

Bike to Work Day

Modesto Bee, Friday, May 14, 2010

Before watching the bicyclists in the Amgen Tour of California race through town, participate in Bike to Work Day. The first 150 bike commuters who show up at Tenth Street Place will receive free T-shirts and prizes. Later, head to the Amgen Lifestyle Festival featuring a health and fitness expo on I Street. The festival will feature more than 170 booths, and include a health and fitness expo, cancer awareness education, cycling gear, family activities, bike safety, food and entertainment.

WHEN: Bike to Work, 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. Wednesday. Amgen Lifestyle Festival begins at 11 a.m.

WHERE: Tenth Street Place, Modesto (Bike to Work Day) and I Street between Seventh and 13th streets (Amgen Lifestyle Festival)

ADMISSION: Free

CALL: 571-5193

Festival scheduled for day of Amgen Tour

Bakersfield Californian, Sunday, May 16, 2010

Before you watch bicyclists race to the finish line in Stage 5 of the Amgen Tour of California, take part in some of Thursday's festivities accompanying the event at Bakersfield College.

The MBT Lifestyle Festival will include vendor booths, food and live local bands, according to a Bakersfield Convention & Visitors Bureau news release. Local exhibitors include Chevron, San Joaquin Community Hospital and the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce. Prime Cut, Carnie Kettle Corn and Lassen's will be among the food vendors.

"The festival offers something for everyone -- cycling enthusiasts, sports fans, socialites and families," said Kerry Ryan, president of the Bakersfield Sports Foundation, in the release.

The cyclists should finish the stage between 3 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.

The festival will be held in the campus' northeast parking lot from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Free public parking will be available in the south student parking lot on University Avenue between Haley Street and Mount Vernon Avenue. Spectators are asked to carpool and arrive early to avoid traffic delays and parking issues.

Bike Bakersfield will host a free bike valet on-site for spectators who want to ride bikes to the event and secure them for the day.

Engines bill would provide grants

By The Record

Stockton Record, Monday, May 17, 2010

The San Joaquin Valley would receive up to \$20 million per year in grants to replace polluting engines under legislation introduced last week by Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton.

McNerney's bill, HR5296, would designate the Valley as an "Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zone," making the region eligible for grants. Residents could voluntarily replace or retrofit engines in agricultural equipment, tractors and other vehicles.

Companion legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif.

Bill introduced to improve air quality in San Joaquin Valley

By Ross Farrow

Lodi News Sentinel, Monday, May 17, 2010

Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, and U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer have introduced the Air and Health

Quality Empowerment Zone Act, legislation aimed at helping to improve air quality in the San Joaquin Valley. House Resolution 5296 would allow San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, King, Tulare and Kern counties to receive grants for programs that help residents voluntarily replace or retrofit polluting engines. The bill also allows up to \$20 million per year through 2015 to be allocated to the grant fund.

According to the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District, the San Joaquin Valley emits extremely high levels of pollutants, putting it at a level of non-attainment of air quality standards, according to McNerney's office.

Chem Waste says cleanup complete at Kettleman dump

Hanford Sentinel, Saturday, May 15, 2010

KETTLEMAN CITY (AP) - The company that runs the Central California landfill where nearby residents complain that toxins have caused a number of birth defects in their town said Thursday it has cleaned up contaminated areas cited by federal investigators.

Chemical Waste Management Inc. said a thorough cleanup of a storage building and an adjacent soil area at its Kettleman Hills Facility exceeded federal requirements, the building's floor has been re-coated, and clean soil has been brought in.

The company also has "implemented new processes and procedures, including more frequent soil testing, to ensure continued compliance with all regulations," said Bob Henry, senior district manager for the facility.

Last month the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said the facility had violated the Toxic Substances Control Act by improperly disposing of PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls - chemicals linked to cancer and other health effects.

It also faulted the dump - the largest hazardous waste facility in the West - with failing to decontaminate structures prior to continued use.

The EPA had tested the site between Feb. 8 and 12 as part of its compliance investigation.

Nahal Mogharabi, a spokeswoman for the EPA in San Francisco, said she could not comment because of the ongoing investigation.

The facility has been at the center of a fight with residents who blame it for a seemingly high number of birth defects in nearby Kettleman City.

A survey done by Greenaction, an environmental justice group, found that of 20 children born in the area from September 2007 to November 2008, five had defects, including clefts in their palates or lips.

State health officials said in February they found nothing unusual about the rate of infant birth defects in the impoverished farm town, but they emphasized the findings were preliminary.

Federal environmental officials announced earlier this year they would investigate the situation, including whether the EPA had dropped the ball on past complaints.

[Fresno Bee Earth Blog, Friday, May 14, 2010:](#)

Bury your dead goats

By Mark Grossi

In the local air district's lengthy and serious report on ag burning, one item made me pause and briefly smile.

Burning your dead goat will no longer be allowed.

I'm not making light of the impact on the air, but it just stood out. I know farmers who bury their dead goats. This rule is just confirmation of what they do.

On Thursday, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will be discussing exempting some farm waste from the complete burning ban that was promised by July of this year.

There are usually situations where exemptions apply in broad rules, especially with an industry as wide and varied as Valley farming. But these exemptions will attract attention from air activists. Look for a feisty meeting.

At the same time, I don't think dead goats will enter the discussion.

[Bakersfield Californian, Commentary, Sunday, May 16, 2010:](#)

Putting Bakersfield on cycling map

By Don I. Cohen, Contributing writer

It is a great time to live in and visit Bakersfield. We are just days away from Stage 5 of the 2010 Amgen Tour of California coming to town, and I have to say it's been a privilege to be involved in the planning and execution of this event.

The effort has brought together many community members and organizations. So many, in fact, I would not be able to list every one of them here. A lot of behind-the-scenes work will go unnoticed Thursday, but that is the way a well-run event is supposed to be.

I could not go on without recognizing Mercy Hospitals of Bakersfield, the presenting local sponsor of the race. Mercy's commitment to Bakersfield and this event is evident by the support it has shown since the incipient days of planning the race stop in Bakersfield.

Lance Armstrong and the world's top cyclists will finish atop the Panorama Bluffs sometime between 3 and 4:15 p.m. Thursday. Bakersfield is one of three stages with a circuit finish.

The cyclists will make 2 1/2 laps up the bluffs and out to Fairfax Drive before finishing.

As exhilarating as 130 cyclists going by at 40 mph is, spectators do not want to miss the Lifestyle Festival beginning about 11:30 a.m. The Lifestyle Festival is an interactive expo full of vendors who will be showcasing the latest products and services across many industries. More than 40 vendors will be on hand.

Another feature is the live entertainment. Local artists, presented by the Arts Council of Kern, will perform throughout the day on the entertainment stage.

Closer to the finish time, local cancer survivors and their caregivers will be recognized during the Breakaway Mile, a celebratory walk on the course to raise awareness for cancer research. Bakersfield was one of four cities to be selected to host a Breakaway Mile.

A celebrity tricycle race will take place near the finish line, so don't miss this opportunity to cheer on your favorite media member, local dignitary or friend. The best part is the festival is free.

Another relatively unknown aspect of this event is the commitment from all involved to make the event as "green" as possible. The local organizing committee has done everything in its power to make this event have as little impact on the environment as possible.

Vendors and food merchants are required to use recyclable utensils, cups and serving containers. The city's Solid Waste department is furnishing recycling containers throughout the festival and VIP tent areas. Select vendors will have their booths powered by solar energy through the use of a 48-foot flatbed solar-panel truck provided by Pure Energy Solar. Bike Bakersfield will provide a complimentary bike valet for those who choose to ride to the event.

Spectators may or may not see what is taking place to make this event green, but it has been a focus of the local organizing committee since the city was granted a stage of the race.

The race will be covered live on TV through the Versus network in the United States, and on EuroSport throughout the world. Millions will see our great community, and the exposure our city stands to receive is priceless.

I hope everyone knows how important this is to the effort by many organizations to promote Bakersfield as a great place to visit, meet and host an event. All of you are ambassadors of our city, and I am convinced you will be gracious hosts to those attending from across the state, country and world.

Finally -- and most importantly -- enjoy the event. Truthfully, I knew very little about professional cycling when we began to work to secure this event over a year ago, but I quickly found out how dynamic these athletes are. Many of them will go on to compete in the Tour de France later this year, and a select few will become the next Lance Armstrong. Your support and enthusiasm for the riders will not go unnoticed by race organizers, local dignitaries and the world.

Give yourself a pat on the back, Bakersfield -- we've got the largest cycling race in North America coming to town, and you all are a big reason why.

Don I. Cohen is the manager of the Bakersfield Convention & Visitors Bureau and a co-chairman of the local organizing committee for the Stage 5 finish of the 2010 Amgen Tour of California.