

City of Merced *Your City Connection* www.cityofmerced.org

JANUARY 2009

Welcome to 'Bike City USA'



Riders in last year's Amgen Tour of California race.

City hosts three major bike races in February

Merced becomes "Bike City USA" in February, when it hosts three world-class cycling events.

The cycling trifecta will attract top-notch riders from around the globe, along with ardent fans and spectators who enjoy the fast-paced sport.

It all starts Wednesday, Feb. 18, when the Amgen Tour of California rolls into town. Starring 144 of the globe's best racers, Merced is the fourth stage of the nine-day event.

Next up is the Snelling Road Race, which will take place Saturday, Feb. 21, followed by the Merced Criterium Sunday, Feb. 22.

The month's racing winds up with the Merco Credit Union Cycling Classic presented by McLane Pacific Feb. 28. The Merco Road Race will be held in the northern part of the county on Sunday, March 1.

Lance Armstrong set to race in Merced in the Amgen Tour of California

The Amgen Tour of California will feature Lance Armstrong, easily the US's, and possibly the world's, most famous cycling champion.

The Amgen race is billed as a warm-up to the world famous Tour de France, which Armstrong won seven times.

The Amgen Tour of California's "Alpine Stage" will begin in Merced Feb. 18 and end later that afternoon in Clovis.

After the racers circle through Merced's downtown on their warm-up laps, they will take M Street to North Bear Creek Drive.

From there they will turn onto Cunning-

ham Road and connect to Highway 140 for the ride to historic Mariposa County.

Riders will race along Highway 49, with sweeping vistas of the Sierra as a backdrop, until reaching Oakhurst, where they will wind their way back to the Valley floor and finish in Clovis.

Sign up to help with race

The Amgen Tour of California needs lots of help from the community to make it a fun and safe event.

Volunteers will be helping in a variety of roles dealing with stage course marshals, the media, medical control, security, site decorations and the lifestyle festival.

To volunteer, go to the City's web site at www.cityofmerced.org and click on the Amgen Tour of California link under Public Information. All volunteers MUST sign up online. For questions on volunteering, please call 385-6867.



The course of the Merco Credit Union Cycling Classic takes riders past the Merced Civic Center. The Amgen Tour of California will begin in front of the Civic Center.

Merced City Council

Mayor Ellie Wooten
 Mayor Pro Tem John Carlisle
 Joe Cortez
 Michele Gabriault-Acosta
 Noah Lor
 Jim Sanders
 Bill Spriggs

Contact the City Council by email at Citycouncil@cityofmerced.org, by calling 385-6834. You can write to Council members at the Civic Center address listed below.

Offices closed

The City offices will be closed Jan. 19 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. There will be no change in refuse collection.

Council meetings

The Council usually meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers in the Civic Center. Due to the MLK holiday the Council will meet Jan. 20. The agenda is posted at www.CityofMerced.org.

Contacting us

The Web site, www.CityofMerced.org, contains City Council information, the Municipal Code and General Plan and other information. To contact the Newsletter, e-mail newsletter@CityofMerced.org, call the Public Information Office at 385-6232 or write:

Merced Civic Center
 678 W. 18th St.
 Merced CA 95340

The Civic Center is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., except holidays.

Call us

City Council	385-6834
City Manager	385-6834
City Attorney	385-6868
City Clerk	388-7100
Airport	385-6873
Code Enforcement.....	385-6861
Finance	388-7900
Inspection Services	385-6861
Personnel	388-7100
Planning Department.....	385-6858
Public Works (7:30-4:30) ...	385-6800
After hours	385-6905
Recreation/Parks	385-6855

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Fire Department.....	385-6891
Police Department	385-6912

Ask the City: Where do old CFLs go?

Ask the City is an ongoing column answering questions that have been submitted to us by mail, email or phone. Readers can submit their questions to the addresses in the column on the left.

I went through my house replacing the incandescent light bulbs with the new, curly compact fluorescent bulbs. I've read that those new bulbs shouldn't be put in the trash. What do I do with them once they burn out? Greg.

Those new bulbs, called CFLs, contain a tiny amount of mercury to help them operate. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the bulbs use about 75 percent less electricity and can last 10 times longer than ordinary light bulbs. It's estimated that if every home in the US switched just one light to CFL, it would prevent greenhouse gases



Compact fluorescent bulbs, or CFLs.

equal to those from 800,000 cars.

The easiest way to dispose of CFLs is to take them to Home Depot, 1735 W. Highway 140 during regular business hours.

The Household Hazardous Waste site, 723-4753, located at 6049 N. Highway 59, also can help you dispose of the CFLs, and other hazardous wastes such as hypodermic needles, car batteries and pesticides.

City receives \$1.4 million to help foreclosure crisis

The City has been notified that it will receive \$1.4 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding.

The program was created by Congress this summer to address the national foreclosure crisis. The funds can be used to help put people who are qualified buyers back into homes that have been foreclosed.

The City will submit a plan for a local

program that will be administered by the Housing Division.

Help for people in foreclosure

There are programs in place to provide information and help to people having trouble with their mortgages. A list is available at www.cityofmerced.org. Look for Mortgage Help under Public Information.

Clearing the air about cable TV numbers

The Comcast cable TV bills leave some people confused because they include a phone number for City Hall. The City does not operate the cable TV system, and can't do anything to fix your reception, adjust your bill or provide you with a converter box.

The number is there because Comcast's cable lines run through street rights-of-way, and the City charges them for that use. The

phone company and PG&E also are charged for stringing their lines through the City in what is called a franchise fee. Satellite TV, for example, doesn't pay the fee because they don't run lines through town.

Last year the City received \$1,363,000 from all of its franchise fees.

The number for Comcast is:
1-800-COMCAST (266-2278)

Are you prepared for Feb. 17 and digital TV?

The U.S. will have a new digital divide on Feb. 17, when TV stops broadcasting the traditional analog signal and begins transmitting digital programming.

Many Americans won't be affected because they are on cable or satellite. Those receiving over-the-air signals may find they are just getting fuzz if they haven't prepared for the switch. The new digital signals re-

quire a TV capable of receiving digital signals, or a digital converter box. A coupon to get a \$40 discount on a converter box is available by calling 1-888-DTV-2009 or going to www.DTV.gov.

TV viewers may also find they need to upgrade their antenna system from the good ol' rabbit ears in order to receive a digital TV signal.