



# "In the Works"

Striving to be the Leading Public Works Department Through Innovative Stewardship of Infrastructure and Environment

Stanislaus County  
Public Works

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## Change in Transportation Funding Gathers Momentum

Submitted by Matt Machado

A change in transportation funding in California gathers momentum as advocates unveil a proposed ballot measure.

The debate over transportation funding in California got a surge of energy in November with the unveiling of a proposed ballot measure to devote a portion of car license fees to road repairs.

The proposal, put forward by two advocacy groups, Transportation California and the California Alliance for Jobs, could generate up to \$3 billion for road repairs to help replace dwindling revenue from the state gas tax and expiring transportation construction bonds.

The measure would take a phased approach to increase vehicle license fees. The current fee is .65 percent of a vehicle's value. It would increase by .25 percent a year for four years until it reached 1.65 percent. Changing the way transportation is financed is essential because the current gas tax was never indexed for inflation and has lost approximately half of its value over the past 20 years. Compounding the problem, the recession reduced vehicle miles driven, and the popularity of high-mileage cars and alternative fuels has caused funds to maintain roads to vanish.

Proponents filed language with the state Attorney General's office November 18th seeking the official wording that would be on a ballot measure that could go before voters in November of 2014. Once the language is approved, supporters could then begin the process of gathering more than 800,000 signatures of registered voters needed to place the measure on the ballot. The Legislature also could opt to put the measure before voters.

## Stanislaus County Organizational Values

On August 23 2005, the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors adopted the revised organizational values. Stan Risen, our Chief Executive Officer, would like us to practice these values at work and in our personal lives. They are:

**Trustworthiness**... acting with honesty, integrity, loyalty and keeping our promises

**Respect**... treating everyone with dignity

**Responsibility**... being accountable for our actions and pursuing excellence

**Fairness**... treating others with impartiality and equity

**Caring**... showing concern for the well-being of others

**Citizenship**... obeying laws and regulations and caring about our community

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## Ethics Quotes Nelson Mandela

Born: 7/18/18   Died: 12/5/13

"A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination."

## "Health & Safety Byte"

Author Unknown

"When you gamble with safety, you bet your life."

*Safety is no accident!*

## Civility Principle: "Speak Kindly"



## Top Story from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

The members of the CSAC elected a new leadership team at the organizations recent Annual Meeting in San Jose, Santa Clara County. Stanislaus County Supervisor Vito Chiesa will serve at First Vice President. **Congratulations Supervisor Chiesa!**

Source: The CSAC Bulletin dated 12/6/13

### Did You Know?

Submitted by David Leamon

It surprises me what I learn along the way while here at Public Works. The Lion Bridge (also known as the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge) was once part of US 99, the Golden State Highway. US 99, was also known as the Pacific Highway, as defined by the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) which ran from Calexico, California at the Mexican border to Blaine, Washington on the Canadian border. The 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge was informally part of this highway from its construction in 1916 to 1927, then officially part of US 99 when California signed the Golden State Highway as US 99 in 1928. The route through Modesto, came south from Salida along 9<sup>th</sup> Street, then across the tracks at I Street, south on 7th Street over the river, then back east across the tracks at Hatch Road.

The Modesto Bypass constructed in 1933, built a new 40-foot wide bridge across the Tuolumne River at 9<sup>th</sup> Street, bypassing 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the bridge. This eliminated three at-grade crossings of the Southern Pacific Railroad; at I Street, Butchertown Sub Division Crossing, and Hatch Crossing. The new 9<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge had a 30-foot wide travel way, with two five-foot sidewalks on either side. With this construction contract, 7,269 feet of new road was built from Hatch Crossing to the bridge, 2,049.5 feet of bridge was built and 1,030 feet of new road was built north of the bridge.

Also of interest, Modestans voted on the new bridge location, as apparently there was some controversy over where the new bridge should be located. The 9th Street location won by a large margin over the westerly route that was proposed.

The dedication ceremony for the 9th Street Bridge was held on July 4, 1933 which was attended by approximately 20,000 people and included a parade and speeches by prominent elected officials. Governor James Rolph, Jr. and two former mayors of Modesto, Sol. P. Elias and L.L. Dennett were speakers at the dedication ceremony (photo on right).

#### Sources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S.\\_Route\\_99](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Route_99)



Automobile Club of Southern California, "Inland Route – Los Angeles to San Francisco- Part 5 Modesto to San Francisco and Oakland", 1920's.

California Department of Public Works, California Highways and Public Works, "Triple Celebration Marks Official Opening of Modesto Bridge Project", July – August 1933.



## Public Works Employee's Actions Exhibit Qualities of “Caring” and “Citizenship” (Two of Our County Organizational Values)

David Becker, (photo on right) from Stanislaus County’s Risk Management Department relayed this story to Public Works via an email message.

This happened early one dark morning late in the month of November. David wrote:

*I was at home getting ready for both a trip out of town and work at the same time. In doing so I was working in part on the pick-up and camper parked in my driveway and getting things out of the house into both the truck and my work vehicle. While this was being done, I left the driver's door on the truck ajar as was the rear door entering the camper. I did not put out the steps as I just jump up into the back while doing this type of loading.*

*When John went by, he felt the vehicle/camper condition and the garage door being open with no lights on looked odd and wondered if something was wrong. He stopped his street sweeper, got out and started walking toward the location. As he was*



*doing this, I came back out of the house and found him walking up towards the house. When he saw me, he recognized me at once and said good morning.*

*In doing this, he was attempting to safeguard both life and property of a person he did not know. He was being careful not to get over involved in something that could have been dangerous while also doing what he could to aid another person.*

*Thank you John Ramazzina for your caring work above what would be required. Thank you Public Works Roads and Bridges for doing good work and keeping a safety eye out for those you serve.*



John Ramazzina (photo above) is a Road Maintenance Worker III in Public Works. He started his County service in the Parks Department in 1983 and transferred to Public Works in 1985. Thank you for your service and caring about others!

### Until We Meet Again... Submitted by Aja Verburg

After five years at Stanislaus County Public Works, I have decided to return to private consulting. During my five years, I gained a new perspective on public service and the responsibility to the public that we have as County employees. Before coming to the Public Works Department, I had no experience working with transportation projects and did not realize the extent of how many roads and bridges Public Works is responsible for maintaining and all the different divisions within the department that work together to make the County network of roads and bridges safe and operational for the community.

Of the many projects that I worked on, the best part was seeing bridge projects during construction. Although I will be moving on, I have learned that this town is very small and the engineering community is very close, so until we meet again... like, next week, or sooner... I'm sure I will be crashing some potlucks!



## Transit Division's Quarterly Report Submitted by Eunice Lovi



In 2013, the Transit Division completed a number of projects to enhance and improve transit services offered in the County, including a major overhaul of existing routes. Service changes implemented in August 2013 involved improvements to on-time performance and service frequency on the fixed routes, enhancements to running times on most fixed routes and some of the demand response routes, and adjustments to route schedules to ensure passengers get to their destinations in a timely manner. Analysis of transit service data for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012-2013 show increases in the ridership on most routes, including services provided in Riverbank and Oakdale.

Some of the high performing routes include:

- ✓ 6% ridership gain on Route 10
- ✓ 15% rise in ridership on the Route 70 and Waterford Runabout
- ✓ 11% increase in the usage of transit service on the Patterson demand response as well as a 6% increase in passengers riding the Newman demand response route
- ✓ 5% increase in the number of residents using the non-emergency transportation service to the Bay Area

Overall, 17,000 more passengers used StaRT in FY 2012-2013 when compared to FY 2011-2012.

Other accomplishments in 2013 are highlighted below including:

- ✓ Developed transit capital projects that were incorporated into the County's FY 2013-2014 Capital Improvement Plan
- ✓ Successfully merged transit services with the Riverbank-Oakdale Transit Authority and began operation of transit services in the cities of Riverbank and Oakdale as part of Stanislaus Regional Transit (StaRT)
- ✓ Participated in over 30 County-wide events to promote and market transit services offered throughout the County
- ✓ Received approval from the County Board of Supervisors to purchase seven buses to replace vehicles in the fleet close to meeting their service useful life. The County took delivery of five 40-foot buses purchased from New Flyer Industries in September and anticipated delivery of a 32-foot bus from El Dorado at the end of December
- ✓ Completed the Annual Transportation Development Act Audit for FY 2012-2013



### Meet Joann Schmidt, Accountant II ~ Finance Division

My name is Joann Schmidt. I was born at Fort Sill Military Base just outside of Lawton, Oklahoma. My father retired from the Army after 20 years of service. During that time, my family and I lived in Oklahoma, Missouri, Alabama, Texas, Germany, and Hawaii. My older brother was born in Texas and my younger brother was born in Germany. Growing up in military communities has taught my brothers and me that people are people and everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

I've worked for Stanislaus County for just over 10 years. I started with Public Works in Building Maintenance as an Account Clerk II. When the General Services Agency (GSA) was created, Building Maintenance left Public Works and was merged into that department. While with GSA, I promoted through the accounting series to an Accountant I. When the Accountant II position opened with Public Works I applied and was hired. Prior to working for the county, I worked for various private businesses, always in the accounting department.

When I'm not working I attend evening classes to obtain my accounting degree. I enjoy gardening, landscaping, putting together jigsaw puzzles, and creating jewelry to sell on eBay. I have volunteered my time as treasurer for a local family oriented motorcycle club as well as made lap quilts and other personal items for the residents of local retirement homes. I'm happy to be back with Public Works and am looking forward to many more years of learning and growing. **Welcome back Joann!**

**Do you know what this is?**



If you do, then you probably know how to use it and who uses it too.  
The answer will be in next quarter's "In the Works" newsletter.



# NEWEST ADDITIONS TO THE MORGAN SHOP FAMILY

Submitted by Olivia Tanner, Staff Services Analyst

They arrived during the week of August 26, 2013 with the help of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Districts' (SJVAPD) Public Benefits Grant stork. One boy, named Leaf, and one girl, named GEM (Global Electric Motorcar). Leaf weighed in at a GVRW of 4,193 lbs., and GEM weighed in at a GVRW of 3,000 lbs. They sleep through the night, need minimum changing, and barely utter a sound. The Morgan Shop family was ecstatic about the brand new arrivals!

The new additions to the Morgan Shop family are actually electric vehicles, and the first electric vehicles to be owned by Public Works. GVRW stands for the gross vehicle weight rating when loaded to capacity. For vehicles, they are light as a feather. Public Works purchased these vehicles with the help of the SJVAPD Public Benefits Grant Program in support of our efforts to reduce emissions and protect the environment. The Public Benefits Grant is awarded based on the SJVAPD guidelines to provide clean-air projects for the benefit of valley residents. One project involves the purchasing of alternative fueled vehicles. The electric vehicles help to reduce the amount of pollution released into the air and save the County money by reducing fuel and vehicle repair costs.



The 2013 Nissan Leaf (photo on left) runs purely on electric battery. It burns no fuel, thus reducing the amount of pollution that is released into the environment, and it has no exhaust. The Leaf's motor has 108 horsepower and runs on a 24kWH lithium-ion battery. The battery's charge lasts approximately 90 miles in the city and 70 miles on the highway depending upon driving conditions. It lasts longer in the city because it has the capacity to charge while decelerating to a stop. The electric cost to recharge the battery is approximately \$3.00 from empty or \$0.03-\$0.035 per mile (it fluctuates with the change of the provider's rates); compare that to October's United States average cost of unleaded fuel at \$3.25 per gallon. It takes approximately 15 hours on a 110-voltage outlet and four hours on a 208-voltage outlet to charge from empty. The battery's useful life is 10 years; the same as most transmissions. The battery also contains 48 individual battery cells. You can replace one cell without having to replace the entire battery. The Leaf only requires coolant and washer fluid; no other liquids. It also has no major vehicle components like the transmission, spark plugs, or engine. When starting it, you have to confirm that it is on because the engine is so quiet. The Leaf's repair and vehicle maintenance is minimal.

Manufactured by Polaris, the 2013 GEM (photo on right) functions much like the Leaf. It is fully electrical and needs no fuel. It operates on a 72-volt battery system that contains nine 8-volt gel batteries. The battery system can run 40 miles on a full charge depending upon driving conditions. It takes approximately six to eight hours to fully recharge on a 110-voltage outlet and the cost to recharge the battery is approximately \$0.18 from empty (it fluctuates with the change of the provider's rates). The battery's life span is approximately two years. It travels at a maximum speed of 25 miles. Much like the Nissan Leaf, it has minimal maintenance because it only has windshield wiper fluid and no major vehicle components.



The Nissan Leaf and the Polaris GEM electric vehicles are an inexpensive way for Public Works employees to travel around Stanislaus County. Employees use the Leaf to visit job sites and projects, to attend meetings or trainings, and to run County related errands. The GEM vehicle is primarily used on the 15 acres of land surrounding the Public Works buildings located on Morgan Road. With a capacity of 1,100 pounds, the flatbed is useful with maintenance and hauling supplies and materials around the yard. It is also a great asset when needing a quick ride to the Public Works fuel station to help County employees needing assistance with obtaining fuel. The GEM is street legal and can be driven on roads with a speed limit posted of 35 miles or lower. The Morgan Shop division uses the GEM to pick-up parts and supplies from local vendors.

The Nissan Leaf and Polaris GEM are great additions to the Morgan Shop division of Public Works. They emit no pollutants thus making them environmentally friendly, and they replaced two old and depleted emission burning diesel trucks. In addition, they help the County to lower expenses because there is little maintenance, and they do not require fuel. Public Works is happy to welcome them into the Morgan Shop family of vehicles, and like most anxious parents, we cannot wait to see how long it takes them to mature!

For more information about electric cars go to: <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/evtech.shtml>

For more information about the SJVAPD Public Benefit Grant go to: <http://valleyair.org/grants/publicbenefit.htm>

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Articles by Public Works Writers

Published by Keimi Espinoza 

**Transit Division's website is:**

[www.srt.org](http://www.srt.org)

For route info call StaRT at 1-800-262-1516

## Staff Updates and News

### New Employees:

**April Henderson-Potter** (Staff Services Analyst) joined our Transit Division on 12/2 as their Mobility Coordinator.

**Les Stachura** (Senior Engineering Tech) joined our Development Services Division on 11/4 as their Encroachment Inspector.

*Welcome aboard!*

### Promotions:

**Jeff Rufo** was promoted to Road Supervisor on 11/30.

**Jason McCormick** was promoted to Senior Road Maintenance Worker on 12/14.

**Jayne Sisse** was promoted to Staff Services Technician in our Sign Shop on 11/16.

**Keith Wilcox** was promoted to Senior Road Maintenance Worker on 10/5.

*Congratulations!*

### Departing Employee:

**Aja Verburg** (Associate Civil Engineer in Design Engineering) left after 5 years of service.

*Good luck! You'll be missed...*

### New Children & Grandchildren:

**Jeff Chilton** (Road Maintenance Worker III) has a new granddaughter named Eve who was born on 11/11.

**Casey Roberts** (Road Maintenance Worker I) has a new baby boy named Jace born on 12/17.

**Diane Haugh** (Assistant Director) has a new granddaughter named Emmeline who was born on 12/29.

*Best Wishes!*

### Kudos to our Road Maintenance Division

Ron called to say "Thank you!" to our Road Maintenance team and Sylvia Jones for the prompt response regarding his request for work done on Santa Fe Avenue. **Good job!**

## Operation Christmas Child Submitted by Julie Serrano, Accountant III

For our 2013 Holiday Project, Public Works prepared shoe boxes to donate to Operation Christmas Child (OCC). OCC is a project of Samaritan's Purse and offers hope to children ranging from ages 2 to 14 years old from around the world.

My goal for Public Works was to complete at least 25 shoe boxes, including enough cash to cover the shipping costs. We exceeded our goal by 9 shoe boxes!!!! Public Works employees donated a total of 26 filled shoe boxes, plus they donated over \$130 so we could complete 8 more shoe boxes, and let's not stop there... We also collected enough in cash donations to cover shipping charges for all of our boxes. (See photos below.)

This was a very heartwarming experience for us to participate in. I am very proud of our department for being able to reach so many children with our gifts of hope and love.



## Meet Denae Davis, Administrative Clerk III Development Services and Transit



Denae graduated from high school at age sixteen and enlisted in the United States Army as a Public Affairs Specialist when she was seventeen. She received her certification from the Department of Defense Information School in Public Affairs – Writing. Denae served in the Army National Guard from 2006-2010 where she performed a wide variety of duties. She is currently working toward a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. Her goal is to eventually obtain a Master's degree in Social Work and a teaching credential.

Denae joined the County as a temporary Administrative Clerk in January 2007 in the Planning and Community Development Department (Building Permits Division). Due to a Reduction in Force in 2008 Denae's position was eliminated. She then transferred over to Community Services Agency (Adult, Child, and Family Services Division under Emergency Response Intake) as an Administrative Clerk II. In August 2013, Denae came full circle to work with many familiar faces when she accepted a promotion to an Administrative Clerk III in Public Works. Denae works at the Tenth Street Place office with our Development Services and Transit Divisions.

Denae comes from a large family where the last time she counted she had thirteen siblings (she thinks) and has three godchildren with one more on the way. When she is not at work or at school Denae enjoys traveling and has been to Ukraine, China, and Japan. She has lived in Maryland and South Carolina, and has visited at least eight states. She works out five or six times a week, and also enjoys photography, reading, writing, shoes, cooking, working with youth, playing and watching sports, and singing. **Welcome Denae!**