



City of Modesto

CITY PRIDE

May 2001

City Wide

CITY OF MODESTO SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO CITY RESIDENTS ONLY

Crews inspire local youth to learn about tree services

By David Paladini

"Ding, dong!" The doorbell rang around 7:30 a.m. I went to the door, and there stood a man in an orange suit and a tan jacket. (I later learned his name was Paul). He was from the City of Modesto Parks and Recreations - Urban Forestry Division. He asked me if we could move our vehicles, so they could trim the trees.

I told my dad and mom, and we went out and moved the truck and car around the corner. When we were done we went inside. We were going to start our day as usual, but I really wanted to watch the men work. My parents said I could go out and watch them if I would write a paper on what I saw. I agreed, and went outside to watch.

I got to take a few pictures and some notes. A very nice man named Bill came over, and told me all about the different techniques of cutting trees.

We watched a man named Dan reaching high into the tree on his big hoist mounted on the top of the truck. He was able to cut even the highest branches of the tree. Bill told me that Dan was going to work for two hours and then they were going to switch places. Bill was down on the ground with



Crews work to clear tree branches near David Paladini's home.

a long-handled tree trimmer. With it he was able to reach up and pull down branches that wouldn't fall. He said that when they were done here in downtown they were going to go over to the college area. He told me that it takes about four or five years to go completely around Modesto and come back to our neighborhood.

I learned that in Modesto there are actually more trees than people.

A few other tree facts I found are:

- The tallest tree in Modesto is in Graceada Park. It stands 119 feet tall (imagine trimming that!).

- The oldest trees in Modesto are the trees that are planted near the McHenry Mansion. There were planted before 1887.

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some heavy logs to my yard. Several of the men posed for me to take their picture, and were all very nice. One of the men helped me by stacking logs so I could move them over to my pile by my house.

I think it was really cool to be able to watch and learn things about trimming and cutting trees. I will now have a different perspective when I see men working on trimming trees.

- Modesto is famous for the "Modesto Ash" and "Pearl Street Pistache."

- Modesto has been awarded the title of Tree City USA since 1980. This award was given by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Everyone on the tree trimming crew was nice and helpful. Some of the workers even gave us firewood from some of the trees. (The wood was still green so it will be good next year for us to burn).

Three men who were raking and cleaning were part of a ground crew from the jail. I learned that they can get a little time taken off their sentence if they work with a good attitude and work hard. Bill told me that their labor saves the city a lot of money every year. They helped me carry

Through the eyes of a child



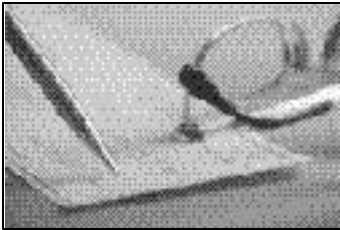
This month's cover article is written by 13-year old David Paladini. Homeschooled here in Modesto, David will be providing a kid's perspective of city activities and issues for *City Pride*, *City Wide* and the City of Modesto's website. He enjoys playing baseball, reading, writing and riding a unicycle.



Here are few ways the City of Modesto is using new technology to enhance current services and provide easier access to government agencies.

Electronic Utility Payments

Citizens can now have utility bill payments deducted electronically from their bank accounts using the City's Automated Clearinghouse payment system. To sign up for the service, residents must send a voided check with a completed ACH payment form to the City of Modesto Finance Department, P.O. Box 767, Modesto, CA 95353. The form can be found in the Customer Services office of the Finance Department or online at www.modestogov.com/fin/forms/pdf/ach-pdf. Once established, the words "Bank Draft" will appear under the "Amount Due" box in the upper left-hand corner of the utility bill. Each month on the payment due date, the amount is automatically deducted from the assigned bank account.



Customer Kiosk

A customer kiosk containing the city's Business License Application soon will be installed in the Customer Services lobby of the Finance department. The kiosk will allow customers to input application information that, once saved, will forward to a printer behind the Customer Services counter. Customers will no longer need to stand in line waiting for the application, fill it out manually and then return to the line. The new "Hands On" Business License Application allows customers to complete the form, press print and visit the Customer Services window only once to complete the application process. To learn more about the Finance Department log onto www.Modestogov.com/fin.



Service Requests

The City's Operations and Maintenance department provides a Service Request Form online, allowing citizens to submit comments, concerns or complaints regarding city streets, alleys or roadsides via the Internet. Once the Service Request Form is submitted, a staff member from the Operations and Maintenance department processes the form



and forwards it to the appropriate division for action. Citizens can access the Service Request Form at <http://www.modestogov.com/omd/servreq.htm>.

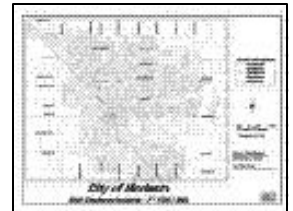
Pavement Management System

The City of Modesto has a tremendous investment in the pavement that covers city streets. In fact, it would cost an estimated \$545 million to replace the 1,130 land miles of streets that currently exist within the city's boundaries. That is why the Engineering and Transportation department maintains a computerized database of pavement conditions after inspecting, analyzing and rating our streets in any given area. The computerized Pavement Management System performs a cost analysis of various maintenance and rehabilitation strategies, then prioritizes and recommends the most cost-effective approach to street maintenance. The system can also project future pavement conditions so city officials can prepare for upcoming improvements. More information about the system can be obtained online at www.modestogov.com/etd/reports.



Geographical Information Services

Modesto has recognized the need and benefits of Geographical Information Services (GIS) and is currently working to develop and implement an integrated GIS program from which all departments would benefit. GIS is a computerized mapping system used to store, view, query, and analyze geographic (Spatial) data. Put more simply it is a smart map. GIS will improve the City's ability to rapidly respond to citizen requests and support the decision-making process for administrative and elected officials. Additionally, GIS will allow for inventory of infrastructure and other assets, provide a means to graphically represent information to the public and city staff, streamline labor-intensive processes, reduce duplication of effort, and promote the sharing of data between agencies.



Sidestep the sidewalk when placing your garbage can out for collection

Please remember that garbage cans may not be placed on the sidewalk at any time.

The City of Modesto Municipal Code requires that garbage cans be placed in the



street on the asphalt next to the curb or on the edge of the driveway apron in areas where alleys do not exist.

For safety reasons it is important that our sidewalks remain clear from obstructions especially during these months of heavier traffic. Pedestrians, parents pushing strollers and handicapped residents have the right-of-way on sidewalks, so it is important to keep sidewalks clear.

Help make our community a safer place for everyone by placing your garbage cans in the street. Call the City of Modesto, Solid Waste Waste office at 577-5493 for further information.

Free household chemical drop-off locations begin this summer

Get rid of your unwanted household chemicals at one of the several drop-off locations in Modesto this summer. The program is free to Stanislaus County residents.

Modesto drop off locations and dates are:

June 30 Downey High

July 14 Modesto High School

July 28 Beyer High School

Aug. 11 Davis High School

Aug. 25 Johansen High School

Among the items the drop-off locations will accept are car batteries, waste antifreeze, brake fluid, paint,

drain cleaners, batteries, bug killers, fertilizers, pool and spa chemicals and charcoal lighter fluid.

Unacceptable items include loads over 200 pounds, empty containers, containers with dried paint, business waste, commercial ag chemicals, asbestos and radioactive waste.

For more information about the free household chemical disposal program, please call 525-4123 or visit the county's website at www.co.stanislaus.ca.user/projhhw.html.

Watch your local cable television channel for a rebroadcast of the special Energy Town Hall Meeting.

Local businesses awarded for keeping Modesto clean by reducing waste

The City of Modesto honors resource-efficient businesses and organizations that implement creative waste reduction and recycling programs.

This year's winners include:

- Modesto Junk Company for diverting more than 25,000 tons of recyclables from the waste stream
- Gilton Resource Recovery/Transfer Facility, Inc. for diverting over 96,000 tons of recyclables (via reuse, recycling, and composting) from the waste stream
- Memorial Hospitals Association for their creative efforts in recycling various products including helicopter blades! They also donate items for reuse such as medical equipment, used furniture and palm trees
- American Medical Response for shredding and recycling their large volume of confidential documents and establishing an aluminum can recycling program for their Employee Appreciation Fund
- Save Mart Supermarkets for their expansive composting program, "Save Mart Schools" bag recycling program, and various reuse, reduction, and recycling programs.

A ceremony was held at the Earth Day in the Park Festival, 2001. Gary Plummer, Modesto Chamber of Commerce president and CEO presented the awards.

Convenient oil recycling available

Recycle used motor oil right from your home, for free! The City of Modesto's Residential Used Oil Collection Program makes it easy to do. The oil will be collected on your garbage collection day when you follow these simple steps:

1. Call your garbage company (the name is on your garbage can) and make a collection appointment. You can call any business day before your collection day.
*Modesto Disposal / Waste Management 538-2210
*Gilton Solid Waste 527-3781 ext. 158
*Bertolotti Disposal 537-8000
2. Pour the oil into a plastic container with a screw top lid. Please do not mix oil with other materials such as antifreeze, brake fluid, or gasoline. These and other hazardous materials can be disposed of at our Household Hazardous Waste Facility, 525-4123. There is a limit of four gallons per week.
3. Place oil containers on your driveway near the garage or house, not at the curbside, by 6 a.m.

*This Program is not available to residents who have metal "dumpster" style garbage bins. Please call the Used Oil Recycling Hotline at 577-5493 for free Collection Center locations or for further information.



... and the health of your community

Guide offers tips for pesticide-free gardening

We all want our homes and gardens to be beautiful and bountiful, but insect pests can be a difficult challenge. Many people use chemical pesticides to control pests but stormwater testing in Modesto shows that some active ingredients in the pesticides, especially diazinon and chlorpyrifors, are occurring at levels that could threaten our health and the health of our rivers, ponds, creeks and wetlands.

The testing also shows that most of these pesticides come from Modesto's residential neighborhoods.

We can reverse the situation -- we just need to learn to manage our pests differently. A guide to help you eradicate pests with



alternatives to pesticides is now available at several Modesto locations. The guide, developed by the City of Modesto's Stormwater Program, the Stanislaus County UC Cooperative Extension office and the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Project also provides some general tips to deal with the most common pests found

in Modesto's homes and gardens. Guides are available at City Hall at the Mall, City Hall at 1010 10th Street, Hischer's Nursery, Scenic Nursery, Westurf, Home Depot or by calling the UC Cooperative Extension office at 209-525-6800.

Take a walk for the environment

The City of Modesto is looking for volunteers to distribute door hangers in residential neighborhoods throughout the city. The door hangers have pollution prevention tips and information about Modesto's Storm Drain Systems.

Volunteers will be given maps of the area they need

to cover and can walk alone or with other volunteers. The hours/days are flexible, pick any two to four hour shift between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Just call Cheryl Heller, in the Environmental Services Division, at 577-6257, to set up a time to Walk for the Environment.

MTBE-Free fuel regulations now in effect at reservoir

Please remember to fuel up with MTBE-free gasoline before hitting the water at Modesto Reservoir this year.

Effective April 14, all two-cycle engine vessel operators must use MTBE-free fuel only. MTBE-free gasoline is available again this year at the Modesto Reservoir Gas Dock or Marina. Fuel tank levels must be 1/8 or a tank or less upon entering. Visitors will no longer be allowed to enter the park with their own gas containers.

Visitors may also fuel up with MTBE-free fuel at C.L. Bryant's Union 76 station in Waterford. There, recreationists will receive a validation tag verifying that their vehicle contains MTBE-free gasoline.

MTBE, a gasoline additive

used to reduce engine pollution, will be banned in California by December 2002. Until then, City of Modesto and Stanislaus County officials are working to reduce and eliminate the amount of MTBE detected in Modesto Reservoir water. The reservoir provides a large portion of the drinking water to Modesto area residents.

The plan's first phase to require two-stroke engine vehicles to use MTBE-free fuel at the reservoir was implemented last year. It was determined to be successful and the requirements will be followed again this year. If the first phase had not been successful, a more strict second phase would have been implemented.



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Scenic Nursery-- 1313 Scenic Drive
Westurf -- 1612 Claus Road