

## **Public input requested at bike plan workshop**

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012

Local transportation officials are developing a bicycle master plan for the unincorporated areas of Kern County, as well as 11 communities outside of the Bakersfield metro area.

And they want your input.

A public workshop to discuss issues related to bicycling will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday at Standard School District auditorium, 1200 N. Chester Ave. in Oildale.

By creating attractive, well-marked bike lanes, shared-use paths and bike-friendly roadways that offer direct routes to key destinations, advocates say communities encourage more people to travel on two wheels. And that translates to a healthier community and better air quality.

The Kern Council of Governments is responsible for completing the plan, which will guide the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities for years to come.

A second public workshop will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at the Kernville Community Room, 11447 Kernville Road, in Kernville.

For details, email KernCOG Project Manager Pete Smith at [psmith@kerncog.org](mailto:psmith@kerncog.org) or call him at 861-2191.

Or visit the project website at [Kerncountybikeplan.com](http://Kerncountybikeplan.com).

[Fresno Bee editorial, Wed., Jan. 11, 2012:](#)

## **Moderate winter plagues Valley air quality**

It's hard to gripe about weather that allows you to wear shorts in January -- a fashion statement that many in California have been embracing. For people who like mild weather, the numerous sunny days of late have been a blessing, but the lack of wind and rain comes with some downsides.

A big one is dirty air, which is a particular health threat for children and people with asthma and other respiratory diseases. On Tuesday, Fresno's air was among the dirtiest in the country.

San Joaquin Valley residents have been suffering through the worst air quality in a dozen years. The 4 million people who live in the 200 miles between Stockton and Bakersfield have to deal with the nation's worst ozone, but usually enjoy some fresh air during the winter.

The dangerously high levels of particulates this winter should spur officials to heed long-standing calls from air-quality advocates to look seriously at agricultural sources of pollution and tractor-trailer rigs, as well as fireplace soot. While burning bans may be the least painful to enforce, they may not be enough to ensure healthy air.

Continued dry weather could also eventually become a water problem. While most reservoirs hold above-average supplies, and state officials say it's too early to fret, the contrast from last winter is stark.

The season's first snow survey, done last week, which found the water content of the Sierra Nevada snowpack at just 19% was one of the lowest readings on record. On the same date last year, the snowpack was 212% of normal.

Because of last year's wet winter, state officials are still promising 60% of contract water deliveries to 29 local agencies that buy from the State Water Project and serve more than 25 million Californians.

Still, farmers in the Valley are having to irrigate crops weeks sooner than normal. Some have been unable to plant at all, the California Farm Bureau Federation says.

Ski resorts in the Sierra are also having a hard time because of a lack of snow.

It would be nice if Mother Nature smiled on California with some rain and snow -- preferably in steady, manageable amounts -- in the next few weeks.