



## MCAG Newsletter - Have a Happy New Year!

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#### What's in store for MCAG in 2012?

Be on the look out for our special January issue that will highlight plans for 2012.

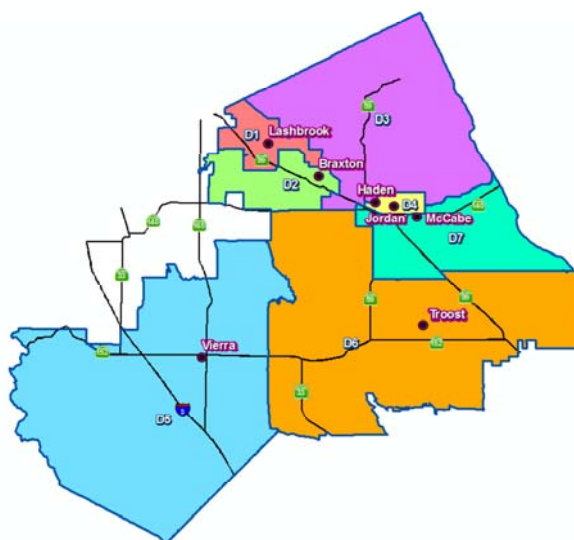
#### One Voice visit scheduled for April 2012

One Voice, the Merced Regional Advocacy Program, has been successful in securing over \$5 million for projects and programs in transportation, economic development, education, healthcare and water.

We will once again travel to Washington, D.C., April 24-25th, to ensure our needs are heard by members of Congress and federal agencies that determine how federal money is distributed as well as what legislation should move forward.

Participation is needed from all sectors - government, non-profits, business and concerned citizens. If you'd like to participate, contact Lori Flanders at (209) 723-3153 x308 or [lori.flanders@mcagov.org](mailto:lori.flanders@mcagov.org).

If this email appears distorted [click here](#) to view.



### MCAG's Role in Redistricting

California's state and federal officials are not the only ones affected by a redistricting process. Changes in how voters elect their 2012 Merced Region school trustees could also be in place for 2012 elections. Redistricting is the process of drawing voting boundaries in response to population changes determined by the results of the decennial (every 10 years) census. Redrawing district and precinct lines to ensure balanced representation is a critical yet complex task. MCAG's Geographic Information System (GIS) Department has taken on the challenge for over a dozen elementary/high school districts and Merced College.

The criteria GIS staff must follow makes the process rather complicated. A few examples of what the GIS department must consider when redrawing voting districts – distribute the population equally, maintain ay districts that have minority population great than 50%, keep existing incumbents in their districts, and make sure each district is contiguous (touching). Overall, the final product just has to make sense.

Using GIS mapping technology, GIS staff analyzed the criteria mentioned above and the latest available census data, to develop draft maps, also known as scenarios, for each of the districts. They presented these draft scenarios to the respective Boards and the public to solicit comments. GIS staff then compiled all of the comments received from the Boards and the public to develop final scenarios.

### Upcoming Events

#### Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

January 6, 2012 - 8:30 am  
at MCAG

[Click here to view agenda](#)

#### Homeless Street Count Planning Meeting

January 10, 2012 - 10:30 am  
at MCAG

#### Technical Review Board Meeting

January 11, 2012 at noon  
City of Merced

[Click here to view agenda](#)  
once available

#### MCAG Governing Board Meeting

January 19, 2012 at 3pm  
City of Atwater

[Click here to view agenda](#)  
when available

## Emails

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Although each Board is within different stages of the approval process, they must complete the redistricting process, which includes certain federal approvals, in time to prepare for the 2012 November elections.

If you have never experienced the excitement of GIS technology, be sure to click below to access interactive tools, view zoning and general plan maps or contact our GIS staff directly.

[Click here to experience GIS technology](#)



### 2012 Homeless Street Count

The Merced Regional Continuum of Care Program, facilitated by MCAG, has garnered over \$2 million in grant funds for homeless programs. Programs range from housing the mentally ill to a web-based data tracking tool for Congress.

As part of the grant requirements, the Continuum of Care collaborative, made up of service providers, homeless advocates and government representatives, conducts an annual homeless street count and survey. The 2012 count is scheduled to take place the morning of January 24th. "Counters" literally walk or drive throughout the county to visually identify and tally homeless persons. Emergency shelters also provide their headcount for reporting purposes.

The 2011 street count found 485 homeless persons living on the streets or in emergency shelter. In addition to the headcount, volunteers also survey the homeless to learn more about their characteristics, including their gender, length of homelessness, if they're a veteran, any disabilities, mental illness or substance abuse issues. The data collected is not only provided to the federal government for reporting purposes, it is also used by members of the Continuum of Care to identify any existing gaps that may exist and provides an opportunity to introduce the homeless to programs they may not be aware of.

If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Alicia Ochoa-Jones, Coordinator for the Continuum of Care at (209) 723-3153 x328 or via email at [alicia.ochoa-jones@mcagov.org](mailto:alicia.ochoa-jones@mcagov.org)

[Click here to view the 2011 Street Count/Survey](#)

[Report](#)

MCAG is an association of city and county governments, with members who meet to solve regional problems such as transportation, solid waste, and air quality.

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