



Q4
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Message from the President

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As we enter the fourth quarter of 2009 (calendar year), I look back on the many trials and challenges we've faced. Membership in MCMA took a hit from the early retirement incentives and position eliminations. We went into the budget process with 182 members and came out with 162. That's 20 positions we lost to retirement and lay-offs, directly related to the condition of the budget. Yet, we've gained 10 new members and our membership is now 172. There are still approximately 40 management and/or confidential employees who are not taking advantage of MCMA membership. If you know any of them, remind them that they benefit from the dues you pay and encourage them to become dues paying members. Applications are available from any Board member, or on the MCMA website, modestocma.com

Lots of things are changing at the COM. The Human Resources and Finance Department recently underwent reorganizations. Employee Benefits staff (Rosemary and MaryAnn) are now located on the 2nd floor, the Deputy Director position was eliminated and replaced by an Employee Relations Coordinator and an AOA II Confidential position was eliminated. In Finance, the Budget oversight function has been moved to the City Manager's office. More changes are coming with the reorganization of Public Works, scheduled for Council consideration on October 27th.

In the meantime, MCMA employees are struggling with an increased workload, mandatory furloughs and a corresponding pay reduction. These circumstances cause increased tension and pressure. Make sure you are aware of the resources available to you to help deal with the stress, both

at work and at home. If you don't know, call any Board member and we'll work together to find an answer.

On the immediate horizon is the COM's proposal to outsource Workers' Compensation Claim Management Services. Currently, these services are provided by 2.6 MCMA employees, who stand to lose their jobs. The COM has provided \$12,000 to MCMA to hire a consultant to prepare a response to the RFP and compete to continue providing these services. If the past is the predictor of the future, the probability of retaining these services is not on our side. However, MCMA is working with the consultant and affected staff to prepare the best response possible to the RFP. We are, however, disturbed by reports that some council members have stated their support of outsourcing even before the proposals are in. That's politics.

Coming up, the next General Membership Meeting is scheduled for November 5th. Please plan to attend, bring your lunch, and get the latest information on your Association's activities. Our labor representative, Kim Gillingham, will be there to answer any questions you have.

Finally, believe it or not, the holidays are knocking on the door. Mark December 3rd on your calendar and plan to attend the MCMA Annual Holiday Open House at Fuzios. Last year was great fun, and I expect this year will be too!

As always, feel free to contact me or any Board member for any needs you may have.

Laurie Smith, President

Who is Bill Latham?

Mandatory Furlough Days – City Offices Closed

Don't forget! City offices will be closed December 24 through January 3rd as part of the mandatory furlough days negotiated for this fiscal year. City offices will also be closed on Friday, May 28th. **It is important to remember that 6 days (48 hours) of the mandatory 12 days (96 hours) are fixed and should be saved for use on the above closure dates.** The remaining 6 days are non-fixed so that employees can schedule them in the same manner as vacation.

Critical operations have been identified in many departments and will require minimal staffing during the closures. Employees in those work areas should be notified well ahead of time.

Sometimes called the “Oddjob” (not looks, but responsibilities!) of the Transit Section (formerly Division), Bill Latham is responsible (for lack of a better word) for the Modesto Area Dial-A-Ride program, facility manager for the downtown Transportation Center and Amtrak Station, supervises the Taxicab program, and chairs the Transit ADA Advisory Committee.

A 5th generation Californian, born and raised in Southern California—at an early age he was fortunate to appreciate the special role of the great central valley during summer trips to the high Sierras and especially our great National Parks. Spending his ‘formative years’ and completing his education in Long Beach, Uncle Sam made him an offer that he couldn't resist. Accompanied by his bride, he participated in a quarter century adventure with the United States Air Force. While living and traveling around this great country and through many foreign lands his growing family experienced opportunities he never could have imagined as a young man. From contract management in the Middle East to survival training in Alaska he experienced the Air Force from the days of the last propeller driven planes to the arrival of the stealth bomber.

Upon retirement, he left Washington with the Pentagon in his rear view mirror to return to California in order to be closer to his extended families. This also allowed his wife, Janice, a better opportunity to pursue her career as a public school administrator. While one of the leading collectors of teaching credentials from across the country, periodic moves were not helpful to building a military spouse's career. Moving to Modesto in 1996 a ‘new’ life began.

While serving as a volunteer historian at Manassas National Battlefield his appetite for the National Parks was only enhanced. His ‘secret’ life could no longer remain hidden. He collects ephemera—National Park ephemera* that it. Anyone seeing the recently concluded National Park exhibit at the McHenry Museum was ‘exposed’ to a portion of his collection.

Since arriving in Modesto, his children have left the nest. His son Matt is a mechanical engineer married to a plant pathologist living in Dixon. His daughter Emily is a nurse at UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento married to PE teacher who loves to coach water polo. His wife is busy with her ultimate goal—principal of a Middle School. But Bill still finds ways to slip away occasionally to visit one of our local national parks. What a better way for a Transit Planner to spend a day—taking a bus trip around Yosemite Valley.

*Ephemera—transitory, usually paper, materials such as posters, maps, leaflets, brochures, circulars, etc.



MCMA ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!

Mark your calendars for the MCMA Annual Holiday Open House, Thursday December 3rd at Fuzio's. Last year's event was the best ever and we expect this year's event to be as fun! So, put it on your calendar now and plan to attend to enjoy a relaxing evening with good food, good friends and some joyful holiday spirit!



Public Works Reorganization

Nick Pinhey, Director of Public Works, will be going to Council on October 27 regarding a proposed Public Works Reorganization. Should it be approved by Council, the proposed reorganization will create two separate departments: Public Works (PW) which will be responsible for the day-to-day operations and Utility Planning and Projects (UP&P) which will be focused on strategic initiatives, master planning, financing, and project implementation related to water resources.

Why the changes...now? Recent judicial decisions and the drought have increased the demand for water in California. There is a high demand for this valuable resource and strategic planning is necessary for management of the City's water resources to meet future demands and deal effectively with multiple issues. The City is a regional water and wastewater services provider and is currently engaged in two additional regional utility planning efforts with the TID project and a joint feasibility study with the City of Ceres.

How does this affect MCMA members? There will be changes to the current Public Works Admin Department with the movement of one Administrative Analyst II and one Executive Assistant to the new UP&P Admin Dept from the current PW Admin Dept. Additional staffing will include a Director of Utility Planning & Projects and a Utility Rates Manager. It is proposed that a Deputy Director of Public Works will be moved into the Director of Public Works position for the interim to create a savings of \$91,000 to partially offset funding for the additional department head. The current position of Deputy Director of Public Works – Engineering will be changed to Deputy Director of Utility Planning and Projects.

This reorganization will redefine the Public Works Dept and allow it to focus on the day-to-day functions that are critically important, ensure regulatory compliance and maintenance of the City's infrastructure and unify operations and maintenance functions by centralizing all units that provide these complex and essential services to the public.

Combined Charities Event

This year's kickoff for the combined charities is scheduled for October 29 in the Plaza at Tenth Street Place. Radio station Sunny 102.3 will be broadcasting live from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm and discounted lunches will be available from a local restaurant. The always popular silent auction baskets will be on display in the Civic Partners office from 10 am to 12:45 pm. The Salvation Army will also be on site to accept non-perishable food and blankets. Other events include a bake sale and a raffle for fabulous prized donated by community businesses.

MCMA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Please plan to attend the next MCMA General Membership Meeting:
Thursday, November 5, 2009
12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.
Stanislaus Room – Modesto Centre Plaza
Bring Your Own Lunch!

For more information, call any Board Member:

Laurie Smith, President
Aaron Trott, Vice President
Leslie Curtin, Secretary
Cheryl Hollingsworth, Treasurer
Mark Murphy, Diane Rambo, Gail Smith, Directors

Amazon Kindle

I was watching The Oprah Show one night and Oprah raved about her latest favorite new gadget—the Amazon Kindle. “It’s absolutely my new favorite thing in the world,” she says. She said it was a gift that changed her life.

The Amazon Kindle is a wireless portable reading device with instant access to more than 190,000 books, blogs, newspapers and magazines. Just type in the name of a book or author and in less than a minute you will find your book on the Kindle.

The Amazon Kindle is equipped to hold about 200 books, but if you pop in a simple memory card, you can have more than 4,000 books at your fingertips. The font size can be adjusted for personal preference. You can bookmark where you left off and it will return to that page. You can put notes in the margins. Even if you are a little computer challenged, the Kindle is very easy and simple to operate. You don’t even have to have a computer for it to work.

The Amazon Kindle is kind of like a cell phone, it has a wireless radio built right into it and so you can shop right from the device. And anytime you want to get a book, you can have it in less than 60 seconds. Kindle’s screen is as sharp and natural as reading ink on paper and is claimed to be nothing like the strain and glare of a computer screen. It never becomes hot and is designed for ambidextrous use so both “lefties” and “righties” can read comfortably at any angle for long periods of time.

Amazon.com founder and CEO Jeff Bezos is the man who dreamed up this wireless reading device. He wanted something completely mobile and simple to use for everyone. No PC and no syncing needed. Unlike WiFi, you will never need to locate a hotspot. There are no confusing service plans, yearly contracts, or monthly wireless bills. You can download books, most magazines, and newspaper subscriptions can be delivered wireless each morning.

And because they know we can’t judge a book by its cover, Kindle lets you download and read the first chapter so you can try it out—if you like it, simply buy and download with 1-Click, right from your Kindle. All newspaper subscriptions start with a risk-free two-week trial.

Kindle’s paperback size and expandable memory let you travel light with your library. It also has a built-in dictionary! If you don’t know a word, you only have to hit a button to get the definition instantly.

In addition to being able to download songs for background music, you can ask your Kindle any questions that are on your mind. Simply send it off and a group of people called “electronic Turk workers” will research it and send you a reply within five minutes.

Afraid you might lose your Kindle? Every time you buy a book, Amazon stores an archival copy for you. So if you ever want to delete something off your Kindle or if you lose your Kindle, you can always get your books back, re-download them back anytime you want for free.

Kindle is being compared with Apple’s iPod, and we all know how that turned out! The huge deal with TiVo was time shifting and commercial skipping. The huge deal with the Kindle is its wireless connectivity. The Kindle brings the same sort of freedom and power to textual content that the cell phone brought to voice communications.

Whether you prefer biographies, classics, investment guides, thrillers, or sci-fi, New York Times Best Sellers and New Releases are \$9.99, and you’ll find many books for less.

Is the Kindle perfect? Not yet. Is it expensive? Yes. \$359 on the Amazon website.



Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is the one time each year that you are able to evaluate your health care needs and, if necessary, make changes. The City is changing its health plan year of August 1 – July 31 to coincide with the calendar year January 1 – December 31. This change is due to increased interest and popularity of the High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) which is based on a calendar year. To facilitate this change, the City's open enrollment period starts October 1, 2009 and ends on October 30, 2009 for the new plan year beginning January 1, 2010. If after reviewing your health care needs, you determine that you want to stay with your current health insurance selection; you will not need to do anything. Your current health insurance selection will automatically carry over to 2010 if you do not make any changes.

**All changes must be submitted to the Human Resources Department by
5:00 p.m., Friday, October 30, 2009.**

**NOTE: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS ARE NOW LOCATED ON THE SECOND
FLOOR OF TSP**

*Elections made during open enrollment will become **effective January 1, 2010.***

All open enrollment reference materials are available on the intranet under Human Resources Department – Open Enrollment 2010. There is also a link on the City of Modesto Internet website (Human Resource Dept – Open Enrollment 2010) for employees and dependents to view open enrollment information from the convenience of their home.

City of Modesto: www.modestogov.com

(Go to Human Resources Department – Open Enrollment 2010)

OTHER INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES:

Blue Shield: www.blueshieldca.com

Kaiser: www.kaiserpermanente.org

Dental Insurance: www.deltadentalins.com

Vision Insurance: www.vsp.com

Health Savings Account: www.firsthorizonmsaver.com



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www.modestocma.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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Aaron Trott

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Leslie Curtin

Treasurer
Cheryl Hollingsworth

Directors at Large
Mark Murphy
Diane Rambo
Gail Smith

2009 Upcoming Calendar of Events

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|-------------|-----------------|---|
| November 5 | 12:00 – 1:00 p | MCMA General Membership Meeting |
| November 17 | 12:00 – 1:00 p | MCMA Board of Directors Meeting |
| December 3 | 5:00 – 7:00 p | MCMA Annual Holiday Open House Fuzios Restaurant |
| December 16 | 12:00 – 1:00 p | MCMA Board of Directors Meeting |
| December 17 | 8:00 a – 4:00 p | COM New Employee Orientation |



ICMA Appointments will be scheduled on November 4, November 18, December 2, and December 16. Call extension 75481 for more information.