

Kern COG Quarterly

BETTER PLANNING. BETTER TRANSPORTATION.



**Kern Council
of Governments**

FALL/WINTER 2013

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The City of Shafter will begin work on phase two of the City of Shafter Rail Terminal, using \$3.28 million in federal-aid transportation dollars in December 2014.

Kern COG originally awarded the project in April 2012 as part of a larger package throughout Kern County,

intended to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. In September 2013, Shafter officials received funding authority approval by the Federal Highway Administration to start the project.

The project will provide a connection between two already-installed BNSF mainline switches and establish a facility with more than 9,000 linear feet of track parallel to the BNSF. When completed in the first quarter of 2014, the facility will be capable of handling all levels of service: intermodal, boxcar, tankers, hoppers and gondolas.

This rail connection from the BNSF mainline to the PLP (Paramount Logistics) terminal is
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Delano's RailEx receives \$1.8 million grant



The City of Delano has received \$1.84 million through a September grant award from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help build a new Union Pacific rail spur that will serve an industrial park, including the RailEx Delano platform.

According to the EDA, the \$1,846,062 public works grant will provide Delano "with greater access to the transportation network that moves goods and services, which will increase commercial activity and employment opportunities as well as supporting economic diversification." This grant represents 53 percent of the \$3.48 million project that Delano officials estimate will create 302 jobs and leverage \$35 million in private investment.

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\$3 million awarded for transit improvements

Kern COG's Board in September approved nearly \$3 million in projects from a state-run program designed to improve public transportation.

The Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA), paid for through Proposition 1B bond funds, may be used for transit rehabilitation, safety or modernization improvements, capital service improvements or expansions, new capital projects, bus rapid-transit improvements or

Projects awarded include:

- \$600,000 to build curb cut-outs and sidewalk installation for Golden Empire Transit District's bus stops throughout metro Bakersfield and County locations;
- \$1.2 million for two over-the-road coaches to support GET's express service from Bakersfield to the Tejon Ranch Industrial Complex;
- \$400,000 for Arvin and Taft to build park-and-ride facilities; and
- \$87,000 to the City of Delano for transit maintenance equipment.

rolling stock (buses and rail cars) procurement, rehabilitation or replacement.

Approximately \$6 million remains in the Kern region's account and will be made available over the next three years. All projects funded by the PTMISEA program must be completed by June 30, 2017. Kern COG and its member agencies have delivered nearly \$25 million in transit projects to date using the bond program. ■

2013 Rideshare Week draws 700 pledges

More than 700 Kern County residents pledged to share a ride, ride a bus, walk or bicycle to work or school at least one day during the statewide Rideshare Week, Oct. 7-11.

Kern COG's ridesharing program, CommuteKern, experienced a 20 percent membership increase for its carpool-matching database. The free, web-based database is available at www.commutekern.com and will assist in matching users with someone who is driving to work or school at the same time.

To help promote ridesharing, CommuteKern sponsored daily fun activities, such as Carpool Monday, Transit Tuesday and Bicycle Wednesday.

Commuters who pledged to ride share during that week were eligible to win a bicycle donated by Snider's Cyclery in Bakersfield. Other great prizes included: an iPad, iPod Shuffle, movie passes, bus passes and a gift basket donated by Kern County Raceway Park with four tickets for the "NAPA Auto Parts 150," raceway apparel and other goodies.

CommuteKern thanks its valuable sponsors for Rideshare Week: Snider's Cyclery, Valley Clean Air Now, San Joaquin Valley Air District, GET Bus, Kern Regional Transit, KERO/AZTECA TV and KUZJ/JACK-FM.

You have places to go and we'd like to help you get there! Visit commutekern.org for free ride matching and information regarding other transit opportunities. Don't forget to mark your calendars for Rideshare Week 2014, Oct. 6-10. ■



Students learn "What Matters Most" for air quality

Located at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley's topographic "bowl," Kern County residents have long suffered from some of the worst air pollution in the nation. Now, middle-school students will have an opportunity to learn why the air is dirty and what matters most about cleaning it up.

Kern Council of Governments has developed a sixth-grade science curriculum to help students understand air pollution as well as possible causes and cures. "What Matters Most" is offered to sixth-grade science teachers throughout the county to illustrate the different sources of particulate-matter air pollution, how it affects human and environmental health and how Kern County's topography plays into this common problem.

Released in time for the annual countywide science fair, each "What Matters Most" kit includes paper squares, string, petroleum jelly, markers, packing tape, a hole punch, magnifying glasses, safety compasses and the experiment directions. Students place the string through a paper square and add the petroleum jelly to one side of the paper. They identify different places either around campus or around their yards where they can tie the paper square to collect particulate matter. The squares are observed every day and returned to the classroom on day four. The students then use their magnifying

glasses to count and measure the amount of particulate matter that was collected.

Sixth-graders learn about the different sources of particulate matter air pollution. Now that they see and feel what is in our air that causes so much

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Nominations open for Kern Council of Governments' Regional Awards of Merit

Kern Council of Governments, a regional transportation planning agency, is now accepting nominations for its 23rd annual Regional Awards of Merit Program. The Regional Awards program honors individuals, organizations and programs dedicated to improving Kern County's quality of life through innovative, cooperative, regional efforts. The deadline for submissions is Friday, Dec. 6, 2013. The application form may be found online at kerncog.org.

Nominators should attach the official entry form (or a copy) to a typewritten submission of not more than two pages, describing why the individual or organization deserves a Regional Award of Merit. Applications may be submitted by email, fax, or mail to Kern Council of Governments' office or to rphipp@kerncog.org.

The submission must be accompanied by at least 10 photo-quality electronic images or video footage at least two minutes long that presents a comprehensive mosaic of the nominee's accomplishments. All images should be taken with a minimum of a 4 mega pixel camera with at least 300 pixels per inch resolution.

At least one image must be of the individual nominee or program itself. This image may consist of a sign or logo, if that is the only available resource to visually distinguish the nominee from other programs or projects. All materials become the property of Kern Council of Governments and will not be returned. ■

For more information, contact *Robert Phipps* at 661-861-2191 or at rphipp@kerncog.org.

Rail terminal *(Continued from page 1)*

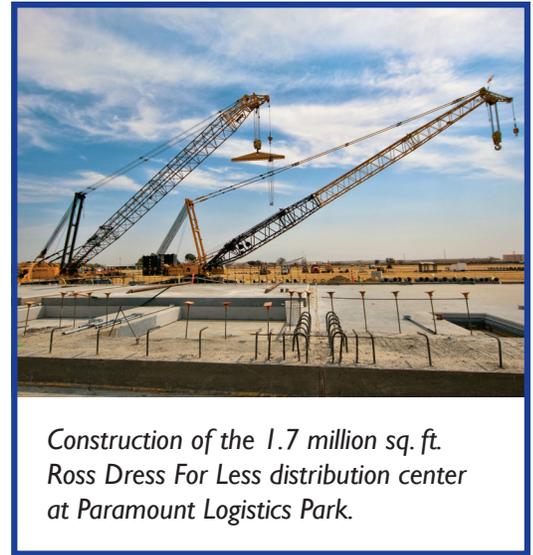
tics Park) will provide Kern County numerous benefits in transportation productivity, environmental benefits and economic opportunities. The facility is already operational and has handled thousands of cars. A new City of Shafter municipal fiber optic network is also bringing state-of-the-art communications to the terminal and park. The terminal is visible from the grade cross near 7th Standard Road and Santa Fe Way as are the more than 2 million square feet of industrial expansion currently under construction.

In addition to connecting the main-line switches, in phase two more than 6,400 feet of track will be added to the lead and runaround tracks, plus a container freight station (CFS) will be added to enhance additional freight. A container management facility (CY) will also be added to reduce the number of empty containers shipped to and from ports, reducing costs for shippers and truckers and reducing reliance on trucks.

The project is the latest in a series of investments, since 1998, using local, state and federal transportation dollars. It included; widening 7th Standard Road to a grade-separated highway at both State Route 99 and on the west end, over the BNSF railroad.

The PLP and Shafter Rail Terminal are considered to be a significant economic engine by Kern County officials. The facility has, and will continue to contribute to regional, state and national economic interests by:

- providing approximately 8,000 to 10,000 new jobs in the region;
- adding 9 million to 10 million sq. ft. of new industrial capacity;
- improving the local tax base with an estimated \$500 million in new assessed valuation;
- increasing ancillary businesses to serve anchor tenants;
- reducing oxides of nitrogen (precursors to air pollutants), by nearly 1,700 tons at full operation;
- creating a major new transportation hub; and
- creating a new standard for industrial development in the United States. ■



Construction of the 1.7 million sq. ft. Ross Dress For Less distribution center at Paramount Logistics Park.

RailEx *(Continued from page 1)*

EDA grants are awarded through a competitive process based upon the application's merit, the applicant's eligibility and funding availability.

RailEx specializes in delivering farm-fresh produce anywhere in the nation by rail within five days. The RailEx facility contains 225,000 sq. ft. of refrigerated space with nine separate, computer-controlled temperature zones inside 19 enclosed, refrigerated rail docks. The fully integrated RF-enabled warehouse management system also includes 43 refrigerated truck doors and five miles of private rail track, enough for a three-train capacity. ■

What Matters Most *(Continued from page 3)*

difficulty to breathe, they discuss things they can do to help cut down on the particulate matter. They learn how to make a difference by walking and bicycling to school on good days versus always asking their parents to drive them. They also understand the importance of limiting "burn" days to help control particulate matter on the worst air quality days in the winter months.

Participating teachers and students alike said they appreciated learning about what things they can do to help make a difference. "What Matters Most" will be distributed to sixth-grade classes again in spring 2014. ■