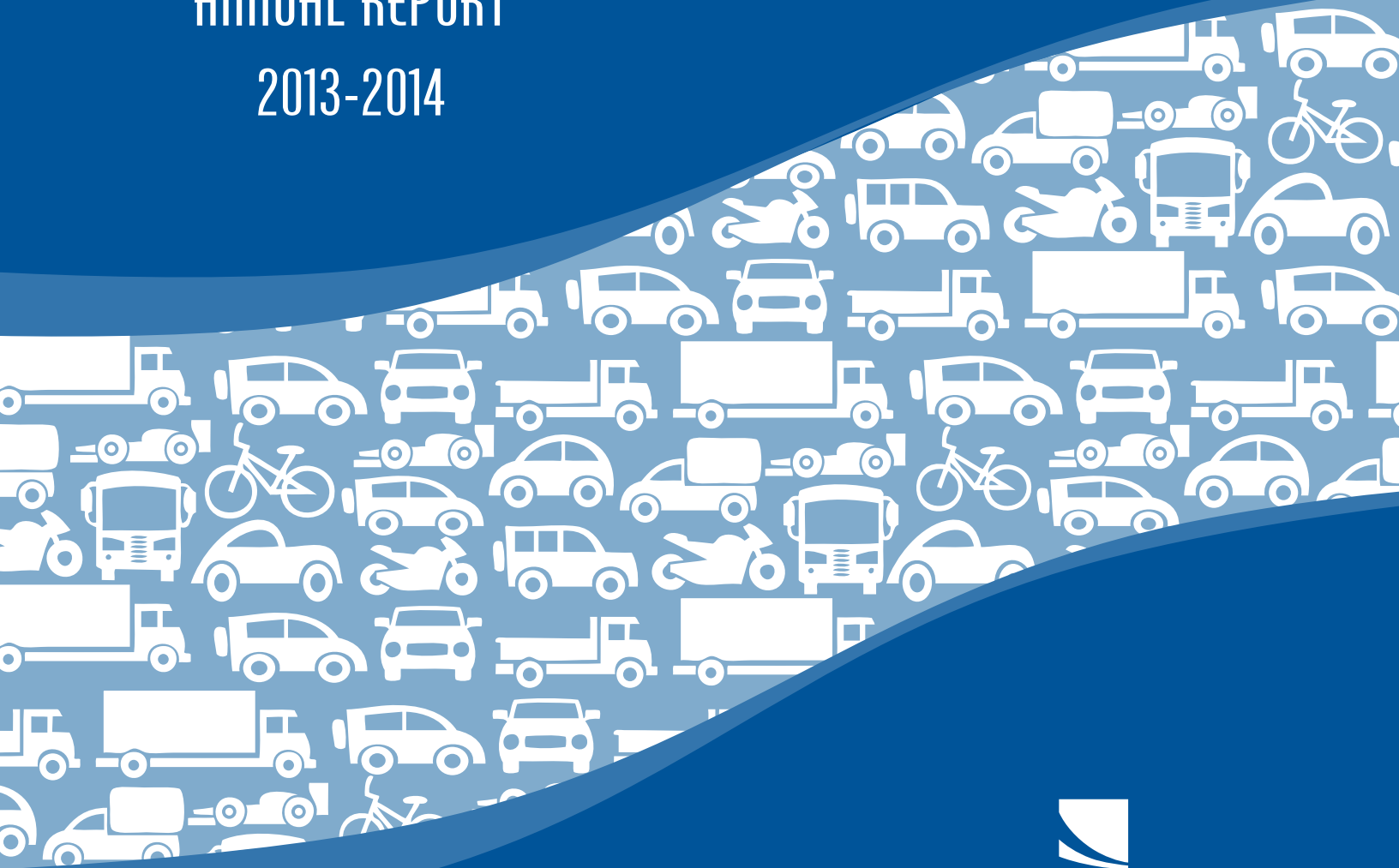


ANNUAL REPORT

2013-2014



**Kern Council
of Governments**

Better Planning, Better Transportation

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	José Flores Harold Hanson, Chair Jennifer Wood Rueben Pascual John Wilke Manuel Cantu Marshall "Chip" Holloway Jon Johnston Paul Linder, Vice Chair Philip A. Smith Cheryl Wegman David Couch Zack Scrivner
Caltrans GET Joint Planning Policy Board	Gail Miller Howard Silver Scott Kiernan

Staff

Administration

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Administrative Assistant

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Regional Planner

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Executive Secretary

Tami Popek
Office Services Assistant

Michael Heimer
Regional Planner

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Rebecca Napier
Regional Planner

Linda Urata
Regional Planner

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Robert Snoddy | Regional Planner

Joe Stramaglia | Regional Planner

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Rochelle Invina | Regional Planner

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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 2013-2014.



2014 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In June, Kern COG adopted its 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which balances road maintenance, larger investments in public transportation, and bicycle & pedestrian infrastructure without sacrificing new capital improvements that will help drive economic development.

A 26-year master plan for transportation throughout the Kern region, the RTP encompasses all federal investments in new, regional projects across different modes, including highways and freeways; public transportation; bicycle lanes and paths; walkways and sidewalks; and some local road maintenance.

Funding levels include a nearly 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

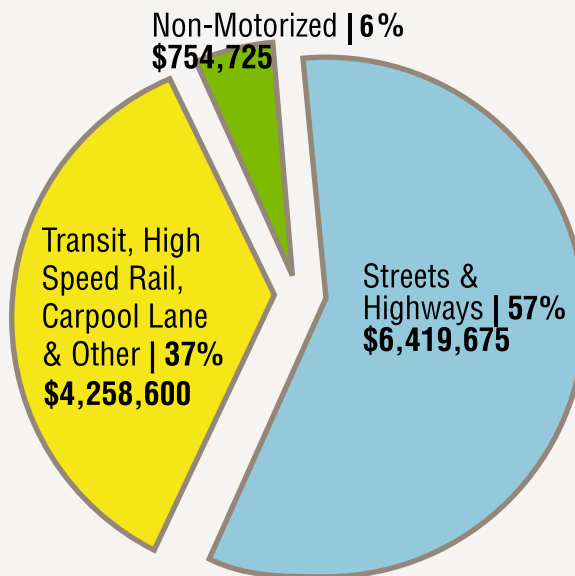
people to live closer to where they work. Ultimately, that will help lower the cost of living for all of us.”

The RTP’s planned expenditures are based on an analysis of different land use scenarios that better coordinate land use and transportation. The 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.

Kern COG outreach efforts related to the RTP engaged more than 8,000 people or 1 percent of the region’s population. Public input resulted in significant changes to the expenditure plan as compared to the 2011 RTP. To further stakeholder and public input on the 2014 RTP and the new Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Kern COG provided access to administrative drafts in the form of a Preliminary RTP and Sustainable Community Strategy. The Final 2014 RTP is available online at: http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/rtp/2014_RTP.pdf.

The 2014 RTP contains a 26-year, \$11.6 billion capital, operations & maintenance expenditure proposal with the following funding breakdown:

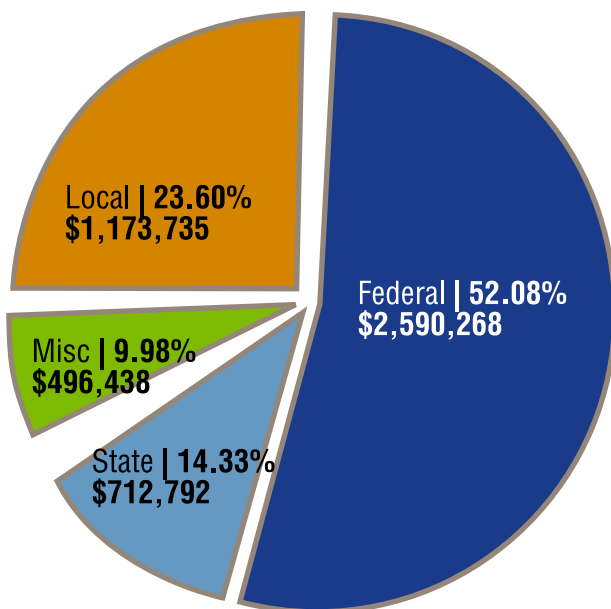
2014 RTP funding (in millions) by mode



Budgeted Revenues & Expenditures

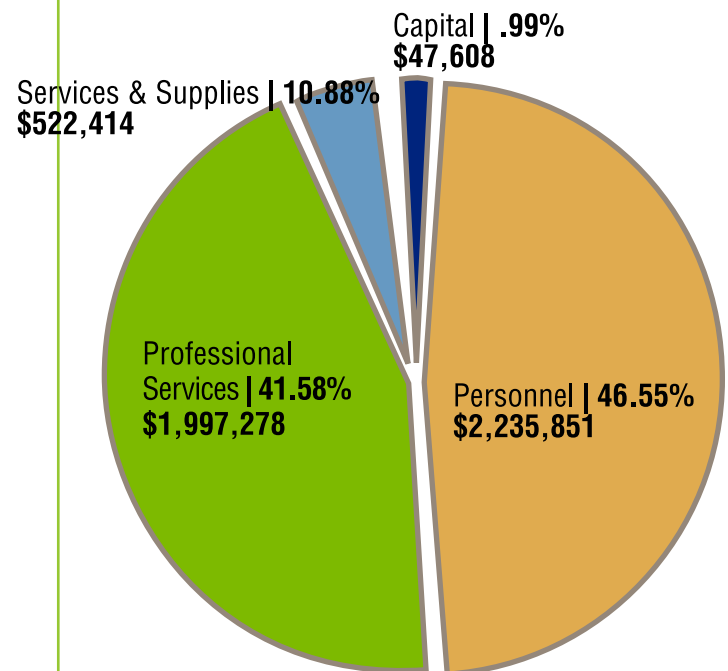
REVENUES

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	% of TOTAL
Federal	\$2,590,268	52.08%
State	\$712,792	14.33%
Local	\$1,173,735	23.60%
Misc	\$496,438	9.98%
Total	\$4,973,233	100%



EXPENDITURES

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	% of TOTAL
Personnel	\$2,235,851	46.55%
Professional Services	\$1,997,278	41.58%
Services & Supplies	\$522,414	10.88%
Capital	\$47,608	0.99%
Total	\$4,803,151	100%



2014 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Eighty-four 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 6 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 2014 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 30 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. Thirty percent of those respondents said they would continue to drive alone even if an alternative were

readily available, a drop from 42 percent in 2013. Thirty percent also said they would be willing to carpool or vanpool.

■ Residents largely approve of Highways 14 and 178 in terms of traffic flow, pavement conditions and safety but ascribe the lowest ratings to highways 65 and 119.

■ Approximately 81 percent of the residents would consider a single-family

home with a large yard and 74 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 252,000 people or 29 percent more households requiring more than 67,600 new housing units by 2023, according to Kern COG’s Regional Housing Data Report released in June.

The report provides a statistical basis for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan (RHNA), which Kern COG adopted with the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan in June 2014. The RHNA is used to update local general plan housing elements for the Kern County region.



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



2013-2014 SHORT-RANGE PLANNING

PROJECT DELIVERY OVERVIEW

Kern COG programmed nearly \$640 million for transportation projects during 2013-2014, including \$195 million for right-of-way purchases on the Centennial Corridor in Bakersfield, a two-and-a-half mile freeway project to connect existing State Route 58 east of State Route 99 to the nearly completed Westside Parkway.

The Centennial Corridor project accounts for \$565 million, or 40 percent, of the \$1.44 billion identified in Kern COG's 2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Program, a short-range programming document that anticipates up to five years of transportation projects using federal, state and local funds. About \$601 million comes from federal fuel taxes returned to the region, \$340 million comes from state fuel taxes and the remaining \$501 million are local matching shares.

Several regional projects were under construction and completed in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

- **Westside Parkway** – New Freeway in Bakersfield – Phases 1 through 5 – *Open to public August 2013.*
- **Westside Parkway** – New Freeway in Bakersfield – Phase 6 – *Under construction.*
- **State Route 58** - Widening – In Bakersfield from Cottonwood Roads to SR 99 – *Under construction.*
- **State Route 99** – Southern Widening from Wilson Road to Route 119 – *Open to public May 2014.*
- **State Route 99** – Northern Widening from Olive Drive to Beardsley Canal – *Under construction.*
- **State Route 178** - Construct New Interchange at Morning Drive – *Under construction.*
- **West Ridgecrest Boulevard reconstruction in Ridgecrest** – *Under construction.*
- **Challenger Drive Extension in Tehachapi** – *Under construction.*

Other Countywide Transportation Expenditures

In 2013-14, approximately \$10 million in federal aid was dedicated to street and roads rehabilitation. Nearly \$107 million was programmed for maintenance on the state highway system.

- \$17 million – 27 air quality-related / transit projects
- \$10 million – 19 local street and roads rehabilitation projects
- \$3 million – 17 Pedestrian and Bicycle related projects
- \$107 million – 11 state highway-related safety and maintenance projects

Project details for projects of regional significance and other local projects may be found at:

- http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/progress_report_201407.pdf;
- <http://www.kerncog.org/federal-transportation-improvement-program>; and
- <http://www.bakersfieldfreeways.us/ConstructionActivity.htm>.

THOMAS ROADS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (TRIP)

The Thomas Roads Improvement Program's (TRIP) biggest achievement in 2013-2014 year was opening the Westside Parkway, but it was a year filled with accomplishments that paves the way for accelerated activity in 2014-2015.

The Parkway's opening on August 2, 2013 had an immediate effect on Bakersfield's transportation network. Nearly 40,000 freeway trips are now made every day, shortening commuter drive times and reducing congestion on area arterial streets. The project's final phase, from Allen Road to Stockdale Highway/Heath Road, is expected to open to traffic in late 2014.

Two projects broke ground in 2013 and are still under construction:

- The State Route 58 Gap Closure Project, with completion scheduled for late 2014.
- The State Route 178/Morning Drive Inter-

change Project, which anticipates opening in mid-2015.

Final designs and right-of-way acquisitions were underway on four projects during 2013-2014. These projects will start construction in 2014-2015:

- State Route 99/Hosking Avenue interchange
- Beltway operational improvements
- Rosedale Highway widening project
- State Route 178 widening

The environmental review process was completed on two projects, including the 24th Street Improvement Project in late 2013. The City Council voted to certify the document in early 2014 after public hearings. In addition, Caltrans signed the final environmental

document for the Hageman Road Flyover in May 2014.

The Centennial Corridor, which will connect State Route 58 with the new Westside Parkway, marked several milestones in the past year. Approximately \$165 million in federal funding was released early to acquire right-of-way from willing sellers. To date, more than 100 property owners have either already sold their properties or are in negotiations with the city.

In addition, the draft environmental document was released for comments, including a Caltrans workshop in July to accept public input. Meanwhile, work on the final environmental document is already under way. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2016.

LITTER REMOVAL

In 2013-14, workers with the City of Bakersfield and the Bakersfield Homeless Center along with inmates from the Lerdo Detention Facility 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 2013, Kern COG's Board approved three separate agreements with the City of Bakersfield and the Kern County Sheriff's Department (KCSO) for litter removal in the metropolitan area, throughout the balance of Kern County and for regional enforcement against littering. The KCSO 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.

Kern Council of Governments (KCOG) 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 more than 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. Litter removal is eligible for KMAA funding because studies show that litter and debris on the roadway create a safety hazard.



■ KERN ENERGY WATCH PARTNERSHIP

KERN energy watch

The County of Kern, incorporated cities within the county, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company have partnered to reduce energy consumption and energy expenses, while conserving natural resources and reducing air pollution.

The program partners conduct outreach, training and installation of energy-efficient upgrades, and strategic planning on projects for municipal facilities, private businesses or in residences.

Local building departments brought improvement safety and energy efficiency to the attention of the public through a marketing campaign during May 2013, Building Safety Month.

The partners celebrated Energy Awareness Month in October by kicking off two initiatives. Between October 2013 and January 2014, city council members; non-profit group members; city staff; and Kern COG staff went door-to-door to 1,350 homes in four communities. In McKittrick, residents participated in an “energy makeover,” wherein residences, businesses and a county fire station received energy efficiency upgrades.

In addition, from November through December, local residents turned down their thermostats and put on “ugly sweaters” to save energy, and then posted pic-

tures to the Kern Energy Watch website to compete for prizes.

The County of Kern and the cities of Ridgecrest and Delano completed Energy Action Plans, guiding short and long-term energy use policies, and identifying specific, future projects. Work commenced to examine the short-term success of Energy Action Plans created by other local communities in 2012.

Meanwhile, PG&E’s subcontractor, Staples Energy, served more than 717 business customers, helping to save a combined 12 million kWh of electricity in nine communities.

Southern California Edison and its partners provided performance audits to local government agencies and businesses in five communities and the County of Kern. Energy efficiency measures will be taken in 2014-15.

Finally, the cities of California City and Tehachapi received certificates acknowledging their stellar participation in the Southern California Edison Energy Leader Partner Program.



COMMUTEKERN



COMMUTEKERN

Because You're Going Places!

RIDESHARE 2013-2014

Between a 29 percent increase in Kern Council of Governments' ridematching database and survey results that show a 12 percent drop in those who said they'll always drive alone to work or school, regional commuters are beginning to express a changing attitude about their daily travel routines.

Kern Council of Governments' rideshare program offers a free, web-based ridematching service at commutekern.org to help link people going in the same direction each day. 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 2013 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 let commuters know about the prizes they could win.



More than 725 participants pledged to rideshare at least one day during the week to help save money, reduce traffic headaches and clean the air—a 45 percent increase in pledges from the previous year. Approximately half of all participants continue to rideshare after their pledge has ended.

CommuteKern staff attended more than 25 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 50 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, the free carpool matching software program.



2013-2014 NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

In early 2014-15, Kern Council of Governments programmed \$727,000 for new, non-motorized transportation projects, including new bicycle lanes, sidewalks and safety programs.

The city of Bakersfield received \$203,000 to buy and install pedestrian countdown timers at 50 intersections across the city. The timers let pedestrians know how much time is left before the light changes to red. Bakersfield was also allocated money to build several short bike lane segments on Snow Road between Allen and Norris Road; on Haggin Oaks between Camino Media and Ming; and on Stockdale Highway between Renfro and Allen Road.

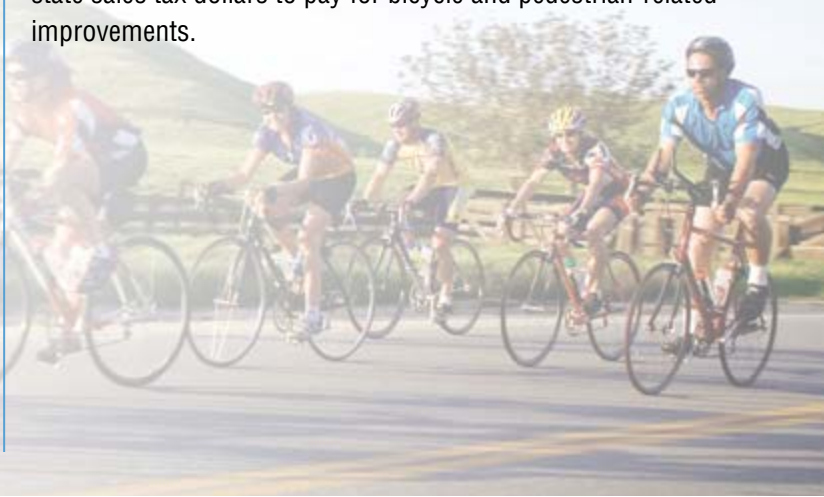
In the city of Tehachapi \$363,000 will go toward designing and building a Class I bicycle lane (separate travel way) on the north side of Tehachapi Boulevard from Hayes Street to east of Stuber Avenue. Funding is also continuing on the citywide bicycle lane project that was awarded last year.

McFarland officials will construct a bike lane on Mast Avenue from the city limits to Garzoli Avenue. McFarland was also awarded funding to buy and install bicycle racks and host a bicycle safety work-

shop for elementary and junior high school students. The city of Wasco will also host a bicycle safety workshop for students.

In Arvin, pedestrian improvements are planned in and around DiGiorgio Park. The project will be funded over three years, costing more than \$132,000.

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.



2013-2014 TECHNICAL SERVICES

■ KERN DATA MANAGEMENT

As the state-designated Census Data Center for Kern County, Kern Council of Governments answered more than 1,200 information requests in 2013-14, distributing social and economic data to other government agencies, private businesses and the general public.

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, including links to other information sources.



■ TRANSPORTATION MODEL

Kern 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

Since 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.

■ AERIAL IMAGERY

Through a partnership with the United States Geological Survey, Kern COG has acquired more than 9,000 square miles of new color aerial imagery covering the entire Kern County area.

The new imagery was collected in April 2014, corresponding to the same time of year for the previous 2010 imagery. The imagery is free for all public and private use and is available through multiple sources. Raster or digital aerial imagery is delivered on portable hard drives and allows users with appropriate software to zoom, pan and print the areas of interest. Kern COG uses aerial imagery in numerous ways:

- Environmental documents for future road projects;
- Identifying population and employment data locations for the regional transportation model;
- Verifying the location and number of lanes of the transportation network in the transportation model;
- Draping imagery of 3-D terrain models to provide perspective views of future road projects;
- Save staff time required to make site visits;
- Identify urban area boundaries;
- Provide visual confirmation of newly completed projects



Kern Council of Governments
2013-2014 Annual Report



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