geographic Information Network (Kern GEONET). This organization coordinates local government GIS efforts to reduce duplication of effort among agencies through data sharing and coordinated data development. Recent projects include online GIS mapping websites at the City of Bakersfield, Kern County and Kern COG.

Kern COG fosters local government use of geospatial technology through a GIS incubator program, the latest of which is Delano, the second largest of Kern's cities.

The incubator program provides technical expertise and data to smaller agencies that may lose experienced personnel. Kern COG steps in to provide maintenance and training until the local agency is ready to again take over these technical responsibilities.

GIS assistance has been provided to Delano, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Maricopa, Kern County, Bakersfield, the Kern County Water Agency and the Indian Wells Valley Resource Conservation District.





1401 19th Street, Suite 300  
Bakersfield, California 93301  
661.861.2191  
661.324.8215 fax  
[www.kerncog.org](http://www.kerncog.org)