

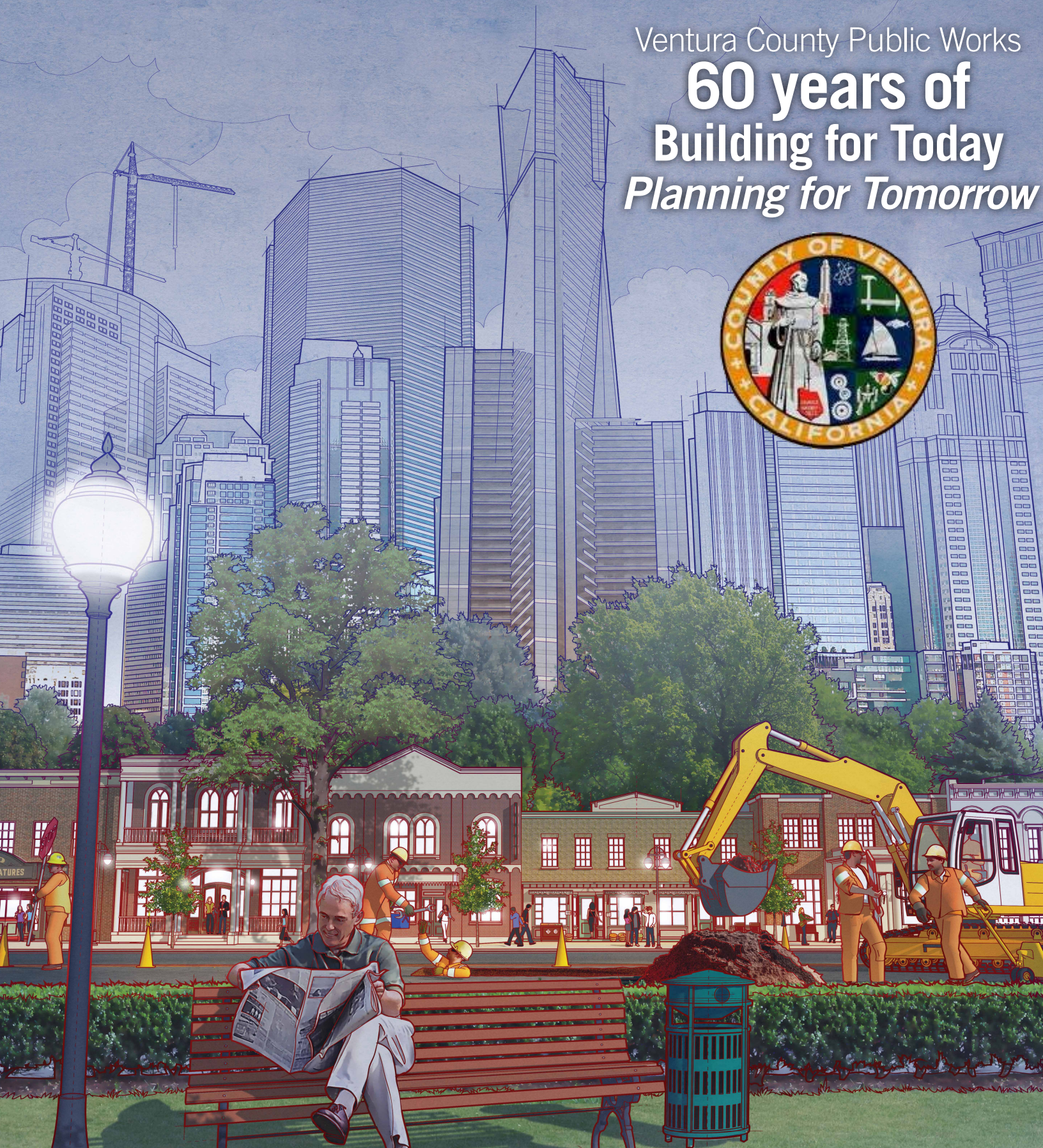
THE PIPELINE

News from the Ventura County Public Works Agency

May 2014

Vol. 5 • No. 5

Ventura County Public Works
60 years of
Building for Today
Planning for Tomorrow



From the
Director's
Desk

Jeff Pratt,
Public Works
Agency Director



Dear Friends,

This issue of *The Pipeline* commemorates National Public Works Week, an initiative sponsored by APWA, taking place May 18-24. It is also a special celebration for us here in the Ventura County Public Works Agency, as we are also commemorating 60 years of service. The theme for 2014 is Building for Today and Planning for Tomorrow — and we would like to highlight some of the exciting ways our agency is doing just that.

Every department is working with the Lean Six Sigma integrated management system, which is part of a continuous process improvement journey to achieve excellence in project coordination, efficiency, and service to our region. The safety, health, and quality of life in Ventura County is our main concern, and we are proud of our hard-working men and women who take this goal to heart on a daily basis.

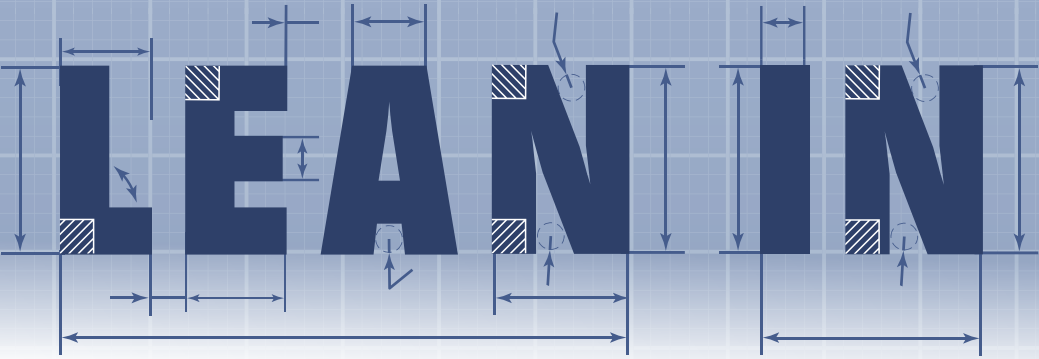
This month, we also feature our Surveyors, who are taking part in a program called 2014 GPS on Bench Marks Campaign, run by the National Geodetic Survey. The work they are doing benefits us locally by improving accuracy on engineering projects, and it also ties into a larger nationwide effort to improve GPS mapping for anyone who uses the information, such as FEMA.

It's nice to know that, along with our service to local residents, we are part of the big picture — and this connection is vital to our future success both as a county, and as a country.

All the best,



Jeff Pratt
Director



Process Improvement Today, Efficient and Effective Processes Tomorrow

Efficiency is important to every business, and government organizations like the Ventura County Public Works Agency (VCPWA) are no exception. Bill Smith, who in the 1960s was vice president and quality-assurance manager at Motorola, developed the Lean Six Sigma efficiency program. It is now one of the most recognizable efficiency programs in the world. The program is a data-driven, disciplined approach to improving performance by eliminating waste and the root causes of mistakes and slow productivity in administrative, medical, and other processes.

“We at VCPWA embrace the County of Ventura’s Lean initiative,” says Janice Turner, Director of Central Services at VCPWA. “We have improved many processes in the Agency using the model’s proven systematic approach to identify waste, streamline processes, and produce measurable results.” The VCPWA process-improvement journey began in January, 2009, with the Agency’s “Get to Excellence” plan. Now, five years later, every department is working with the Lean Six Sigma tools to effectively meet the needs of their customers.

“The character of our values is integrity and respect,” says Jeff Pratt, VCPWA Director.

“In addition, at VCPWA, our people should be empowered through trust, communication, and safety so that our Agency is fiscally responsible, customer focused, accountable, transparent, innovative, and resource minded. It’s a big job but we work very hard to do it; the Lean Six Sigma program and our leadership from the County CEO’s office and the Board of Supervisors ensures that we are the very best.”

VCPWA MISSION:
to deliver efficient, responsive and cost-effective public works services that protect and enhance the safety, health, and quality of life in Ventura County.

The Lean Six Sigma model works by developing a cadre of employees who are trained in using the tools of Lean Six Sigma. They work to achieve levels of excellence in yellow, green, or black belts. For example, Green Belts learn the comprehensive elements

of Lean Six Sigma to direct team efforts in data collection, mapping processes, and formulating recommendations that are presented to managers. Green Belts typically facilitate 1 to 2 projects a year while maintaining their regular work duties. The VCPWA has 30 trained Green Belts that are working on projects throughout the year to improve our daily work. Steve Huber explains, “VCPWA is transforming into a high-performing organization where continuous process improvement is part of the DNA of every activity.”



Q: How does Lean Six Sigma affect and change the process of success for your coworkers and the customer? And this ties into the American Public Works Association’s National Public Works Week theme for 2014, Building for Today, Planning for Tomorrow, how?

A: Using Lean Six Sigma shows the public we are committed to hearing their voices and making their interaction with government a positive, painless, and enjoyable experience.

Q: Who trained you and what is that process like?

A: I was trained through the County Executive Office Service Excellence program. The course examines each phase in a Process Improvement cycle, known as DMAIC (Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control), in detail with hands-on activities and practices using the various tools associated with each phase.

Q: How does Lean Six Sigma affect your daily and weekly duties?

A: VCPWA is now at a mature stage in our Process Improvement program. Providing outstanding service has always been our goal; using

Q: Lean Six Sigma methodologies, we can now measure and

A: track our success.

How has it helped you prepare for the future, particularly in this 60th anniversary year of VCPWA?

A: Using Process Improvement tools helps dig down to the root cause of process inefficiency rather than making general assumptions of what needs to be fixed. With this approach you can really make effective change.



JOIN US IN CELEBRATION!
Public Works Week
May 20, 2014 • 8:30 AM-2:00 PM
DEMONSTRATIONS • DISPLAYS • REFRESHMENTS



GPS

Most people think of GPS as the electronic device that helps them navigate in an unfamiliar neighborhood. Using satellite data, the GPS receiver can detect your position and help you find your way to the airport or coffee shop. But GPS is also used in engineering, surveying, geological research, and a host of other scientific applications.

“GPS has always been very good at giving us accurate horizontal measurements, but the vertical positioning has been lacking,” says Joseph DeChellis, a surveyor for Ventura County Public Works Agency (VCPWA). One reason is that benchmark monuments are subject to movement due to floods, earthquake, landslide, etc. In order to address this, the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) is running a project called 2014 GPS on Bench Marks Campaign.

The current set of datum from the NGS is known as NAVD88, which will transition to the next set in 2022. By taking many survey-grade measurements on existing benchmarks, local surveyors are able to help NGS improve its next hybrid geoid model, a data set which enables the conversion of GPS measurements into NAVD88.

“Locally, our contribution to the project was spearheaded by Jay Satalich of Caltrans District 7 and included Caltrans, Ventura County, Los Angeles County, and the City of Los Angeles,” says DeChellis. Over five days in March, GPS sessions were performed on three different bench marks in Saticoy, Mussel Shoals, and Oxnard. Future projects will likely take place as budgets and schedules allow.

“The best part about the project for me was being involved in such a large nationwide effort,” says DeChellis. Improving accuracy of GPS mapping assists anyone who uses the information, such as FEMA, in the creation of flood maps. It’s just one more way the VCPWA is helping to build today for tomorrow in 2014.