

Report: More Fresno commuters ditching their cars

By Ben Keller, staff writer

The (Fresno) Business Journal, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2013

Fresno drivers were in their cars less and using public transit more than a decade ago, a new study showed.

The study, "Transportation in Transition," was released by the California Public Interest Research Group on Wednesday to show how Americans' travel habits have changed over the last ten years.

Nationwide, the study showed that Americans are driving 7.6 percent fewer miles per capita than they were when driving peaked in 2004.

In its place, drivers were opting for more public forms of transportation like the bus, bicycles and even walking.

Fresno was no exception. In a list of 100 large urbanized areas, Fresno ranked 42 in the decline of vehicles-miles traveled per capita with the figure coming down 3.4 percent from 2006 to 2011.

That means that in 2006, Fresno commuters logged an average of 7,303 miles each in 2011, down from 7,562 in 2006.

That compares to the national average of 1.7 percent fewer vehicle miles with the per capita figure dropping from 8,600 miles to 8,450.

Meanwhile, passenger miles traveled on public transit per capita increased 40.2 percent in the city from 2005 to 2010, ranking 11 for the highest increase.

In 2005, Fresnoans traveled 53.2 miles on average by public transit. By 2010, that figure went up to 74.5 miles.

Nationwide, passenger-miles traveled per capita increased 7.1 percent over the same period.

The proportion of workers who commuted by car in Fresno dropped by 1.7 percent from 2000 to 2007-2011 (U.S. Census populations) compared to 0.1 percent fewer workers who biked to work over the same period. Another 0.7 percent more decided to work from home.

Nationwide, public transit has increased from 45.1 billion annual miles in 2000 to 54.3 billion miles in 2011, a 20-percent jump.

The report mentioned that driving appears to be declining in urban areas less affected by the recession.

Between 2006 and 2011, for example, the average poverty rate increased 2.7 percent in the 15 urbanized areas with the highest per-capita declines in vehicle-mile traveled. That compares to a 3.6-percent increase in poverty in all other urbanized areas.

From 2006 to 2011, the report showed that New Orleans had the largest decrease in vehicle-miles traveled per capita at 22.4 percent.

McAllen, Tex. had the largest increase in passenger-miles traveled from 2005 to 2010 at 366.4 percent.

Free Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendars available in Modesto

By Bee Staff Reports

In the Merced Sun-Star and Sacramento Bee, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2013

MODESTO — The free 2014 Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar is available, featuring the colorful artwork of 15 Valley students.

The bilingual, full-color wall calendar is an annual publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. It showcases original works of art by children in each of the air basin's eight counties, chosen from hundreds of entries.

The pages illustrate a monthly clean-air message in English and Spanish, such as “Help everyone have a healthy air life!” and “Care for our air and walk there.”

Students whose artwork was selected for the 2014 calendar include third-grader Mia Ekhouse of Merced, fourth-grader Emma J. of Turlock, and fourth-grader Jovianne and high school sophomore Mary Rose Ambida, both of Stanislaus County.

The calendars are distributed to schools, community groups, health care facilities, churches, civic organizations and nonprofit groups throughout the Valley.

The district prints 20,000 copies.

The calendars can be reserved, while supplies last, by emailing public.education@valleyair.org, and can be picked up in any district office. In Modesto, that’s at 4800 Enterprise Way, (209) 557-6400.

Merced student’s art makes it into air district calendar

Modesto Bee and Merced Sun-Star, Friday, Dec. 6, 2013

MERCED — A Merced third-grader, Mia Ekhouse, is one of 15 students from the San Joaquin Valley whose artwork is included in the 2014 Healthy Air Living Kids’ Calendar.

The bilingual, full-color wall calendar is an annual publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. It showcases original works of art by children in each of the air basin’s eight counties, chosen from hundreds of entries.

The artwork illustrates a monthly clean-air message in English and Spanish, such as “Help everyone have a healthy air life!” and “Care for our air and walk there.”

The calendars are distributed to schools, community groups, health care facilities, churches, civic organizations and nonprofit groups throughout the Valley. The district prints 20,000 copies of the free publication, which promotes Healthy Air Living throughout the year.

The calendars can be reserved, while supplies last, at public.education@valleyair.org, and can be picked up in any district office: in Fresno, at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave. (559-230-6000), in Modesto, at 4800 Enterprise Way (209-557-6400), and in Bakersfield, at 34936 Flyover Court.