

BETTER PLANNING. BETTER TRANSPORTATION.



**Kern Council  
of Governments**

= = = = = 2010 - 2011 = = = = =  
ANNUAL REPORT

## MEMBER AGENCIES & REPRESENTATIVES



**Steven Morgan**

Kern COG Chairman  
Ridgecrest Council Member

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

Timothy Tarver  
Harold Hanson  
Nicholas Lessenevitch  
Grace Vallejo  
Gary Mock  
Manuel Cantu  
Steven Morgan  
Jon Johnston  
Paul Linder  
Philip A. Smith  
Cheryl Wegman  
Jon McQuiston  
Ray Watson

Caltrans  
GET  
Joint Planning  
Policy Committee

Howard Silver  
Scott Kiernan

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, and 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 2010-2011.

## STAFF

### ADMINISTRATION

**Ronald E. Brummett**  
Executive Director

**Michael Heimer**  
Regional Planner III

**Greg Palomo**  
Financial Services Officer

**Linda Urata**  
Regional Planner III

**Fasika Stowe**  
Administrative Assistant I

**Rebecca Napier**  
Regional Planner III

**Robert Phipps**  
Director of Administrative Services

**Rochelle Invina**  
Regional Planner I

**Laurie Collins**  
Executive Secretary

**Susanne Campbell**  
Regional Planner I

**Tami Popek**  
Office Services Assistant

**Angelica Banuelos**  
Administrative Assistant I

### PROJECT DELIVERY

**Joe Stramaglia**  
Senior Planner

**Raquel Pacheco**  
Regional Planner III

**Robert Snoddy**  
Regional Planner III

### TECHNICAL SERVICES

**Rob Ball**  
Planning Division Director

**Troy Hightower**  
Regional Planner II

**Ed Flickinger**  
Regional Planner III

**Ben Raymond**  
Regional Planner II

**Vincent Liu**  
Regional Planner III

### DATA MANAGEMENT

**Peter Smith**  
Senior Planner

### LONG-RANGE PLANNING

**Marilyn Beardslee**  
Senior Planner



**Ron Brummett**  
Kern COG  
Executive Director

My journey over the past 31 years has allowed me to participate in numerous events that gave me great satisfaction. As a region we have worked together by truly embracing all transportation modes. Whether it's bicycling, buses, walking or rail, there's no escaping that the Kern region has become California's crossroads of commerce and a center for recreation.

Through collaborative efforts we have supported our local economies by addressing both rural and urban roads, improved public transit, implemented air quality strategies and have taken the first steps in addressing sustainable communities through the Kern Regional Blueprint.

Since 2009, Kern COG's focus has been on freight movement and the role Kern plays in getting goods to market throughout California and the West. We have completed the three truck studies aimed at learning what kinds of goods are traveling along our roads and highways. We have also completed two separate rail

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

studies that will help us inventory and prioritize future projects, such as grade separations, as funding becomes available. As more and more freight comes out of the ports of Long Beach and San Pedro, rail seems like a better shipping option all the time, with the potential to relieve our freeways of congestion while also improving air quality.

We made progress on the Metropolitan Bakersfield Long-Range Transit Study, which will inform future routes for Golden Empire Transit District, and may even expand express routes to that service. And of course, we have coordinated efforts to make our local concerns known to the California High-Speed Rail Authority so that the final system design meets the needs of our communities in anticipation of that project breaking ground next year.

To this day, I am humbled by the power of our partnerships, whether with other agencies, businesses, stakeholders or the public. Our willingness to cooperate and find innovative solutions to our transportation problems has always been — and will continue to be — the fuel that gets us where we need to be.

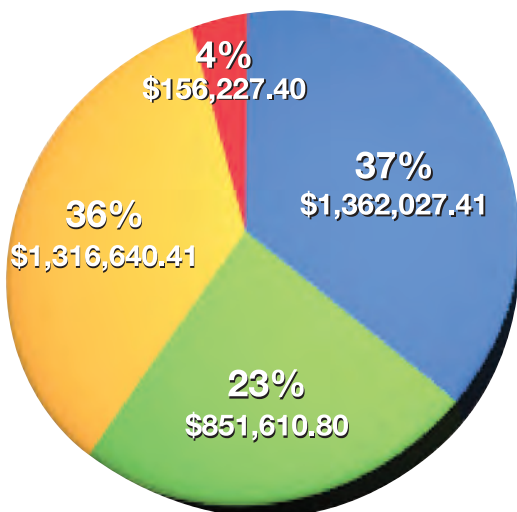
I cannot think of another job that would have allowed me to be a small but active agent of change. For that, I thank you all very much.

## REVENUE & EXPENDITURES FY 10-11

Description	Amount	Percent of Total
Federal	\$1,362,027.05	36.95%
State	\$851,610.80	23.10%
Local	\$1,316,640.41	35.72%
Misc	\$156,227.40	4.24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,686,505.66</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Personnel	\$2,025,857.08	54.95%
Professional Services	\$1,391,261.59	37.74%
Services & Supplies	\$269,386.99	7.31%
Capital	\$0.00	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,686,505.66</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

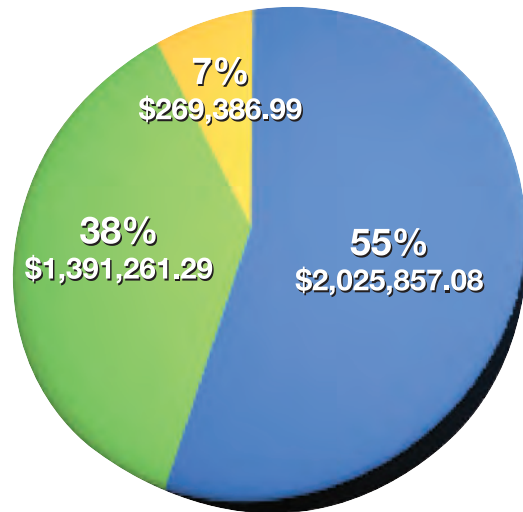


**KERN COG AGENCY REVENUE SOURCES**  
FY 2010-2011



● Federal ● State ● Local ● Misc

**KERN COG AGENCY EXPENDITURES**  
FY 2010-2011



● Personnel ● Professional Services ● Services & Supplies ● Capital

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Seventy-six 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.

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.

Overall satisfaction with quality of life in the 2011 survey

(76 percent) is consistent with the results of the 2010 survey (78 percent). Similar to the previous surveys, residents of the mountain regions such as Frazier Park and Bear Valley are more satisfied with the quality of life in their city or town (83%), than residents of West Kern (74%), the Central Valley (77%), and East Kern (69%). Roughly three out of four residents drive alone in their commute to work or school. Across regions, more than two-thirds of residents reported that they commute by automobile. As in previous years, public transit usage was strongly related to household income.



## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

In winter 2011, Kern COG sponsored state legislation to help preserve short-line rail in the San Joaquin Valley, infrastructure that several local agriculture and petroleum shippers say they rely on to get their goods to market.

Senate Bill 325, authored by Senator Michael Rubio (Bakersfield), has been signed by Gov. Jerry Brown. It establishes the Central California Rail Authority, a joint powers authority much like Kern COG, to acquire short-line rail in danger of abandonment.

Unlike Class I rail, Class II or short-line rail typically runs shorter distances before hooking up with major carriers such as Burlington-Northern Santa Fe or Union Pacific. A recent slate of rail abandonments by operators seeking to cash in on high scrap prices has created gaps in the short-line system from Kern through Fresno counties.

SB 325 allows the Central California Rail Authority to purchase rail threatened with abandonment to preserve the corridor and potentially seek other operators.

The emphasis on a legislative program that Kern COG’s Board began in 2009 is intended to help the region

compete with larger metropolitan regions for federal and state funding. Kern COG has joined its sister agencies throughout the San Joaquin Valley to exert more influence over state and federal lawmakers, including trips by city council members and county supervisors to both Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

By banding together on common legislative goals, the eight San Joaquin Valley counties have managed to carve out a \$1 billion earmark for State Route 99 in the Proposition 1B transportation bond of 2008.

One trip each is planned to Sacramento and Washington, D.C. annually for Board members to meet with legislative representatives and lay out Kern COG’s policy goals.



## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Kern COG's Safe Routes to School program in Bakersfield experienced an average 15 percent increase in students walking and riding their bikes to and from the four elementary schools where the program is active during 2010-11, helping to improve safety and air quality at the same time.

The program is administered by Bike Bakersfield and began in 2009 with two local schools; Raffaello Palla in the Greenfield School District and Almondale Elementary in the Rosedale School District. Two new schools were added this past year; San Lauren Elementary in Beardsley School District and Highland Elementary in Standard School District. The problems associated with the morning commute such as high vehicle traffic, few students walking or cycling, and risky behavior by students and drivers are common at all these school sites.

To achieve this program's success, Safe Routes to School provided some fun activities at each of the school sites. Bike Rodeos, essay and art contests, presentations and attendance at school carnivals and parent teacher events helped Bike Bakersfield educate the students, parents and teachers about bicycle and pedestrian safety. "Walking school buses" and "bike trains" have also helped in motivating students to walk or ride to school while alleviating any anxiety the parents might have about sending their children off to school on their own. Bakersfield's Safe Routes to School program has also assisted in obtaining infrastructure changes such as new crosswalks and stop light beacons to help make the roads to school safer for everyone.

### SafeRoutes

National Center for Safe Routes to School



## KERN COMMUTER CONNECTION RIDESHARE 2010-2011



**Kern Commuter  
Connection**

BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING PLACES

This past year was a promising one for Kern Commuter Connection, the region's No. 1 ridesharing resource. Commutekern.org saw an increase of 10 percent in its membership for the year, while Rideshare Week 2010 motivated 243 additional commuters who pledged to carpool at least one day a week.

Even more telling, more than half of those who chose to participate in Rideshare Week realized the benefits of saving money, reducing traffic and cleaning the air enough that they continue with ridesharing as a means of transportation.

Throughout 2010-11, Kern Commuter Connection (KCC) continued to educate Kern residents about the importance of

sharing alternative commuting strategies. KCC staff worked with larger employers (100 employees or more) to help implement a new regulation from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District requiring ridesharing resources for their employees. KCC met with more than 30 local businesses to provide them with Rideshare brochures and fliers, as well as an introduction to commutekern.org, KCC's FREE carpool matching software program.

Rideshare Week is an annual statewide event designed to spread the word about the benefits of using 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 educate the community about the great prizes they would be eligible to win. Participants also had the opportunity to enjoy a free cup of coffee or a discounted lunch at numerous local coffee houses and restaurants.

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY ART CONTEST

Kern Council of Governments celebrated its 40th anniversary in October 2010 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 who 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, 2010 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.

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! First place in Graphic Art Color was received by Michael Sallee, a long-time artist and owner of Sallee Studios.

During 2011 the winning art is being displayed in public buildings throughout Kern County, used at Kern COG outreach events and posted on the agency's website at [www.kerncog.org](http://www.kerncog.org).

KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS'  
40th ANNIVERSARY  
ART CONTEST



KERN  
energy  
watch



## KERN ENERGY WATCH PROGRAM

Kern COG assumed the utility-sponsored Energy Watch program for small governments and special districts in 2009 as part of a broader effort to reduce energy use throughout the region.

Kern Energy Watch (KEW) is a joint partnership among Kern Council of Governments; utility providers; the County of Kern; cities and special districts within the region; and Staples Energy and Marketing Services. The partners also coordinate with the Kern Economic Development Corporation and the Great Valley Center.

Working with local contractors, Energy Watch partnerships conduct "energy audits" and offer financing and equipment to upgrade residential, business and government facility. The program aims to reduce energy consumption,

expenses, and greenhouse gas emissions while conserving natural resources. These goals are achieved through outreach and education, equipment retrofits and upgrades, strategic planning, and technical assistance.

Ten cities in the Kern region passed a resolution supporting KEW. Through the resolution, each city designates a representative who attends monthly partnership meetings, manages the city's projects, coordinates with a KEW audit team, and carries out projects recommended in the audit.

Kern COG will develop a comprehensive Kern Regional Energy Plan to increase program participation based on the area's unique needs. The program also focuses on energy policies that promote efficiency practices, codes, and standards.

## PASSENGER RAIL IS PICKING UP SPEED

Rail issues dominated Kern COG's planning agenda during 2010-11, with activity on California's High Speed Rail Project picking up speed and Amtrak's San Joaquin route hitting a ridership milestone.

With \$6.33 billion in the bank, the California High Speed Rail Authority could begin construction in Kern as early as next year. Construction is now under way at San Francisco's Trans Bay Terminal, and right-of-way Los Angeles' Union Station has already been acquired.

Stakeholder interest in Kern has intensified as the project moves closer to construction. In May 2011 a Kern Transportation Foundation luncheon event featuring former HSRA Chairman Curt Pringle drew more than 180 government and business officials. On July 14, 2011 the High Speed Rail Authority held its monthly board meeting at the Kern County Board of Supervisors chambers in Bakersfield, providing opportunities for locals to interact directly with the Authority Board and staff.

Meanwhile, the draft environmental impact report for the Fresno-to-Bakersfield segment, which examines several possible alignments through Kern, was released in August with final approval scheduled for spring 2012. As each segment gains environmental clearance, the Authority plans to issue design/build contracts for approximately \$1 billion each. Twenty-five percent of these contracts are required to be filled by small business contractors.

Also in 2010-11, Amtrak ridership on the 12 San Joaquin trains per day (Bakersfield to Oakland) broke 1 million trips annually. Kern COG's Regional Transportation Plan is recommending a closer look at commuter rail options in Kern between Wasco, Shafter and Bakersfield as well as Rosamond and Palmdale.



## KERN RAILROAD GRADE SEPARATION STUDY

At-grade roadway-rail crossings along Morning Drive, Kratzmeyer Road and Rosedale Highway in Bakersfield should be among the top priorities for grade separations throughout the region as funding becomes available, according to a new Kern COG study.

In June 2011, Kern COG's board received the final draft of the Kern Railroad Grade Separation Study, which identified and prioritized crossings that have the greatest potential for improving safety and traffic flow.

The study had three major components: Updating Kern COG's database of rail crossings; developing screening criteria to narrow the database to a list of the top 40 candidate crossings, and; an evaluation method to prioritize the crossings from the initial crossing list into four categories: high, medium and low priority and other.

The information is intended to help decision makers decide which crossings to select for grade separation as local, state or federal funding becomes available. The study is available on [www.kerncog.org](http://www.kerncog.org) under Publications Index — Rail Studies.

### HIGH PRIORITY CROSSINGS

CROSSING NAME	RAILROAD	COMMUNITY
<b>Morning Drive (SR 184)</b>	UPRR	East Bakersfield
<b>Kratzmeyer Road</b>	BNSF RR	NW Bakersfield
<b>Comanche Drive</b>	UPRR	East Bakersfield
<b>Rosedale Highway (SR 58)</b>	SJVR/BNSF	Bakersfield
<b>Lerdo Highway</b>	BNSF RR	Shafter
<b>Kimberlina Road</b>	BNSF RR	Wasco
<b>Merced Ave</b>	BNSF RR	Shafter
<b>East Truxtun Avenue (5 crossings)</b>	BNSF RR	East Bakersfield
<b>Baker Street (included in East Truxtun)</b>	BNSF RR	East Bakersfield
<b>Rosamond Boulevard</b>	BNSF RR	Rosamond

## WORK HAS BEGUN ON ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE TARGETS - 2014 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In 2010-11, Kern COG began a series of studies intended to influence its long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and meet California's new climate change regulations at the same time.

The RTP details anticipated transportation expenditures across modes over a 24-year period within the Kern region, including local roads, highways, bicycle, rail and pedestrian projects.

Kern COG's 2014 RTP will be its first with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) addressing how the region will meet the state's new greenhouse gas reduction targets. San Joaquin Valley counties have been tasked with reducing greenhouse gases by 5 percent by 2020, primarily by reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled. The SCS will analyze strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars, light trucks, and SUVs based on the latest planning assumptions. Some of the studies under way to assist in those reductions include:

- San Joaquin Valley's 8-County Transportation Model Improvement Program
- Metro Bakersfield Long Range Transit Plan
- Managed Lanes-Bus Rapid Transit Study
- Commuter Rail Feasibility Study
- Bikeways Master Plan
- Short Haul Rail Freight Study – Phase II
- Bakersfield High Speed Rail Station Area Plan
- Kern Regional Energy Action Plan

These studies and plans will form the basis for much of the public outreach Kern COG will conduct for the 2014 RTP. Modeled on the highly successful Kern Blueprint, Kern COG will conduct approximately 40 public outreach meetings by the end of 2012. A final series of meetings will be held in 2013 as part of the public review process for the RTP environmental document.

## ADOPTED FORECAST NAILS 2010 CENSUS POPULATION FOR KERN

Newly released 2010 U.S. Census data for the Kern region differs by only 513 people from a population projection that Kern COG's Board of Directors adopted in 2005, a scant 6/100ths of a percent difference.

An accurate forecast means that millions of dollars in environmental work completed before the Census' release won't have to be updated, keeping plans on track for delivering transportation projects in Kern.

The federal Census counts population once every 10 years. Current year estimates are prepared annually by the California Department of Finance (DOF) using information such as building permits, births, deaths, and driver license address changes. DOF revises its estimates when the new Census count becomes available, often causing planners to revise their forecasts.



Kern 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 2010-11 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.

## RURAL ROUTES TRUCK STUDY

The last of three origins and destinations truck studies that Kern COG has conducted over a four-year period focused on rural State Routes including 223, 166, 119, 46, and 65.

Two earlier studies focused on the major routes through Kern County, State Routes 58, 99 and Interstate 5. Collectively, the studies aimed to gather statistical information on truck origins and destinations; better understand the types of cargo being transported and; understand why the route was chosen, among others. Unprecedented data have been collected through the three studies, with 19,770 drivers surveyed, more than 500

trucking firms interviewed, and 10,790 trucks videoed and classified.

According to the Federal Highway Administration no other agency has ever undertaken this kind of effort.

The data will be used to: assist Kern COG in goods movement forecasting and long-range infrastructure planning; provide trucking information for county agencies in their local planning efforts; address air quality issues; and to have a resource that can be shared throughout the region and the state.

General findings by route include:

### State Route 223

- Vehicle volumes are about 4,600/day.
- About 30 percent of all vehicles are trucks.
- Lamont, Edison, and Arvin generate many of the truck trips.
- SR-223 is viewed as the way to go to avoid SR-99, particularly at its junction with SR-58 just south of Bakersfield, and especially at rush hour.

### State Route 166

- Vehicle volumes are about 3,230/day.
- About 26 percent of all vehicles are trucks.
- Most van trucks were bound for Wal-Mart/Sam's Club.
- SR-166 is considered by truckers as a good route to the coast.

### State Route 119

- Vehicle volumes are about 9,700 vehicles/day.
- About 9 percent of all vehicles are trucks.
- Compared to all other routes – SR-119 has highest number of service trucks.
- SR-119 had the greatest proportion of petroleum-related truck traffic and less agricultural traffic.

### State Route 46

- Vehicle volumes are about 7,300/day.
- About 35 percent of all vehicles are trucks.
- SR-46 has the highest volume of trucks in this study.
- SR-46 was identified as a good route around Bakersfield.

### State Route 65

- Vehicle volumes are about 6,700/day.
- About 19 percent of all vehicles are trucks.
- The segment between 7th Standard Road and Lerdo Highway has the highest volume of trucks along the route.
- The Wal-Mart/Sam's Club distribution center in Porterville is a large generator of truck trips.





Kern COG planned to fund roughly \$245 million in transportation projects in 2010-11 through its Federal Transportation Improvement Program, a short-range plan covering three to five years of expenditures.

Of this funding, about \$35 million was federal, \$178 million state and the remainder was local programming. About \$8 million was dedicated to street maintenance while new highway improvements accounted for about \$27 million. Roughly \$130 million was programmed for maintenance on the state highway system. Several regionally significant projects are already under construction. They include:

## PROJECT DELIVERY

- Westside Parkway – New Freeway - Mohawk Extension to Allen Road in Bakersfield
- State Route 46 – Widen to 4 Lanes – Kern County Line to Holloway Road
- Seventh Standard Road Grade Separation at Santa Fe Way Hageman Road/Allen Road Grade Separation

Also in 2011, the Mohawk Street Extension, which serves as the Westside Parkway's first phase, opened to the public. Work began on the project in spring 2009.

The extension is a new, \$29 million, 1.2-mile roadway with three lanes in each direction, plus bike lanes and a sidewalk. Construction included three major bridge structures – across the Kern River, the future Westside Parkway alignment, and the BNSF Railway. A new box culvert was also built at the Cross Valley Canal. The facility offers access to the Kern River Bike Path, which was rerouted beneath the new Kern River Bridge.

## INTERCHANGE STUDIES

Two Kern COG-sponsored studies examining the potential for new interchanges at Highway 99 and Elmo Highway in McFarland, and another at Highways 58 and 223 (Bear Mountain Boulevard) near the Bakersfield National Cemetery are nearly complete, examining a host of alternatives to improve both traffic flow and safety.

The feasibility studies present the first step in engineering and planning leading to design and construction when funding is available.

A draft report is already under consideration for the SR 58/223 study area while the McFarland study area should be finalized by fall 2011. A public outreach meeting in Tehachapi in May presented three possible alternatives for future interchange improvements, including a grade separation to reduce the risk of at-grade accidents. A fourth alternative was developed for the study based on comments presented at the meeting. The final report for this study area



will be presented to Kern COG's Board of Directors in fall 2011.

Presentations were given to the McFarland City Council at its June meeting to bring it up to date on the various options under consideration to upgrade freeway interchange access to Highway 99 near Elmo Highway. A public outreach meeting will be held prior the draft report's release. This study should be completed by the end 2011 or early 2012.



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