Merced County

The Merced County Courthouse in Merced.
Part 1 of 3: Delhi, Livingston,Merced, Atwater.

Merced County

Merced County Data
Population: 210,554 (Rank: 26)
Land Area (square miles): 1,929 (Rank: 25)

The county is named after the Merced River. Lt. Gabriel Moraga gave the river the name. His troops were very thirsty when they found the river and he named it after Our Lady of Mercy, "de las Mercedes" in Spanish. Merced is the seat of Merced County.

The county stretches across the valley from the foothills. In the eastern part of the county along the Merced River are the long mounds of gravel ripped up by gold dredges. Snelling, the original county seat, is located here. There is a dam and power plant at Merced Falls.

On the other side of the county is San Luis Reservoir, which is a key part of the California Aqueduct, transferring water from north to south. Overlooking the reservoir is a visitor center with an informative program about how the California Water Project works.

The western part of the county along the San Joaquin River is swampy land made up of wildlife refuges: Kesterson and San Luis National Wildlife Refuges and the Volta and Los Banos Wildlife areas. It was at the Kesterson Refuge that deformed wildlife was discovered. Selenium, which is a natural part of the soil, became concentrated here because of the run-off of farm irrigation water and caused the birth defects.

The county has two major highways (99 and 5) running north and south. Most of the towns are located along 99 and a few small towns are located on Highway 33. Highway 140 cuts through the middle of the county and winds its way to Yosemite. Today Merced ranks 5th in the state in farm production with milk and chickens leading the way. There is a large Foster Farms processing plant in Livingston.

Cities: Livingston, Merced, Gustine, Los Banos, Dos Palos. Towns: Snelling.

Merced County

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Delhi

Delhi opened a post office in 1912. Today it has a population close to 11,000. (January 2006)

Delhi

(January 2006)

Delhi

(January 2006)

Delhi

(January 2006)

Delhi

What makes Delhi unique is its school. Unlike schools where classrooms are lined up in a row this school has clusters of buiildings. It has a different approach to education. The school is based upon the New American Model developed by Harvard University. (January 2006)

Delhi

The high school has a 72 acre campus with 36 classrooms arranged in clusters. Each cluster has a computer lab. There are about 700 students. The emphasis is on collaborative project-oriented learning.

Delhi

(January 2006)

Delhi

(January 2006)

Delhi

(January 2006)

Delhi

(January 2006)

Merced

Merced

The old courthouse is used as a local museum. (January 2006)

Merced

Merced

Downtown Merced has been renovated into a very attractive main street. The population of the town is 79,000. The city was incorporated in 1889. (November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

The new movie complex downtown has these outstanding murals covering the walls. (November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

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(November 2008)

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(November 2008)

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(November 2008)

Merced

This is the landmark theatre downtown. It is being refurbished for live performances. (November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

The county library. (November 2008)

Merced

The new city hall. (November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(November 2008)

Merced

(The new county courthouse. March 2009)

Merced

The new cultural center on the main street. (January 2010)

Merced

(January 2010)

Merced

The main street. The University of California at Merced was built in 2005. This has brought dramatic changes to the community. (January 2010)

Merced

(January 2010)

Livingston

Livingston is the headquaters of Foster Farms, which is famous for its fresh, never frozen chickens. Sometmes there is a "burned chicken feathers" smell in parts of the town. (July 2003)

Livingston

(July 2003)

Livingston

Foster Farms was started by a Modesto Bee newspaper reporter in 1939. (July 2003)

Livingsto

(July 2003)

Livingston

(July 2003)

Livingston

July 2007

Castle AFB Museum

This museum is a former Strategic Air Command base. It has a great collection of Cold War planes. (August 2003)

Castle AFB Museum

(August 2003)

Atwater

The Atwater City Hall. (August 2003)

Atwater

(July 2003)

Atwater

(July 2003)

Atwater

(July 2003)

Hilmar

This is the Hilmar Cheese Factory. Hilmar was founded as a Swedish colony in 1917. A post office was established in 1920. (January 2006)

Hilmar

The Hillmar Cheese factory was established by 12 dairymen in 1984. It produces two million (I am not sure about the accuracy of that number) pounds of cheese a day. It is the largest cheese factory in the world.

Hilmar

(January 2006)

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