

# THE PIPELINE

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C E L E B R A T I N G  
VENTURA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY 60TH ANNIVERSARY  
SERVING VENTURA COUNTY







## From the Director's Desk

Jeff Pratt,  
Public Works  
Agency Director

Dear Friends,

As we turn the corner into 2014, all of us here at the Public Works Agency will be celebrating a milestone of epic proportions: our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Every future has a past and, during this year's annual meeting, we will take a look at not only where we've been but where we're going. And as *The Journey Continues*, we will boldly go where we haven't gone before.

But we haven't done it alone. Everyone involved, including our CEO and Board of Supervisors, has played pivotal roles in our success. Our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary blasts off with some exciting new developments on the horizon and I'm excited to share them with you.

Don't miss a minute of the 2014 State of the Agency meeting on January 21, 22, and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Be there as *The Journey Continues*.

All the Best,

Jeff Pratt  
Director

## Sixty Years: A Special Milestone

The year 2014 marks a very special milestone for the Ventura County Public Works Agency—it's our 60th anniversary. In 1954, several independently functioning units within the region were consolidated into one Agency to serve the people of Ventura County. We've faced many challenges, both natural and man-made, as population and development have grown through the decades; we have also seen dramatic changes in technology and procedure.

"Change isn't always easy, even when it ultimately makes our lives better and our jobs easier," says Jeff Pratt, Agency Director. "One thing that will never change, though, is our commitment to the same high standards we have adhered to for six decades."

Pratt points to the Agency's Mission Statement to put all future goals in their proper context.

"Character, integrity, communication, teamwork, safety, and fiscal responsibility will always be at the core of what we do," he explains. "We embrace innovation because it continually provides us with a better way to serve the citizens of Ventura County."



## Central Services

**Central Services** provides support services to each department in the areas of fiscal, human resources/payroll, health and safety, clerical, technology/facilities and real estate. It also administers the County's leasing program for most County departments. In 2009, the Agency embraced the County's initiative of Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) using the Lean Six Sigma methodology. Due to its Agency-wide impact, the program is housed in the Central Services Department. Department Director Janice Turner explains that through CPI, employees are empowered to improve processes and look for ways to work effectively and efficiently. This promotes innovation and creates a culture of teamwork throughout the organization. Not only will the Agency be more effective in its day-to-day operations, it will also be better prepared to handle emergencies.

One of the Department's challenges is staying current on training and new regulations. Since much of the Department's work concerns various rules, laws, and union agreements, continual training and research, as well as a creative approach, are vital to its success.

"Having such a diverse group is great because they can offer different perspectives to an issue. We also have a lot of tech-savvy people here at VCPWA and they often push the envelope in terms of using technology to enhance business processes," explains Turner. "That's the key. Using technology to be more efficient, but being careful to make sure we are using it effectively to meet our customer needs – not just using technology because it's fun or because it's the latest fad.



Finally, our use of social media and menu of online services will expand dramatically as we enhance our service-level efforts."

## The Transportation Department

**The Transportation Department**, under the direction of David Fleisch, focuses future plans upon enhancing the the transportation network's longevity and condition while reducing costs to taxpayers. Recent innovations, such as Cold-In-Place-Recycling (CIPR) of pavement, warm-mix asphalt, Asphalt Rubber Hot Mix (ARHM), full-depth pavement recycling, microsurfacing, and asphalt rubberized aggregate membrane (ARAM), are helping to achieve this.

The work of the Transportation Department emphasizes maintaining and improving the transportation infrastructure in the unincorporated County through improved processes, quality work, use of innovative materials and design, and a dedication to customer service. Ever mindful of the safety of the public, they continually assess our road network through a comprehensive safety analysis.

"The maintenance practices that we take today can really affect the road conditions in the future and it is really important to keep a safe way of travel," said Ryan Rivas, Transportation Maintenance and Operations Worker III. "It gives me a good sense pride knowing that I am part of an essential service to the public and I find my work to be really fulfilling. I am proud to be a part of an agency that values integrity, teamwork, and safety."

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— Ryan Rivas, Transportation Maintenance and Operations Worker III



The Department works with the Board of Supervisors to prioritize projects and goals in order to apply for capital funding from state and federal agencies. Recently their hard work paid off—the Department was awarded nearly \$3 million in funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program. HSIP awards are extremely competitive, and are only given for projects that can significantly reduce traffic fatalities and injuries on public roads. The Department is proud to announce that it has been awarded HSIP funds for all five of the projects for which it applied this year, which include road widening, installing new traffic signals, and installing bike lanes.

## The Engineering Services Department

**The Engineering Services Department** provides engineering and contracting support to the many capital and building projects throughout the County. This support is provided to other departments within the Agency as well as outside organizations such as the Sheriff's Department, Health Care Agency, Fire District, Library Services, General Services Agency and Animal Control. Occasionally the Department works with public clients, as well.

Herb Schwind, Department Director, says that the VCMC Hospital Replacement Wing—a \$200 million dollar ongoing project—is one of the largest projects ever undertaken by the County. The Engineering Services Department is busy coordinating the efforts of the many contractors, consultants, and others who are responsible for this project. Several other projects are

scheduled within the next two years: three fire station replacements, a Photovoltaic System to be installed at the Government Center, and the Camarillo Mental Health Rehabilitation Center.

New technology has played a huge part in improving the Department's ability to coordinate and manage the many projects in progress at any given time. This includes software applications such as Accela for online permit tracking, E-Builder for web-based project management, and Building Information Modeling (BIM), which helps designers and builders visualize projects and even provides virtual tours.

Also within the Engineering Services Department is the Ventura County Surveyor's Office, which works to precisely and accurately reflect the boundaries and measurements of Ventura County's growing landscape; as well as the Land Development Division, which manages the Public Works Permits Counter, all Grading Permits, and coordinates much of the Public Works Agency input on other development permits.



VCMC Hospital Replacement Wing Redendering





## Water & Sanitation

Reddy Pakala, Director of **Water and Sanitation**, says that his number-one priority is to provide high-quality water and sewer services in an efficient, cost-effective manner in an environmentally sustainable way that provides a high level of customer satisfaction. In order to make this happen, the Department is investing in innovative technologies such as the recent installation of six acres of solar panels to help power the Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Moorpark Desalination Plant, which will increase the less expensive local water supply and improve water quality in the local groundwater basin.

The groundwater basin in the Moorpark area is currently full, but most of the groundwater is too salty to use without treatment. The desalination process saves money as it will utilize the less expensive local sources rather than import them from Northern California. Other strong water conservation efforts with expanding recycled water systems and local agriculture are underway.

As Susan Pan, P.E., the Manager of the Planning, Design and Construction—Water and Sanitation Department, said: “The landmark engineering project – the California Aqueduct – was built in the last 60 years and brings water from Northern Sierra California to Southern California. It is the largest metropolitan region in the country. In the meantime, we do experience the cost escalations of imported water and the fragility of that water system. This experience has helped shape our vision for the next 60 years to be integrated in resources management and environmentally sustainable.”

The Moorpark Desalination Plant and the recycled water projects will help increase local water supplies, reduce reliance on imported water, and improve groundwater quality. “We are looking into ways to produce energy from wastes, reduce our carbon footprint of waste management, and utilizing technologies available to continuously improve our processes and operations. Right now, we are designing a new office/lab building completely powered by the solar panels. There is a lot of exciting work going on in our department, and I am very happy to be part of it.”

## VCPWA Watershed Protection District

Under the leadership of Tully Clifford, the **Watershed Protection District** is preparing a comprehensive policy manual, confirming core services, and preparing metrics related to levels of service. These are intended to improve the Department’s effectiveness toward its mission, which Clifford defines as “protecting life, property, and the environment from damage and destruction from storm and flood water, while managing water quality and water supplies.”

Every year the District works on activities to meet this mission—flood warning and storm-water management systems, water-quality programs, and programs to protect habitat and endangered species.

“The VCPWA Watershed Protection District is moving in the direction of incorporating the natural environment into our project planning management,” explains Zoe Carlson, VCPWA Watershed Protection District Planner III, Water and Environmental Resources Division. “There are a lot of benefits to restoring the channel to its natural condition – it will reduce our environmental permitting fees and requirements along with our long-term maintenance requirements, as well as return natural habitats for animals.”

As with all other Agency departments, innovation and creativity are carrying the PWA/VPD’s programs into the 21st century. “I think it’s great that we’re celebrating the next 60 years,” Carlson said. “Moving forward, everything we do will impact the next 60 years.”



*“Character, integrity, communication, teamwork, safety, and fiscal responsibility will always be at the core of what we do.”*

— Jeff Pratt, Agency Director



What will the next 60 years bring for the Ventura County Public Works Agency? As Jeff Pratt says, its core values and goals will never change—but there will be innovative ways to accomplish them.

The last 60 years of the Ventura County Public Works Agency have been amazing, thanks to the hard work, diligence, and creativity of its staff and leadership. We can only dream of what the future may hold, but one thing is for sure, the foundation the Agency is laying today will pay off for generations to come.