

The Modesto Bee



Roundabouts and upgrades cause delays across Modesto

BY TREVOR MORGAN
tmorgan@modbee.com

The Modesto City Council approved a \$3 million contract Tuesday to improve Coffee Road, adding to about \$25 million worth of Measure L funds being spent on road upgrades

already in progress throughout the city.

The project, awarded to Hughson-based United Pavement Maintenance, will repave the road, add mid-block curbs, new crosswalks and new signage on Coffee between Norwegian Avenue and Scenic Drive. Construction is set to begin this

summer to align with Downey High School's schedule. It is expected to total about \$3.7 million.

"Overall, the traffic on Coffee Road will be able to drive on smoother pavement, upgraded bicycle facilities and will have more visible markings and signage throughout the corridor,"

reads the staff's agenda report. "In addition to performing pavement maintenance, one of the goals of this project is to provide safer crosswalks for pedestrians in the general area of Downey High School."

No documents presented to the City Council include an anticipated time of completion

for the project. Similar projects have taken anywhere from three months to a year to finish.

Recent projects across Modesto have annoyed drivers this year, with traffic often whittled down to one lane during rush hours on major arteries. Driver sentiment has not gone unnoticed by the city, which maintains it would rather hear complaints during the process than complaints about its roads' substandard conditions.

During the annual State of the City address, Mayor Sue Zwahlen's mention of ongoing construction along Scenic Drive was

SEE ROUNDABOUTS, 4A



ANDY ALFARO aalfaro@modbee.com

Progress on the demolition of the Seventh Street bridge has reached the Tuolumne River in Modesto. Pictured Saturday, May 2, 2026.

Demolition is mostly done at old Seventh Street Bridge

BY JOHN HOLLAND
jholland@modbee.com

Wrecking crews have made steady progress toward the new Seventh Street Bridge in Modesto.

As of Thursday, only about 200 feet of the 1,170-foot old

span still stood. That was six weeks into the demolition for the \$127 million replacement. To protect Tuolumne River fish, the rest of the work must wait until summer.

The new bridge could be finished by early 2028 by MCM Construction, based near Sacramento. It will dou-

ble the motor-vehicle lanes to four and enhance access on foot, bike and wheelchair to Tuolumne River Regional Park.

The original bridge opened 1917, in the Beaux Art style of architecture. The concrete protecting the steel trusses did not hold up well, forcing

weight and speed limits since the 1930s.

The bridge had four concrete lion statues that came to be beloved. Two of them will be restored for display next to the new bridge at the urging of the Modesto Landmark Preser-

SEE DEMOLITION, 4A

MPD annual report details drones and crowd control gear

BY TREVOR MORGAN
tmorgan@modbee.com

The Modesto Police Department delivered its annual Military Equipment Use Report to the City Council on Tuesday. The presentation included a request to purchase new drones, flash-bangs, tear gas canisters, pepper balls, batons and other crowd-control equipment.

MPD's current stock includes most of these items already, but it requested more to supplement or replace inventory. The agency listed 58 military-grade items, across six categories, on its list given to the City Council.

The agenda item for the council to accept the report was originally on the consent calendar — a list of items packaged together and voted on all at once without public discussion — but was pulled by meeting attendee Kevin McCarty.

If a member of the public, or the council, requests an item be pulled from the consent calendar, it must be discussed in the open and voted on publicly. MPD Lt. Joe Bottoms presented the report to council, saying the equipment is used for multiple scenarios and is standard.

"So it may surprise council, and whoever's listening, what (the state) considers to be military items," Bottoms said. "These are items that the Police Department has purchased for as long as I've been a police department ... officer: for over 21 years. So it's just after 2021 that the state determined that they would now consider these to be military items."

MPD's requested new equipment will cost \$71,384, with the most expensive purchase being four DJI Mavic 4T drones. These will replace two identical drones that have reached their "end of life" use, according to its report.

At about \$8,000 apiece, the drones have 56-times zoom lens

SEE ANNUAL REPORT, 4A

Driving the vote for equality in Modesto 1916 reenactment

BY KATHLEEN QUINN
kquinn@mcclatchyservices.com

As ballots begin to hit mailboxes in Stanislaus County, the county Commission for Women and the local League of Women Voters welcomed a restored 1918 Saxon Flyer into Modesto to re-create a 1916 suffragette ride that promoted women's right to vote.

The reproduced trip now promotes the ratification of the 28th Amendment, known as the Equal Rights Amendment. The amendment would codify

in the Constitution women's equal protection under the law. It was originally introduced in 1923, three years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

The Modesto stop on Wednesday was significant because the two women who made the historic drive, Alice Burke and Nell Richardson, visited the city back then and spent a night at the Modesto Hotel.

Jeryl Schriever wrote the book "Driving the Vote for Women: An American Journey for Suffrage" about the 1916



ANDY ALFARO aalfaro@modbee.com

Modesto Mayor Sue Zwahlen rides with Susan Nourse in a Saxon motor car being used in the re-creation of a 1916 suffrage tour. The Driving the Vote for Equality Tour visited Modesto on May 6, 2026, and is retracing the route made by suffragettes Nell Richardson and Alice Burke 110 years ago.

nationwide drive, which began in New York.

"They took a little yellow car, just like the one out here,

and they drove around the country," Schriever said at

SEE VOTE, 4A



We're dedicated to delivering the journalism you rely on. Discover the stories that matter to you inside. Subscribers, explore more stories and features like puzzles and games at modbee.com/edition.

FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE QUESTIONS, CALL US AT: 800-776-4233 OR REACH US ONLINE AT: modbee.com/customer-service



6 06836 77777 4