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## **Staff Report**

STUDY  
SESSION  
ITEM NO. 3

**To: Lemoore City Council**  
**From: Judy Holwell, Redevelopment Project Manager**  
**Date: October 29, 2007**  
**Subject: Update – San Joaquin Valley Railroad**

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### **Discussion**

In May, Council was presented with information on various complaints associated with the San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVRR). Richard McGowan, Manager Marketing & Sales, Customer Service Representative from SJVRR, was in attendance to discuss topics such as streets being blocked for extended periods of time, children crossing under stopped trains and unsafe train speeds through town. At that time we were provided with information that the General Manager, Jack Gauthier, had recently been replaced by Ron Perry, but that Mr. Perry was not able to make it to the meeting. Staff was directed to work with the railroad to resolve the issues.

In the mean time, staff had begun receiving complaints from a concerned citizen who lives on "F" Street between Fox and Follett streets. The concern was regarding the noise being created by refrigerated train cars running day and night along the sidings adjacent to her home. She complained about being unable to sleep at night due to the constant noise and that she could not concentrate during the day either.

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, staff met with Mr. McGowan and Mr. Perry to discuss our concerns. We walked with them along the tracks from Follett to Fox and pointed out the location of the cars and the noise they were creating. Being able to meet at the site where most problems occur was very valuable. The new General Manager was able to visually see (and hear) the complaints.

At that time, train cars were being loaded at Leprino (east plant) and afterward, the cars were moved east of Fox Street where they would remain with the refrigeration units running, sometimes all weekend. Apparently the loaded cars were being staged between Fox and Follett to reduce the amount of time Fox Street is blocked when the engine comes to haul them away. Mr. Perry noted that there was enough siding west of Fox Street to stage approximately six cars. He spoke to the engineer and directed him to stage the cars on the west side until there is no more space available. If the storage of cars west of Fox Street becomes inadequate, one solution may be to extend additional siding further west to 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to accommodate approximately 20 cars.

Staff also discussed the concern about the rate of speed at which the train travels through town. Staff pointed out that one of the crossings has only a stop sign and the other has only lights, but that neither have gates. A few days after our meeting, Mr. Perry called to report that the speed through town had been voluntarily reduced to 25 mph. The railroad will not commit to this speed, however, since they may need to increase it again at some point in the future.

Complaints have decreased and our concerns have been addressed. The concerned citizen has been contacted and she reports noticing a significant improvement. Staff is still concerned however that several issues are still unresolved.

- Blockage of Fox, Follett & Lemoore avenues simultaneously
- Time of day when blockages occur (specifically when schools let out and children cross under and over stopped train)
- Permanent reduction of speed

Staff will continue to monitor the train movements through town and work with the representatives from the SJVRR to develop a Memorandum of Understanding.

**Budget Impact**

None.

**Recommendation**

Information only.