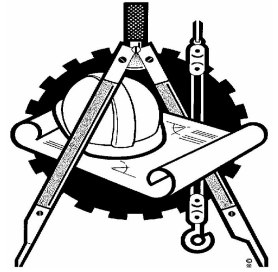

MODESTO ENGINEERS CLUB

email: board@modestoengineersclub.org

website: www.modestoengineersclub.org



Volume 2008 Issue 7

July 1, 2008

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FORMAL LUNCH MEETINGS

July 1/August 5/September 2

*: Skip 1st Tuesday due to holiday conflicts

Meeting Times: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Formal Meeting Location: **S.O.S. Club, 819 Sunset Ave.** (near Dryden Golf Course)

INFORMAL MEETINGS

Members regularly meet on Tuesdays, 11:30a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Mill Café, corner of 9th & F Street in Modesto for camaraderie. No formal program is presented.

BOARD MEETINGS

(7–8:15am, Old Mill Café)

Next Meeting: July 1, 2008

2007-08 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Mike Rieben President 526-4214
president@modestoengineersclub.org

David Castro Vice President 522-6273
vicepresident@modestoengineersclub.org

Jennifer Pratt Sec./Treas. 577-5259
secretary@modestoengineersclub.org

Steve Davis, Earl Kleinfelder, Ryan Carrel, Doug Samski, Rapunzel Lewis, David Leamon

ATTENDANCE: Last Meeting...
22 members, 11 guests

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I made it back to land. I never thought that a ship that big could rock so much with little effort by the ocean.

I hope that all members are getting the newsletter one way or another. Technology, sheesh!

I will be at our next meeting to accept the stack of nominations for our 08'-09' Secretary/Treasurer. If Jennifer can find time in her crazy schedule to donate some of it to our club then anyone could.

Please note that the board email on top of this newsletter doesn't include the 3 officers do to a technical limitation unfortunately. If you were to send an email to the entire board then you would use:

officers@modestoengineersclub.org and
board@modestoengineersclub.org.

See ya there!

Mike Rieben - President

THIS MONTH'S PRESENTATION

Topic: Modesto Groundwater Basin

Presenter: Steve Phillips, Research Hydrologist

Company: U.S Geologic Survey

SECRETARY'S NOTES



Rather than a biography this month, I am including an excerpt from a report titled, Benefits of High Speed Rail in Stanislaus County, which was prepared by former Modesto Engineer's Club President, David Leamon.

It's a little longer than most newsletters (though this is even shorter than the Reader's Digest version of the original report) but is quite interesting. Hope you enjoy and I'll see you all on Tuesday!

The State of California currently proposes to build a high-speed rail system in the State from the Bay Area to Los Angeles with lines to Sacramento and San Diego. The system cost is at least \$33 to \$39 billion for the network. No investment in California infrastructure has been as large as this since the freeway building boom in the 1950's and 1960's. With a rail system capable of traveling at speeds of up to 220 miles per hour, the high speed rail system is likely to significantly alter how Californians travel through the State. The construction of such a system would likely create a paradigm shift in transportation in the State of California.

Here is a discussion of how a high-speed rail system could change Modesto and how it could further affect Modesto if it were built in downtown Modesto rather than at the proposed Parker Road AMTRAK station on the BNSF line along the east side of the Valley:

With the high-speed rail, the low cost of a trip along with the high speed access to the Bay Area would be a boon for Stanislaus County. The benefits to the residents would likely include better access to higher paying jobs at a lower cost in both time and in dollars spent commuting.

Also, the land use types that the high speed rail network would spawn, would likely be much different than the traditional residential neighborhoods being built today. A high speed link to the Bay Area could be able to support a denser neighborhood as the primary link for this neighborhood would be

rail oriented rather than automobile linked. A traditional single family neighborhood incorporates densities on the order of 5 to 7 dwelling units per acre in Stanislaus County. The City of Modesto General Plan calls for densities of 5.1 residential dwelling units per acre.

The rail centric neighborhood would incorporate much higher densities to maximize the benefit of living close to the railhead. The densities would be on the order of 15 dwelling units per acre for single family detached to 20 to 25 dwelling units per acre for multi-family attached condominiums and townhouses. The densities could be further increased by utilizing a mixed neighborhood with mid-rise buildings with retail and commercial uses on the first floor, with residential living opportunities above with densities in excess of 35 dwelling units per acre. Ideally, the neighborhood would be walkable with dining, shopping, entertainment and recreation opportunities within a short distance. This rail-centric neighborhood would be connected with the rest of the City of Modesto through traditional roads and public transportation options. Encouraging this type of development is highly desirable from a land use perspective as it limits urban sprawl, conserving farm land, lessening utility impacts, and moderating the amount of land covered, allowing greater areas of common green-scape/open space.

Bay Street Development in Emeryville is a development that looks similar to a rail-centric village.



Bay Street Emeryville

If the density of Modesto's Central Business District (CBD) could be increased to 5 du/acre or greater, the options for providing public transportation increase greatly. If the

downtown redevelopment continues with the construction of the Gallo Arts Center, the Modesto Center Plaza, 10th Street Place, proposed 10th Street Paseo, Tuolumne River Regional Park at the confluence of Dry Creek and the Tuolumne River and the California High Speed Rail Station downtown, the City could then look at local fixed route transportation options, i.e. street cars. Many American Cities in the past decade have built new street car lines and have been quite pleased at the results. In San Francisco, the 8-Market electric trolley bus line was replaced by 50-year old heritage trolleys, renamed as the *F-line*, running over the identical route in the mid 1990s by the Municipal Railway of San Francisco (Muni). The street car line could run in the 10th Street Paseo and link the core of the downtown with the proposed High Speed Rail Station, providing access to remote parking, linking the various entertainment venues and providing an additional catalyst for densification and redevelopment. Since the introduction of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, communities can apply for and win grants to help fund transportation projects other than more highways. Fixed rail is more cost effective from an operational perspective. In Los Angeles it is estimated that their fixed rail system is 40% cheaper to operate than the equivalent number of buses (Light Rail Now, 2001).

In addition, the CBD of Modesto is intersected by the only freeway that serves Modesto, State Highway 99. The downtown tracks are 3 blocks away from the freeway and the downtown grid system makes getting to the train station easier than it would be to get to the proposed Parker Road Station which is only served by one street, Parker Road.

Although there is no surrounding development around the Parker Road Station, this is not necessarily a good thing due to the lack of infrastructure around this Station. If the High Speed Rail Station was built on the east side of town it would entail significant capital investment in utility extensions. The area is not currently served water or sewer in capacities necessary to bring a 16 by 16 block grid like downtown to it. Preliminary

calculations estimate that one sewer lift station and up to three new municipal wells would be needed to serve the development at a cost of approximately \$9.5 million dollars to construct and maintain. There would additionally be extensive road improvements required to serve the Parker Road Station. This is further reason to build the station in downtown Modesto.

In conclusion, the societal benefits of the high-speed rail are many – quicker travel and commute, reducing pollution by taking cars off the road, providing opportunities to plan communities to allow better use of public transportation and reducing urban sprawl.

STANDBY AGENDAS

The Board would like three standby speakers for the monthly meetings. The standby presentations should be from the existing membership. These presentations would be in case the guest speaker has an emergency or is sick and cannot make it. Standby speakers would receive as little as 2 hours of notification (A real Toastmaster challenge). If you would consider being a standby speaker, please contact David Castro.

MEETING LOCATION

Our formal meetings are at the SOS Club, 819 Sunset Avenue (near Dryden Golf Course), ph. 578-5801. Tuesday's menu features a buffet style meal. **Please pay the \$10.00** to the treasurer, Jennifer Pratt, (half off for Students). The beverage, tax and tip are included. We have the Mellis Room reserved. The main courses will vary each week. Please park in the street or at Dryden Golf Course. The club parking lot is for SOS Club members only.

OUTREACH EFFORTS FOR NEW MEMBERS

The Outreach committee is designed to market the Club to potential new members. Every member can be a part of this effort by forwarding along our monthly newsletter and talking about the club. Please extend offers to join the club to your colleagues.

ABOUT THE ENGINEERS CLUB

AN INVITATION

The Modesto Engineers Club is pleased to invite you to join its membership.

PURPOSE OF THE CLUB

The preamble of the club by-laws is quoted: "The object of this club, primarily, is to provide an organization in which Engineers of all branches of the profession may come together, and through which they may cooperate and foster fellowship and the development of the engineering profession in public affairs and community welfare".

WHO MAY JOIN

The by-laws are further quoted: "The membership shall consist of those who are or have been engaged in the direction or prosecution of engineering or architecture, or teachers of students of engineering or other allied sciences".

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The Club meets once a month on the first Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the SOS club. The program usually consists of a speaker on technical subjects and local affairs of interest to engineers. There are several social affairs during the year, which include the annual President's Steak Fry, A Valentines Day luncheon, the annual trip to Woolgrowers restaurant in Los Banos the annual Officers Installation Dinner and the Christmas Stag Party. Spouses and guests are welcome at most functions.

THE COST

A \$25.00 initiation fee and first years dues of \$25.00, \$50.00 total is payable with the submission of application. Thereafter the dues are \$25.00 per year to renew. New members will receive a certificate of membership and a nametag will be provided for our formal lunch

meetings. Members pay for their own lunches, and for meals at other events.

SIZE OF CLUB

The club, having been founded in 1932 enjoys a wealth of former members, and approximately **63** active members. They represent many of the public works engineers, consultants, utility companies, and suppliers of construction and engineering materials.

THE APPLICATION

We would be pleased if you complete the application. Please obtain the signatures of two active members. After submittal of your application, it will be read at the meeting. At the next meeting at which the applicant is present, membership will be based on a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present. You will then be inducted. The ceremony is simple, but dignified. Applicants are welcome to attend weekly meetings while their applications are pending.