

THE PIPELINE

News from the Ventura County Public Works Agency

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From the Director's Desk

Jeff Pratt,
Public Works
Agency Director



Dear Friends,

We have enjoyed an eventful spring at the VCPWA. One of the more important events was the Executive Planning Session (EPS) on March 11th. This year's meeting focused on improving communication between each department within the VCPWA, as well as between ourselves and the public. One way we did this was by developing "elevator speeches" intended to describe our role at the VCPWA in a nutshell. We also participated in an "interactive brainstorming session to help improve the safety of our workers." It was a great meeting with a lot of information shared, and we thank everyone who participated.

This month we also said goodbye to Anne Dana, who retired after 24 years of service to the VCPWA Water and Sanitation Department. We wish her all the best.

And finally, we would like to remind you that 2015's Public Works Week is approaching! On May 19th we will celebrate this annual event with a special Public Works Week Awareness Day at the Government Center that includes demonstrations, displays, refreshments, and more. See you there!

All the Best,

Jeff Pratt
Director



Rustic Canyon Golf Course *Natural Landscapes*

Today, the common perception of a good quality golf course is one that is lavishly landscaped with a forest of lush green foliage and a fresh cut fairway. However, when you visit Rustic Canyon Golf Course in Moorpark, you will also find beauty in its desert-inspired landscape of dry, firm, natural yellow and brown links course.

So why does Rustic Canyon pride themselves on its non-traditional approach? Because they strive to reshape the definition of a first-rate golf course by helping people see the true beauty of their natural landscapes. This is a valuable concept as California continues to face the challenges of water conservation.

The beauty of Rustic Canyon is commonly compared to the traditional European style of Links Golf Courses, which support various indigenous plants and grasses. These types of courses are typically on or near a coast, conserve water, and have very few trees.

Rustic Canyon Golf Course is a tribute to the roots of the

game with a lay-of-the-land design. Jeff Hicks, the Course Superintendent of Rustic Canyon Golf Club explains, "The course is built into the natural landscape, preserving and incorporating native plants and grasses such as sagebrush, cactus, and brome and stipa grass."

In 2007, 50 acres of fairway turf were converted from rye grass to Bermuda grass, which consumes 30-40% less water, and eight of those acres grew back to the native vegetation. "With the water conservation that needs to take place right now we can't let golf continue to go down the same road," Hicks warns. That is exactly why they use a type of grass that goes dormant in the winter. Their strategy has led them to reduce water consumption by 25% to date. In the next couple of years, the golf course will collaborate with the Public Works Agency's Water and Sanitation Department to irrigate their landscape with reclaimed or recycled water for a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative.

2015 Executive Planning Session

According to Nitin Nohria, the 10th dean of Harvard Business School, "Communication is the real work of leadership." During this year's PWA Executive Planning Session, communication was at the center of discussion. Agency directors, managers, and other leaders reviewed the Agency's Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Metrics to enhance and develop a more effective Communications Plan for the year ahead.

"The Communications Plan is imperative to Ventura County Public Works Agency's (VCPWA) overall brand and to improve the public's perception, encourage their support, and increase their understanding regarding VCPWA's vision and mission," explained David Fleisch, Director of Transportation Department. "Also, 2015 is our year of collaboration, which means we are deepening our work with the community, stakeholders, and political leaders."

"We are proud to say that there is increased interest in the type, quantity, and quality of public works services and improvements being provided to the citizens of Ventura County," said Jeff Pratt, Agency Director. "However, we still have obstacles to overcome, one being that public works infrastructure is aging and deteriorating, and without a change in public understanding and support for funding, the facilities we own and maintain will be unable to function in the future."

So how will we overcome these concerns? VCPWA has initiated and grown the use of social media, internet-available information, public interaction, and press relations to continue to deliver information and education to the community.

The group of leaders returned for the second day of the planning session with the communication

Communication is the real work of leadership
— Nitin Nohria
10th Dean of Harvard Business School

challenges fresh in their minds. The departments collaborated to develop portfolios for continuous process improvement events that will take place in the near future. Janice Turner, Director of Central Services, mentions, "The biggest commitment of the Central Services Department is the upgrade of the County's financial system, which will have big impacts on the Agency as a whole."

Meeting attendees also collaborated on interactive activities. "We participated in a group brainstorming project that aimed to assist in the development of new ways to improve the safety, health, and quality of life in Ventura County," explained Turner.

"Overall the Executive Planning Session was a success and we'd like to thank everyone for their enthusiasm, continued interest, and level of engagement throughout the two days," said Pratt. "Through the direction of our Communication Plan and support of the VCPWA team, we are confident we will continue to provide a high level of service to the community of Ventura County."



Congratulations...

to our Director, Jeff Pratt, who was presented with his 15-Year Service Award by Michael Powers, County Executive Officer, at the beginning of VCPWA's Executive Planning Session (EPS) meeting. Beginning his career at the VCPWA in 2000, he served as the Director of the Watershed Protection District. In 2008, he signed on to the role of VCPWA Director, and supervises all five core departments of the Agency: Central Services, Engineering, Transportation, Water and Sanitation, and the Watershed Protection District. In addition, Pratt serves as the County Road Commissioner, the Chief Engineer of several special districts, and the Executive Officer of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency. I think we can all agree that he's a very hard-working man and deserves many accolades as he celebrates this important milestone!



National Public Works Week Awareness Day



May 19th

8:30 AM - 2 PM

Government Center
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA



Join us for:

- Equipment Show & Tell
- UAV Demonstration
- Department Display Booths
- Invasive Plant Presentation
- Giveaways and Refreshments

While supplies last.

Exhibits inside of the Hall of Administration will be open all week

A Heartfelt Good-Bye to Anne Dana



Nearly 100 people dropped by the Water and Sanitation Department offices in Moorpark on March 5, 2015, to wish Anne Dana a fond farewell and a happy retirement. Anne retired as of March 14, 2015, after over 24 years of County service.

Anne actually began working for the Public Works Agency in the mid 1980s as a student aide. She was hired to permanent status in 1990, and worked for the Engineering Services Department for four more years. Anne then came to Water and Sanitation, where she held positions of increasing responsibility and worked on water conservation, grants administration, domestic and agricultural water allocations, accounts payable, utility billing, customer service, and numerous special projects. Anne held the position of manager of customer service, billing, and administration for the Water and Sanitation Department for almost 15 years.

The luncheon, hosted by Water and Sanitation Department staff, was attended by Anne's husband, her four children, a grandson, and a dear friend, as well as current and former employees of the Water and Sanitation Department and the Public Works Agency. Anne was presented with several gifts, including a bicycle, as well as a Resolution from the Board of Supervisors.

Hearts were the theme of the celebration and underscored Anne's passion and commitment to her job as well as the friendship she extended to everyone with whom she worked. We congratulate Anne and thank her for her many years of dedicated service.

