



“In the Works”

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

**Stanislaus County
Public Works**

**Volume 4, Issue 3
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The History of Fuel Taxes

Submitted by **Matt Machado**

Transportation Infrastructure in our nation and state is primarily funded through fuel taxes. State gas tax is our primary source of funding to maintain our road and bridge system in Stanislaus County. The Federal portion of the gas tax is used for capital or safety related projects. The history of this gas tax is important to understand, so as to help guide our future. For FY12/13 the department is projecting gas tax revenues of approx \$14,800,000. With a system of approximately 1600 miles of roads and more than 230 bridges this level of funding is severely deficient to conduct proper maintenance. In fact the projected deferred maintenance for FY12/13 is \$14,000,000. The history of federal and state gas tax gives an indication of why this funding level is inadequate.

The first federal gasoline tax in the United States was created on June 6, 1932 with the enactment of the Revenue Act of 1932 with a tax of 1.0 cent per gallon. The tax was last raised in 1993, to 18.4 cents per gallon, and is not indexed to inflation. The federal gas tax has lost purchasing power of 33 percent since 1993. Some of the federal programs funded through the gas tax are: Surface Transportation Program (STP), Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and Safe Routes to School Program. Below is a summary of the history of the Federal gas tax.

Year of Tax Increase	US President	Comment on Tax Increase
1932—1 cent	Herbert Hoover	Means to Balance Budget
1956—3.1 cent increase	Dwight Eisenhower	Finance Interstate System
1983 – 5 cent increase	Ronald Reagan	Repair Nations Roads/Bridges
1990 – 5 cent increase	George Bush	Deficit Reduction /Infrastructure (50/50 split)
1993 – 4.3 cent increase	Bill Clinton	Response to Energy Tax, dedicated to Infrastructure

The first US state tax on fuel was introduced in February 1919 in Oregon. It was a 5 cent per gallon tax. In the following decade, all of the US states (48 at the time) adopted a gasoline tax. By 1939, an average tax of 3.8 cents per gallon of fuel was levied by the individual states. The following is a brief history of California’s fuel tax.

- In 1923 the first State Gas Tax was created to fund the expansion of the State Highway System. Initially the tax was set at 2 cents per gallon. Accompanying legislation also created "Motor Vehicle Fuel Fund," with some of the funding going directly to counties and other funds being deposited into the "State Highway Maintenance Fund" for the purposes of maintenance, repair, widening, resurfacing, and reconstruction of state highways and roads and highways in state parks.
- In 1947 the Collier-Burns Act was passed. Gas and diesel taxes were raised by 1-1/2 cents.
- In 1953 California’s gas tax was increased to 6 cents per gallon to fund the improvement of the highway system.
- 1955 Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law was enacted. As a result of this law, California implemented the following fuel sales tax, with subsequent adjustments: 1972 – 5%, 1974 – 6%, 1989 – 6.25%, 1991 – 7.25%, 2011 – 2.25%. (This reduction was due to the fuel tax swap which increased the excise tax by 17.3 cents per gallon).

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Ethics Quotes

J. C. Watts

“Character is doing the right thing when nobody is looking.”

"Health & Safety Byte" Submitted by Laura Janovich

All government employees, including County employees, are disaster service workers by State Law (California Labor Code). This means that in addition to your everyday job, you have the added responsibility of helping throughout any disaster. If you are at home when a disaster strikes, ensure the safety of your family and then report to your normal duty station if it is safe to do so.

“Refrain from Idle Complaints” is the Choose Civility Principle for September

In his book, “Choosing Civility,” Dr. Forni says idle complaining “is the kind that bespeaks helplessness rather than assertiveness, is more interested in assigning blame than in finding solutions, and is rooted in the feeling that life is unfair. When you complain, you stick your unfortunate listeners in your own mud and drag them along with you for no good reason.” If we spend time identifying our recurring themes of complaining, then we can work on stopping the idle complaints little by little. **“Don’t curse the darkness... Light a candle.” — Chinese Proverb**



(continued from Page 1)

- In 1963 the legislature increased the gasoline tax to 7 cents a gallon.
- In 1983 California's gas tax was increased to 9 cents.
- In 1990 the State gas tax was increased to 14 cents with a yearly increase of one cent per year for four more years.
- In 1994 the State's gas tax reached 18 cents per gallon.
- 2011 Reduced sales tax from 7.25% to 2.25%, replacing this portion of the sales tax with an increased excise tax of 17.3 cents per gallon.

Today the State of California excise gas tax rate is 35.3 cents per gallon (18 cents + 17.3 cents of fuel tax swap). The local share of the 18 cent base excise tax is 36% and the local share of the 17.3 cent fuel tax swap excise tax is 44%. These rates and shares date back to 1994 and 1991 respectively. The State fuel taxes have not kept current with inflation, similar to the Federal fuel tax. In summary, the State and Federal gas tax rates are nearly 20 years out of date thereby creating deferred maintenance.

Alternative Work Program in the Workforce

Submitted by Charles Carpenter



In the beginning of June 2011, I took over the Alternative Work Program (AWP) from Deputy Dave Whipkey. Previously the County contracted each fiscal year to have a sheriff deputy supervise men from the program with the cost of deputies being in excess of \$100,000. In order to maintain fiscal responsibility, the Department of Public Works' Roads Division elected to have me, a departmental employee, take over the supervision of AWP's.

I have embraced the position and am finding it very rewarding. I am a people person and have enjoyed working with people of ethnic diversity and different cultural backgrounds. I have also had men ranging from 18 years to 67 years old. I have worked with documented gang members, and people who committed various crimes ranging from driving under the influence (DUI), theft, and various other crimes from mild to severe.

Some of the younger men have never had a regular job. Working for our Roads Division for some has been their experience with real work for the first time. Most have done very well considering they are not paid for the work they perform. I try to keep the crew lighthearted and try to keep the jobs interesting even in the face of dirty, hot, and sometimes very hard working conditions.

I very much enjoy making a learning experience for men and often smile from the kinship and teamwork developed by men when you give them a job to do and believe in them.

Public Works Quarterly Safety Report

Submitted by Laura Janovich

Although we haven't broken any records for consecutive injury free days this quarter, the injuries our employees did receive were not very serious and if they required lost days from work, those days were minimal. The injuries we did have, covered a variety of causes. Motor vehicle accidents, and strains seem to be high on the list Countywide and we had one of each. We also had an insect sting. All three of these could have been much more serious. Knowledge and experience seem to be a factor in the lessened severity of the injuries our staff did report. Our incentive program, "Safety Bingo" has proven to be an effective program to bring knowledge, in the form of safety bytes, and keep us aware of the frequency, by tracking the consecutive accident free days. The \$25.00 gift cards are an added extra incentive that we all enjoy.

We are ahead of the game with the transformation of the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to Safety Data Sheets (SDS) program. We have developed a form that will require anyone **RECEIVING** any hazardous material to complete. It is a simple process that will help us track the MSDS/SDS paperwork and keep employees informed on the hazards that exist when exposed to some of the materials they are required to work with. This is a process improvement and some training will be required of those who check in deliveries. The SDS program is more focused on "Understanding" and not just "Knowing" the dangers of hazardous materials.

It is your "Right to Understand."

Cultural Diversity Week

Submitted by Diane Haugh

Stanislaus County's Board of Supervisors proclaimed the week of September 30 through October 6, 2012 as "Stanislaus County Diversity Awareness Week." To promote cultural awareness the Public Works' Department held a cultural potluck. Employees were encouraged to bring a dish reflective of their culture or family tradition. The selection of food was absolutely amazing! From biscuits and gravy, red cabbage and bratwurst, linguica, teriyaki Spam, lasagna, enchiladas, pork and sauerkraut, sausage and pasta, to pavlova, eclairs, Texas-style chocolate cake, and treacle pudding. (Sorry if I missed something!)

Encarta® defines cultural diversity as: "An ethnic variety, as well as socioeconomic and gender variety, in a group, society, or institution."

MN Cultural Dynamics Education project, Building Cultural Connection's definition is: "Diversity- the difference between people including, but not limited to, shape, size, ability, gender, color, age, sexual orientation, family background, economic status, spiritual belief, race, culture, ethnicity and political affiliation." Celebrating the diversity in our department allows us to feel that our values, beliefs and experiences are fully appreciated.

What is Cultural Awareness, anyway?

Cultural Awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Why do we do things in that way? How do we see the world? Why do we react in that particular way?

Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret and evaluate things in a different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality.

Increasing cultural awareness means to see both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences. In becoming culturally aware, people realize that:

- ♦ We are not all the same. Similarities and differences are both important.
- ♦ There are multiple ways to reach the same goal and to live life.

- ♦ The best way depends on the cultural contingency. Each situation is different and may require a different solution.

How Do I Manage Cultural Diversity?

We are generally aware that the first step in managing diversity is recognize it and learning not to fear it. Since everyone is the product of their own culture, we need to increase both self-awareness and cross-cultural awareness. There is no book of instructions to deal with cultural diversity, no recipe to follow. But certain attitudes help to bridge cultures.

- ♦ Admit that you don't know everything.
- ♦ Suspend judgments.
- ♦ Be empathetic.
- ♦ Systematically check your assumptions.
- ♦ Become comfortable with ambiguity.
- ♦ Celebrate diversity.

As: The Culturocity Group, LLC., excerpts from "What is Cultural Awareness, anyway" by Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore
 [1] Adler, Organizational Behavior, 1991



Avoid the Danger—Know Your Part on How to Jump Start

Submitted by Olivia Tanner

Imagine walking out of a grocery store to find that you left your lights on and now your vehicle won't start. Suppose you own a vehicle for every season, and it is time to switch from your fall vehicle to your winter vehicle; however, your winter vehicle won't start because it has been sitting too long. Do either of these scenarios sound familiar? There is a huge probability that your car battery is dead. You could pray that you find a nice person, whose not on the America's Most Wanted list, with a vehicle that runs and who is skilled in jump starting a battery, but what if you or this person do not have the knowledge to correctly jump start a battery?

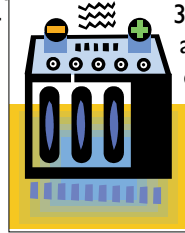
Jump starting a battery can be dangerous if it is not done correctly. Wrong connections could cause damage to the vehicle, the vehicle's electrical systems, or to individuals. With the winter months approaching, it is essential to know how to accurately jump start your battery because batteries tend to fail with extreme changes in temperature.

Batteries generate a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases, which are highly combustible and will explode upon meeting the right spark. Enclosed in the battery casing is a highly corrosive sulfuric acid electrolyte or battery acid. With the chance of an explosion, there is a risk to exposure of this battery acid. Exposure can cause severe burns to the skin, eyes, and if inhaled, to the throat and lungs; all of which require immediate medical treatment.

Having a jumper cable in your car at all times is extremely helpful. Car repair kits come in handy for unexpected breakdowns and most include a jumper cable; however, the cable tends to be short. The cable should be at least 16 feet to give you adequate length to connect from one vehicle to another (20 feet is preferable). The cable will have two connectors at each end: one positive (red) connector, and one negative (black) connector.

Before you jump start your vehicle, make sure that both vehicles have their ignitions turned to the off position. To jump start a dead battery:

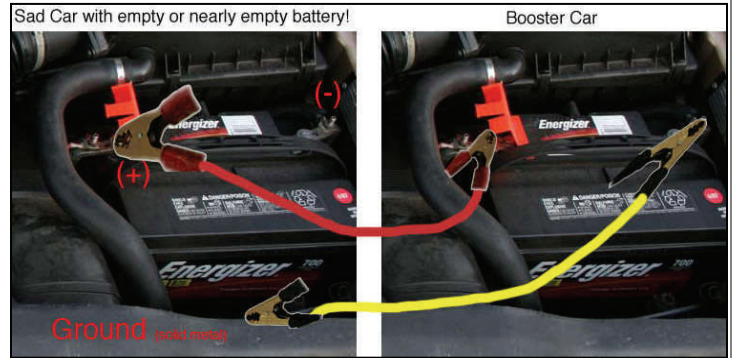
- 1) Pinpoint the positive and negative posts on the top or sides of each battery. The positive post should be marked with a plus (+) sign while the negative post should be marked with the negative (-) sign. Attach the red connector or positive connector to the positive post on the dead battery. Attach the positive connector at the opposite end of the cable to the good battery. *Do not allow the positive and negative connectors to touch or it will ignite a spark.*
- 2) Attach the black connector or negative connector to the negative post on the good battery. Attach the negative connector at the opposite end of the cable to any unpainted engine



ground or to any other unpainted metal component. The component could be as small as a bolt. *Do not attach it to the negative post on the dead battery as it may ignite a spark.*

3) Start the ignition of the vehicle with the good battery and leave it running for a few minutes. This will allow a charge to build in the dead battery. Next, start the ignition of the vehicle with the bad battery. Your vehicle should start automatically. If not, check the jumper cable connections to make sure that they are secure and cleanly attached to their designated surfaces.

4) Removing the jumper cable from the batteries is opposite to connecting them. You start with the negative (black) connectors. First, remove the negative (black) connector from the engine ground or metal component. Then, remove the negative (black) connector from the negative (-) post of the good battery. Lastly, remove the positive (+) connector from the positive post of the dead battery, and remove the positive (+) connector from the positive (+) post of the good battery.



This is how the cables should look once all connections have been made.

If you are exposed to battery acid, flush the affected area thoroughly. If ingested, drink large amounts of water, milk of magnesia, milk, beaten eggs, or vegetable oil, but do not encourage vomiting. If the acid splashes into the eye area, flush the area with cool running water for at least 15 minutes. In all instances, seek medical attention immediately.

It is important to follow these directions carefully and to not attach the jumper cable connectors to any non-designated surfaces. This will help to avoid sparks and explosions, shocks to you and the vehicle's electrical systems, and most importantly, harm to you or others. An important factor to remember is that you want to avoid any sparks in the area of the battery. If you wish to view a video demonstration on how to jump start a dead battery, go to www.youtube.com. HowdiniGuru produced one of many easy to follow videos on how to jump start a dead battery.

Pictures courtesy of Microsoft Word ClipArt
<http://www.instructables.com/id/Jump-a-Dead-Car-Battery/step5/Attach-the-other-cable-normally-black-here-yello/>

Consolidation of Riverbank Oakdale Transit Authority and Stanislaus Regional Transit

Submitted by Eunice Lovi



In June of this year, the Riverbank Oakdale Transit Authority (ROTA) approved the County's proposal to merge transit services provided in the Communities of Riverbank and Oakdale with transit services offered by the Stanislaus Regional Transit (StaRT) throughout the County. In July, the County Board of Supervisors approved staff's request to begin negotiations with ROTA and to start preliminary work needed to merge the two transit systems. Since then, staff in the Transit Division has been working diligently to complete a number of activities associated with consolidating ROTA and StaRT transit services.

To begin the process, the Transit Division created a Transitional Plan that outlined all necessary tasks to be completed. Some of the essential tasks included seeking approval from the County Board of Supervisors to begin negotiations with the Cities of Oakdale and Riverbank as well as working on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for approval by the Cities of Oakdale and Riverbank and the County to enable StaRT to operate transit service in those communities. Other tasks consist of evaluating existing service provided by ROTA to determine the type of service to be operated in both cities.

To date, staff has completed a number of the activities associated with tasks for merging the two transit systems, including meetings held with ROTA, the City of Riverbank, and the Stanislaus Council of Governments to determine how transit funds would be transferred to StaRT for future transit operations in Riverbank and Oakdale. We continue to work with ROTA to address ongoing challenges and have also met with StaRT's service operator Storer Transit Systems to iron out potential operational challenges.

In October, we hope to seek approval of the MOU between the County and the Cities of Riverbank and Oakdale from the City Councils and will also seek approval of the MOU that spells out how transit funds will be distributed from the ROTA Board. Staff plans to seek final approval from the Board of Supervisors tentatively in November 2012 to merge ROTA and StaRT, and will begin operating the new service in Riverbank and Oakdale beginning January 2013.

UNITED WAY – Live United

Submitted by Sylvia Jones



In these very difficult economic times you might be thinking that there is no way you can squeeze anything else into your budget. But with just a 50 cents per week or \$1.00 per pay period donation from all Public Works employees, we could collectively contribute almost \$3,000 to the **United Way of Stanislaus County**. Add that to all County donations, and we have an amazing number!

You can also "Give the Gift of You" – Volunteering is Easy, Rewarding and Fun! Everyday, ordinary people are accomplishing extraordinary things by volunteering. The United Way Volunteer Center works with volunteers and local nonprofits to develop the best opportunities for youth, busy working adults and seniors. Visit www.uwaystan.org/volunteer for local volunteer opportunities.

Please let me know what would be helpful to assist you in making your decision to donate to United Way. This could be: You would like to have a UW representative on site to answer any questions regarding United Way, or you may want to view a video of some of the ways United Way is helping our neighbors in Stanislaus County (**approximately 99% of dollars stay in Stanislaus County**). Where does my donation go (84% of dollars go directly to services or programs), or how to donate to a specific charitable organization of your choice (must be a 501(c) (3) organization).

Be looking out in the next coming weeks for more information on How to Live United in Stanislaus County and your United Way pledge form.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

Winston Churchill

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Articles by Public Works Writers

Published by Keimi Espinoza 

Our Public Works
2011 Annual Report is available at:
<http://www.stancounty.com/publicworks/pdf/2011-annual-report.pdf>

Stanislaus County Department of Public Works
2011 Annual Report
Then and Now



Transit Division's website is:

www.srt.org

Passengers may call StaRT at 1-800-262-1516
for route information.

Upcoming Events

October 31st (Wednesday) is Halloween. You may wear a work appropriate costume on this day, or if you prefer, you can wear your favorite school, team, or sport shirt/jersey to work.

November 6th (Tuesday) is the 4th Annual Public Works Chili Cook-off. Flyers are posted or see Sheila Nemeth for more details.

Start buying toys. Our 2012 Public Works Holiday Project will be a toy drive.

December 20th (Thursday) is our voluntary Secret Santa holiday celebration.

Heart Walk 2012

Submitted by Sharon Andrews

The Public Works "Road Warriors" team participated in the 2012 American Heart Association Heart Walk on Saturday, September 29th. It's a 3.1 mile walk/run/stroll through historic Modesto around the Graceda Park area. There are refreshments before and after the walk as well as vendors providing information and resources to help educate about heart disease.



Together we raised \$630.47 in funds to contribute to the research and development of new treatments and education to combat the #1 Killer of Americans = Heart Disease. Some facts from the American Heart Association Website: Someone dies from cardiovascular disease **every 38 seconds**. Congenital cardiovascular defects are the most common cause of infant death from birth defects. Heart disease kills more women than all forms of cancer combined. Get more information at the **Go Red for Women** website:

<http://www.goredforwomen.org/>

Kudos!

July 1, 2012

Dear Diane, Laurie & Sharon:

Will you please convey a word of "thanks" to your entire team who completed the EECBG Lighting Project on-time and on budget. Your patience and dedication were stellar. Your team went way above and beyond.

Thank you,
Mark E. Loeser
CEO Operation Services



Public Works Has an Anniversary!

Submitted by Sylvia Jones

It is hard to believe it has been two years (June 28, 2010) since our big move from 1010 10th Street that combined most of the Public Works team members together at Morgan Road. The Transit Division and one Engineer/Permit Technician remain at Tenth Street Place representing Public Works. All of the packing, moving of boxes, painting, setting up data communications and installation of three modulares are all but a memory now. But new memories, friendships, and the sense of being one team are developing every day.

Staff Updates

New Grandchildren:

- ♦ Rodrigo (Rigo) Rodriguez (Road Maintenance Worker III) has a new granddaughter named Isabella who was born on 8/2.
- ♦ John Ramazzina (Road Maintenance Worker III) has a new granddaughter named Elena who was born on 8/24.
- ♦ John Fitzpatrick (Road Maintenance Worker III) has a new grandson named Carter who was born on 8/29.
- ♦ Charles Vasquez (Staff Services Coordinator in Engineering) has a new granddaughter named Adella who was born on 9/5.

Best wishes!

Achievement:

Stacie Morales (Marketing Specialist in Transit) will fill the seventh seat on the Modesto City Schools board by a unanimous vote.

Congratulations!