

2007 Annual Report



A look back for the City of Modesto

The City's 2007 Annual Report is produced by the City Manager's Office and highlights some of the accomplishments made by the City of Modesto in 2007. Let's take a look back...

Election Results

The Modesto City Council consists of seven members, including the Mayor, currently elected at-large on a non-partisan basis for four year terms. Their terms of office expire in alternate odd numbered years, with a maximum of four council seats up for election at any one time. For 2007, the following seats were up for election: Mayor seat, Chair 1, Chair 3 and Chair 6.

After the November 6 election vote the open seats were filled: Mayor seat - Jim Ride-nour; Chair 3 - Garrad Marsh and Chair 6 - Brad Hawn. Chair 1 was filled by Dave Lopez after a run-off election held on December 11, 2007.

Tree City USA

Modesto was recognized as a "Tree City USA" for the 27th consecutive year and received a sixth annual "Growth Award" for tree planting, preservation and educational efforts from the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Bringing City Hall to Citizens with Web-Based Action Center

City of Modesto Departments came together to address citizen issues, concerns, suggestions and need for information regarding City services by implementing a web-based Action Center.

The Action Center allows citizens to submit their inquiries over the web and the appropriate City staff member will respond using the citizen's chosen communication method – email, phone, mail or website. A request may require input from more than one City source and online tracking shows progress as it is being made; both citizens and staff are able to track the status of requests.

The Action Center also allows citizens to register to receive City information as it becomes available. This feature is currently enabled for City Council agendas and will soon be available for other newsworthy items such as Recreation Activity Guides. Frequently Asked Questions are categorized by topic and provide easy to locate quick answers to common inquiries.

Visit the City of Modesto Action Center at: www.modestogov.com - click on the Action Center and let us know what you think!

Modesto Votes to Potentially Change How Councilmembers are Elected

On November 6, 2007, Modesto voters went to the polls and voted on two non-binding advisory measures that proposed changes to the way in which our Councilmembers are elected.

First, Modesto voters decided they would like to explore replacing the current "at-large" council races with districts. Second, Modesto voters rejected a proposal that would have created two additional council seats and instead supported a district system that would create six separate council districts, with the Mayor still being elected "at-large" for the city.

The possible move from city-wide election races to district campaigns will be before the voters in February 2008 as a follow-up to the November advisory vote. Additionally, voters will have the opportunity to weigh-in on other Charter revisions recommended by the Charter Review Committee.

For more information on the Charter Review Committee and their recommendations, visit www.modestogov.com and click on the Charter Review link.

Smoke Detector Projects

The Modesto Fire Department has been working with Boy Scouts to install over 200 smoke detectors and replace batteries in existing detectors in Modesto mobile home parks.

The smoke detector projects are designed to earn the Scouts their Eagle rank. To date, seven Scouts have earned their Eagle Badge by spearheading the projects and working with the Fire Department.

National Night Out

The 2007 National Night Out was a tremendous success as usual. Over 240 neighborhoods joined together to host 135 parties. This is the largest participation Modesto has ever experienced.



Governor Schwarzenegger, Senator Boxer, as well as many other government representatives, all recognized Modesto this year for our commitment to working together as a community to make our neighborhoods safe. Mayor Ridenour and City of Modesto Councilmembers visited neighborhood gatherings throughout the city which were made possible through the tremendous efforts of our neighborhood watch participants. Many local businesses also donated their time, resources and money to help make National Night Out 2007 one of our best events ever.

This year, Modesto became the first city to win first place for two consecutive years in the history of National Night Out. Modesto won first place in the Nation from the National Association of Town Watch for participation in National Night Out in 2002, 2004, 2006, and now 2007. In the last 7 years, Modesto has placed first in California.

Reduction in Auto Thefts

Reducing auto theft has been a strategic plan objective for the Modesto Police Department for many years and resources are continually dedicated to the Stanislaus County Auto Theft Task Force. The 2006 national rankings were released in early 2007, with Modesto dropping from the number one spot for auto thefts to number five.

While there is still a long way to go, this is an excellent beginning. In 2006 thefts were down approximately 30% from 2005, and through June of 2007, the City of Modesto was down another 2% from 2006. Continued cooperation between all law enforcement agencies, along with greater education and vigilance from all residents will help to continue this downward trend. Remember to lock your car and keep valuables out of sight!

Firefighter of the Year

The annual Firefighter of the Year award, given by the American Legion, honors a firefighter who has demonstrated his commitment to the community and his fellow firefighters. Modesto Fire's own Michael Swenson was chosen as Firefighter of the Year 2007.

Swenson has spent his 28-year career with Modesto Fire dedicating himself to the Engineer Training program. Engineers drive our fire engines and trucks and not only protect the safety of our crews while responding to emergencies, but also protect the citizens who are sometimes unaware of the lights and sirens coming their way. Nearly all current Modesto Fire Engineers owe their training to Swenson as he works tirelessly, often giving of his personal time, to help them pass their qualifications and maintain the department's outstanding safety record.

Modesto Fire is pleased that the American Legion chose Michael Swenson as Firefighter of the Year 2007.



Tuolumne River Regional Park (TRRP) a Hit with Legislative Officials

With construction progress visible at the TRRP site, several legislative officials have visited Modesto in 2007 to commend the City on this project. In April, Senator Barbara Boxer toured the TRRP Gateway site and discussed the benefits of this project to the City and the region. Senator Boxer also awarded her Conservation Champion Award to the TRRP Joint Powers Authority which includes the City of Modesto, City of Ceres and Stanislaus County.

In May, Assemblymen Tom Berryhill and Kevin de León toured the TRRP Gateway site and discussed the benefits of this project and others like it. The two Assemblymen promised support of this project in the upcoming budget process and said they would work to allocate funds from Proposition 84 to the Central Valley region.



Street Repaving

The Streets Division repaved 8.27 lane-miles, including the following locations:

- Pelandale Avenue and Sisk Road intersection
- Southbound Oakdale Road from East Orangeburg Avenue to Wylie Drive
- Oakdale Road north of Briggsmore Avenue was repaved and widened to three lanes
- East Orangeburg Avenue near Christianson Drive
- Plaza Parkway from Sisk Road to Prescott Road
- 10th Street and 11th Street, next to the Gallo Center for the Arts

Street paving is always a high priority, with resources focused on areas where the Pavement Management Survey identified the most critical needs. Street crews will continue to focus paving efforts in 2008 where the work is most needed, including eastbound Kansas Avenue from Rosemore Avenue to Carpenter Road; northbound Sisk Road from Sullivan Court to Vintage Drive; and Tuolumne Boulevard from Neece Drive to Roselawn Avenue.



Rubber Sidewalks

A section of rubber sidewalk, an innovative product made from recycled tires, has been installed at the Department of Motor Vehicles facility, located at the corner of Burney Avenue and Jennie Street. Take a walk there, it's sure to bring a spring to your step!

Composting News

Modesto's composting facility will divert more than 65,000 tons of yard waste in 2007 from community forestry and residential green waste cans. In turn, the facility will produce a beneficial product - compost. Approximately 53,000 tons of compost will be sold to local businesses and the local residential community. Now that's reuse!

Virginia Corridor

The Rotary Clubs of Modesto Centennial Junction portion of the trail is completed and Phase III of the project is to be completed at the beginning of 2008. This phase of the trail extends from College Avenue to Granger Avenue and once completed, the Virginia Corridor will be one and one-half miles of useable trail!



NeoGov Online Application System Implemented

In April 2007, the Personnel Department implemented an online application system through NeoGov. The implementation of this system was quite an undertaking requiring extensive training for staff.

The Personnel Department is excited to report that this new system has greatly improved the ability for job seekers to browse all City jobs, apply online, create an applicant profile, re-use applications for different job openings, review salary and benefit information, and search job descriptions. In addition, due to the increased interaction with candidates through email, applicants are notified immediately regarding testing, scheduling and test results.

The City's applicant pool has increased considerably thereby potentially enhancing the City's ability to attract top-notch individuals to the City's workforce.

Airport Parking Lot Expansion

The Modesto City-County Airport formally opened a new 243 space terminal parking lot in 2007, doubling the off-street lighted passenger parking. This additional lot offers safer and more accessible parking for airport users who previously used on-street and temporary gravel parking areas.

The addition of eight flights daily to and from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and additional service to San Francisco International Airport (SFO) has resulted in an unprecedented demand for expanded airport parking. The parking lot addition remains a fundamental part of the Modesto Airport's FREE close-in parking program. No other regional airport with commercial passenger service on par with Modesto offers this free, up-close parking benefit.

New Business in Modesto

Community and Economic Development Department staff worked to provide City assistance in bringing Plastipak Packaging, Inc. to the Beard Industrial District. Plastipak, the nation's third largest plastic manufacturer of its kind, began full-operations at their Leckron Road facility this past February; resulting in approximately 50 new jobs for the area.

Hybrid Bus Purchased

Modesto Area Express (MAX) purchased a diesel hybrid electric low-floor bus and placed it into service in March 2007. A diesel engine combines with an electric motor to power the bus. Hybrid buses emit significantly fewer pollutants than standard diesel buses and are quieter and more fuel-efficient.

The bus is easily identified by the "hump" on the back where the batteries and other electrical components are located, and the bold lettering that says "Hybrid Electric". The interior is identical to other MAX low-floor buses.



Finance Receives Awards

- A Certificate of Excellence in Capital Budgeting from the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers for the preparation of the Fiscal Year 06-07 capital budget.
- A Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ending June 30, 2006.
- The Citizen's Guide to the Budget earned a Certificate in Excellence in Public Communications Budgeting from the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers.