

## **Merced County Times**

### **WalMart Opens the door to Merced.**

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A businessman said last week, "If the City Council votes the WalMart Distribution Center down, you can shut the door on Merced."

On Monday night, six out of seven of the members of the City Council voted for approval of the Distribution Center.

The door is still open in Merced.

The door is not wide open, as we would like to see, but businesses know that the city realizes how critical jobs are to the future welfare of our community and its residents who now face very difficult times in finding employment.

Without firms like WalMart, where are the jobs?

We have service providers, however these kinds of firms must depend on people having jobs so they can afford the services.

We have restaurants, however without core jobs, there is no money for dining. There is barely money for families to eat at home.

WalMart's approval sets the stage for other businesses who are looking for an area in California with a pool of labor, land to expand and a city which wants to do business.

Does one think for a minute that had the Merced City Council turned down WalMart's Distribution Center that Madera or Modesto wouldn't have been waiting at the door. Then we would have had all the truck traffic up and down highway 99 without the benefit of employment or taxes.

The solution to our bad air problem in the central valley is to cut back on gas and diesel vehicle use. This takes a long range plan to replace the cars and trucks we use now, with some other means of mobility. High speed rail would the use of bicycles as transit, however this would require the city to improve bike paths so they actually go somewhere in our city.

School bus traffic is another major pollutant but we do not see Asthma Coalition or Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth picketing the schools. One of the

biggest polluters is the lawn mower and we never hear of anyone saying "stop growing all this grass!"

WalMart, on the other hand is a job provider, the kind of business which only comes along once in every decade. During these economic times, it may be every other decade before another opportunity comes along.

We are glad to see that the City Council used some common sense to approach a problem of major magnitude. The problem of lack of jobs, goes deeper than just providing income so people can feed themselves and their family.

It goes directly to the core of public safety. Without jobs, crime will only increase in our city.

We need to find a way to put our people back to work.

This is the number one priority.

Monday night the City Council opened the door for 1,200 jobs in the future. Now, what is next?

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