

Kern COG Quarterly

BETTER PLANNING. BETTER TRANSPORTATION.



**Kern Council
of Governments**

WINTER 2014

Inside...

2

Plan calls for 67,000 new housing units in Kern by 2023

Nearly \$730,000 awarded to bicycle, pedestrian projects in Arvin, Bakersfield, McFarland and Tehachapi

3

New buses, electric charging stations and parking lots among recipients of \$9 million in transit grants

Tehachapi opens Challenger Drive extension

Grants fund local transit planning

4

Rideshare Week draws more than 1,000 new carpooling pledges

Air quality 'What Matters Most' for sixth-grade science classes

5

Bakersfield's Energy Action Plan sparks efficiencies

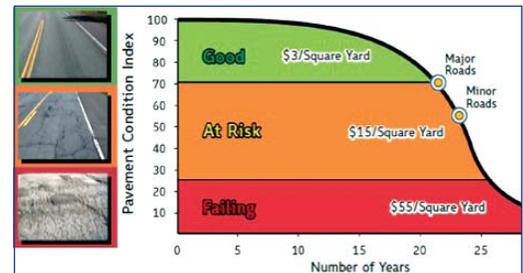
Campaign asks residents to 'Take 5' minutes to save money

Report: 25 percent of Kern region's roads need to be completely repaved

A new report sponsored by California's cities and counties says Kern's pavement condition has degraded 3 percent over the past six years and that 25 percent of the region's roads will need to be completely repaved at 10 times the cost of normal maintenance.

Surprisingly, this degradation has occurred during relatively good transportation funding years for Kern. Over the past six years \$100 million of "one-time" funding sources (federal stimulus, demonstration funds and state bonds) have been spent to repave and build new roadways at a pace that has almost kept up with the rate of normal roadway wear and tear. However, these one-time funding sources are drying up and the pay-as-you-go flat taxes on gasoline have lost nearly half their buying power since they were last increased 20 years ago.

Kern County Roads Commissioner Craig Pope estimates that the backlog in road maintenance has grown by at least a third to \$300 million in the unincorporated areas alone during this period.



Roads in the Kern Region Have Degraded 3% Between 2007 and 2013

In June 2014, Kern Council of Governments adopted a transportation plan to increase lane miles 29 percent to meet the needs of a projected 71 percent population increase by 2040. However, without new revenue sources, maintenance funding is anticipated to decrease 23 percent by 2040.

"The California Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment 2014" blames the increasing number of electric/hybrid vehicles that don't incur gas tax expenses and the declining purchasing power of federal and state gas taxes for the funding shortfall.

Please see *Save Our Streets*, page 6

State grant awards \$8 million to active transportation projects locally

The County of Kern along with the cities of Arvin, Bakersfield, Delano, Tehachapi and Wasco will collectively receive more than \$8.1 million through a new state transportation grant program targeting pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation projects.

Kern Council of Governments on December 4, 2014

adopted eight biking and walking projects throughout the county through its regional share of the 2014 Active Transportation Program (ATP). These projects are in addition to those awarded in August when the California Transportation Commission (CTC) funded 148 projects statewide, collectively valued at more than \$430 million, making it the nation's largest such program.

Please see *Active Transportation*, page 6

Plan calls for 67,000 new housing units in Kern by 2023

More than 67,600 units will be needed to accommodate the Kern region's growing population through 2023, according to a Kern COG plan that proscribes how many new and existing homes each community will need to meet demand.

Both the 2013-2023 Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan (RHNA Plan) and Kern Regional Housing Data Report (Data Report) have already been approved by California's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD). HCD provided Kern COG the following table for the region's housing needs determination by income category. The plans detail housing need based on income levels, including very low income; low income; moderate income and above moderate income.

Kern COG develops its RHNA Plan to allocate the region's share of the estimated housing need to cities and the county. Local governments are then required to plan where

and how the housing units will be developed within their communities through their general plans' housing elements.

The RHNA Plan, Kern Regional Housing Data Report, and housing element information can be downloaded: www.kerncog.org/regional-housing.

Regional Housing Needs Determination by Income Category for Projection Period: January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2023		
Income Category	Percent (minimum)	Housing Units (rounded)
Very-Low	24.9%	16,850
Low	15.6%	10,555
Moderate	16.6%	11,235
Above-Moderate	42.90%	29,035
Total	100.0%	67,675

Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development

Nearly \$730,000 awarded to bicycle, pedestrian projects in Arvin, Bakersfield, McFarland and Tehachapi

In September, Kern Council of Governments awarded \$727,500 to seven projects in Arvin, Bakersfield and McFarland for 2014-15 to add bicycle lanes, "countdown" pedestrian signals, sidewalks and other non-motorized transportation improvements.

Project funding comes from the Transportation Development Act, a ¼-cent of state sales tax funding for local transportation projects awarded using standardized scoring criteria. Some of the largest projects include:

The city of Tehachapi was awarded \$121,158 for a Class I (separated) bike path on the north side of Tehachapi Boulevard from Hayes Street to east of Stuber Avenue. The project will be completed in 2016.

The city of Bakersfield will install bicycle lanes on Haggin Oaks

Boulevard between Ming Avenue and Camino Media, as well as between Renfro Road and Allen Road on Stockdale Highway. Bike lanes will also be installed on Snow Road between Allen Road and Norris Road in the city's northwest. More than \$87,000 has been budgeted to pay for these improvements. Bakersfield officials were also awarded \$48,333 to begin funding on bike lanes on several streets in the city's southwest region. The project will be completed in 2016.

The city of McFarland was awarded \$24,100 for bicycle lanes on Mast Avenue from the city limits to Sherwood Avenue and from Mast Street to Garzoli Street on Taylor Avenue. The project will be constructed in 2015.

Pedestrian safety is expected to improve thanks to \$79,060 for 50 "countdown"

signals at intersections in Bakersfield. The timer lets pedestrians (and drivers) know how much time is left on the green signal.

Arvin officials will use \$44,200 for pedestrian improvements in and around DiGiorgio Park beginning in 2016.

Nearly \$250,000 was already awarded for the Kern County Niles Street sidewalk from Virginia to Oswell streets, as well as another sidewalk project on Niles Street from Lynwood Drive to Morning Drive.

Additionally, the city of Bakersfield has received all the funding for its bike lanes on Akers Road between McKee Road and Wilson Road. The project was approved and partially funded in 2013. Construction is anticipated in 2015.



New buses, electric charging stations and parking lots among recipients of \$9 million in transit grants

At its November meeting, Kern COG's Board approved nearly \$9,000,000 of projects from the Proposition 1B Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA) program to improve public transportation in the Kern region.

Projects include:

- \$2,700,000 to begin construction of a parking lot expansion and electric vehicle charging stations at the downtown Amtrak station;
- \$3,500,000 for a solar power project at the Golden Empire Transit District's office to reduce energy use;
- \$1,200,000 to purchase intelligent bus systems

and two replacement buses for Kern Transit's countywide service;

- \$500,000 to the city of Arvin to construct a park-and-ride facility, and
- Other transit maintenance equipment to the remaining Kern communities.

Since PTMISEA funding is based on sales of California bonds, it will take a year or two to deliver these projects.

All projects funded by the Proposition 1B program must be completed by June 30, 2017. Using funds from the Proposition 1B bond program, Kern COG and its member agency staff have delivered nearly \$25,000,000 of transit projects to date.

Tehachapi opens Challenger Drive extension



From left: Tehachapi City Councilmembers Kim Nixon, Ed Grimes, Mary Lou Zamudio, Sue Wiggins, Mayor Phil Smith, Kern COG Executive Director Ahron Hakimi and Tehachapi City Manager Greg Garrett cut the ribbon to officially open the Challenger Drive Extension in Tehachapi. The project runs parallel to State Route 58 and provides an important access for emergency vehicles to a portion of the community when at-grade railroad crossings are blocked. This project is part of a long-range plan to add ramps to Dennison Road at SR 58.

Grants fund local transit planning

McFarland, Taft and rural communities in the Kern River Valley will all benefit from five-year comprehensive plans to improve public transportation thanks to more than \$140,000 in Caltrans grants.

Kern COG applied for the funds on behalf of the communities and will develop the short-range transportation development plans to identify potential mobility improvements for residents, as well as commuters to metro-Bakersfield.

The plans will also consider connections to the Amtrak and Metrolink passenger train service and throughway bus service to Los Angeles and other southern California communities. The plans were begun in October 2014 and should be completed by June 2015.

Rideshare Week draws more than 1,000 new carpooling pledges

More than 1,050 participants pledged to carpool at least one day during CommuteKern's Rideshare Week Oct. 6-10 to help save money, reduce traffic headaches and clean the air.

This year, Rideshare Week promoted sustainable transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, walking, brown bag lunches and telecommuting. Staff worked with local media and businesses to help promote Rideshare Week activities and to educate commuters about participation prizes, such as a bicycle, an iPad, iPod shuffles, movie passes and gift cards to Vons and Starbucks.

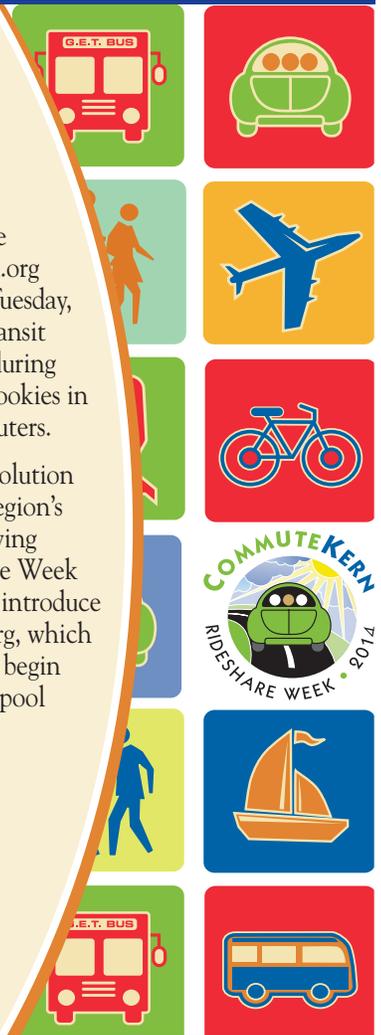
The pledge response represented a 35% increase over the previous year, with approximately half of all participants continuing to rideshare after their pledge has ended.

Rideshare Week sponsors included the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Valley Clean Air Now, Snider's Cyclery, Golden Empire Transit District, Kern Transit, and Bike Bakersfield. To help commuters get involved and have fun at the same time, CommuteKern offered a variety of tools for employers and commuters. More than 50 large employers throughout the county received marketing materials and additional

information and activities were available on the commutekern.org website. To celebrate Transit Tuesday, Kern COG, GET and Kern Transit staff served coffee and snacks during the morning rush hours, and cookies in the afternoon to all bus commuters.

Sharing the ride is a low-cost solution that will help meet the Kern region's mandate for clean air and growing transportation needs. Rideshare Week has enabled CommuteKern to introduce commuters to commutekern.org, which offers information and links to begin ridesharing as well as a free carpool matching service.

Way to Go!
Kern County



Air quality 'What Matters Most' for sixth-grade science classes

Sixth-grade teachers throughout Kern County are taking advantage of Kern COG's science lessons to teach students about the challenges the San Joaquin Valley faces in its fight for cleaner air.

"What Matters Most" is a standards-based curriculum designed to help students understand air pollutants along with possible causes and cures. In November, Kern COG staff delivered 61 "What Matters Most" kits around the county to introduce students to the different sources of particulate matter air pollution, how they affect human and environmental health and how Kern County's topography plays into the problem.

Each "What Matters Most" experiment kit includes 3" x 3" paper squares, string, petroleum jelly, permanent markers, packing tape, a hole punch, magnifying glasses, safety compasses and instructions.



Students place the string through a paper square and add petroleum jelly to one side of the paper. The experiment calls for them to identify places around campus or their yards where they can tie the paper square to collect particulate matter. After four days of observation, the squares are returned to the classroom, where students use magnifying glasses to measure the particulate matter collected.

Air pollutants harmful to human health are measured by particulate matter and ozone levels. One group of easily visible pollutants in the air is the tiny particles of solid matter or droplets of liquid. Natural sources include volcanic ash, pollen, and wind-blown dust. Man-made sources include burning of fuels, such as coal (barbecues and power plants), oil and diesel fuel (burned by industry and vehicles). Burning wood and plant material (wildfires and in fireplaces) is also a source of particulate matter.

Bakersfield's Energy Action Plan sparks efficiencies

Encompassing everything from better building insulation to programmable thermostats, the city of Bakersfield's new Energy Action Plan (EAP) includes a list of municipal projects and upgrades designed to achieve long-term energy efficiency standards and reduce living, working and business costs.

Through a grant from Southern California Edison, Bakersfield and Kern COG officials have been collecting data from 2010 to develop a Greenhouse Gas Local Government Operations Protocol inventory, which allows the city to analyze energy use trends between 2005 and 2010.

Data gathered for the protocol inventory details baseline energy use as well as associated direct and indirect air pollution

emissions. From there, staff members established projects, programs and initiatives to allow the city facilities to conserve energy in a cost-effective manner for years to come.

Bakersfield's EAP and its associated cost-benefit measures are the outcome of phone interviews, public workshops, meetings, consultations and data collection. Municipal building insulation upgrades; programmable thermostats, renewable energy option; air conditioning upgrades and energy benchmarking topped the list of cost-effective measures in the plan.

For more information on the California Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/energy/Energy+Efficiency//eesp/.

Campaign asks residents to 'Take 5' minutes to save money

More than 1,400 residents throughout the county received free shower timers, LED nightlights and a host of information on energy savings during Kern Energy Watch's Take 5! Door-to-Door campaign in October.

The campaign – held in Arvin, California City, McFarland, Tehachapi, Wasco and Derby Acres as part of Energy Awareness Month – provided families simple ways to reduce monthly energy bills. Kern Energy Watch worked with local governments and local non-profits to go door-to-door promoting energy efficiency and distributing "kits" to show how changing light bulbs or taking shorter showers can cut down on energy use.

Kern Energy Watch is a partnership among the County of Kern and the cities of Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Delano, Maricopa, McFarland, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi, and Wasco and local utilities (PG&E, Southern California Gas Company, Southern California Edison). The goal is to improve energy efficiency in buildings and facilities; training industry professionals to incorporate energy efficiency into their practices and; installing energy efficient equipment in local government facilities and businesses.



Take 5! Tips:

- Leave your blinds open. Let the sun warm your space.
- Want to stay in green fashion? Wear more sweaters! (And, turn down the thermostat).
- Use LED holiday lights when decorating.
- Turn off the lights when you leave a space.
- Unplug & do something fun: play a game, ride a bike, go bowling!



Save Our Streets (Continued from page 1)

State and federal flat taxes on gasoline (36.4 cents per gallon) have not increased in 20 years and account for more than half of all transportation funding. During that time, inflation has eroded the buying power of these funds by 50 percent, according to the report.

Sponsored by the League of Cities and the California Association of Counties (savecaliforniastreet.org), the report says that Kern is on the precipice of losing its roadway system. When not maintained in good condition, the cost to

repave a road can be 10 times more expensive than keeping it in top condition through regular maintenance.

“Most metropolitan areas of California have stopped looking to the state and federal government to maintain and expand their roadway systems,” said Kern COG Executive Director Ahron Hakimi. “By going to the voters with local transportation ballot measures, they have taken the responsibility for their transportation system upon themselves.”

Active Transportation (Continued from page 1)

From bicycle safety programs to sidewalk improvements near schools, 14 regional projects received winning scores from a network of volunteer grant evaluators representing local and state transportation agencies as well as non-profit organizations and advocacy groups. A full list of all Kern projects appears below.



Kern COG-Awarded

Agency	Project	Cost
Wasco	Clemens and Jefferson School Bike and Pedestrian Improvements	\$305,827
Kern County	Walter Stiern Middle School Pedestrian Improvements	\$125,000
Arvin	Sidewalk Improvements at Various Locations	\$680,000
Wasco	Highway 43 Pedestrian Lighting	\$593,565
Wasco	Prueitt Elementary School Bike and Pedestrian Improvements	\$473,136
Bakersfield	Bike Lane and Route Projects Group B (West)	\$270,000
Bakersfield	Safe Routes to School Improvements-Frank West School	\$311,850
Tehachapi	Safe Routes to School Gap Closure Project	\$884,622
Total		\$3,644,000

State-Awarded

Agency	Project	Cost
Delano	Safety and Education for an Active Delano School Community	\$392,463
Wasco	Palm Avenue Elementary School Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements	\$458,181
Wasco	Burke Elementary School Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements	\$1,794,594
Kern County	Horace Mann Pedestrian Improvements	\$310,000
Kern County	Highland Elementary Pedestrian Improvements	\$275,000
Tehachapi	Valley Boulevard Bikeways Facilities Project Phase II	\$1,292,000

Total

\$4,522,238

Grand total

\$8,166,238

“Wasco has a consistent backlog of good projects just looking for funding,” said Wasco City Councilwoman and Kern COG Board member Cheryl Wegman. “Finally, some of those have been noticed by the right people, especially those projects that will make it safer for kids to get to school.”

The new program replaced a patchwork of small federal and state grant programs with a centralized, more comprehensive one. Evaluators focused on projects that would help satisfy the state’s goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while providing viable links from neighborhoods to work or school.

“If you look at the full list, Kern County is very well represented. This is great news for the entire region,” said Bike Bakersfield founder and Bakersfield City Councilman Bob Smith. “Collectively, we submitted some outstanding projects that were recognized for their potential to move people without getting in a car.”

In addition to those projects the CTC awarded on regions throughout the state received a portion of funds based on population formulas. Kern COG expects to award an additional \$3.6 million in ATP projects in September 2015.