

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,

As we wrap up 2015 and look with hopeful anticipation toward the year to come, let's take time to reflect upon what we have accomplished in the past 12 months. Despite the challenges that continue to present themselves, we forge on with projects that help build our community, protect our citizens, and give back to those in society who are less fortunate. This generosity of spirit is seen throughout VCPWA, as employees played a part in various charitable events across the County, from building can trees for FOOD Share, to sponsoring needy families through RAIN, to donating time, resources, and money to the Wounded Warriors Project. VCPWA is honored to support these worthy causes, and proud of our VCPWA family for participating.

In this issue we also cover two recent projects geared toward the environment and recognize our employees' recent outreach efforts. First, the dedication and renaming of two Oxnard channels. Names for the two channels were submitted and chosen by the community. It was a unique opportunity for us to contribute to wetlands ecosystem restoration. Second, solar panel installation at the Government Center's Lot F, which will generate a huge savings in money, electricity, and pollution. Finally, VCPWA Transportation Department staff shared their experience and knowledge when they gave a presentation to the Society of Women Engineers.

Another event covered in this issue is the VCPWA annual Picnic for staff members, retirees, and their families. This year's event, themed "Fair Fun," was held at Soule Park in Ojai. We enjoyed delicious fair-themed food and midway-style games. These picnics are always a great time and I can't wait to see what we can expect for next year.

All the best,

Jeff Pratt
Director

Holiday **SPIRIT**

Thank you to everyone who came out to the CAN-tree Food Drive at The Collection at RiverPark for an inspirational day of giving back to our hungry friends in Ventura County. The Ventura County Public Works Agency team put their own fun spin on building CAN-trees this year. Instead of using the standard tree toppers supplied by The Collection at RiverPark, the VCPWA team brought decorated orange cones out to top their CAN-trees!

The CAN-tree Collection provides over 150,000 meals for people in need in Ventura County. We are proud to be part of such an important community event!





THE RAIN PROJECT

For the past several Christmases, the Watershed Protection District (WPD) team has adopted one or more families from RAIN (a transitional living center for the homeless in Camarillo). In previous years, it was funded through donations. This year, a bake sale was held in February that raised \$600. These funds helped WPD provide Christmas for a single mom and her 4-year-old son, plus two single adults (all residents of RAIN).

On Wednesday, December 9, Isaac Romero (Program Coordinator for RAIN Communities), Jackie Perrin (RAIN Board member), and “Stephanie” (a former RAIN resident who is now successfully living independently with her four children) were guests at WPD’s holiday party to represent RAIN and to receive the gifts for the families being sponsored by WPD.

“Once again the RAIN Project is thankful for your generosity in helping our residents to enjoy the holiday season,” says Romero. “Many of our families have come from very difficult living circumstances and are just grateful for a roof over their heads and a bed to sleep in. These gifts bring them hope for the future and joy in knowing someone cares.”

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

When the Watershed Protection District was looking at which charities to support this year, they decided to also give to the Wounded Warrior Project — a non-profit organization that has served over 100,000 wounded veterans and their families, providing much needed services. A chili-dog fundraiser was held on November 10 (the day before Veterans Day), and a total of \$1,200 was raised — which will be designated for helping wounded warriors in Ventura County. As a side note, the chili was donated by the manufacturer, which meant more money went directly to the WWP. After the event, the left-over chili was donated to the Ventura County Rescue Mission, which used it to feed the hungry and homeless — a definite “pay it forward” opportunity.



During the District’s annual holiday party, a ceremonial check was given to Anthony Simmons (a District student worker who served in the United States Navy). Tully Clifford, WPD Director, took the opportunity to recognize other veterans and to thank them for their service.

“It is such a joy to work with people who desire to give to those in need,” said Clifford. “These are both worthy organizations and I am proud to be a part of supporting the good work they do in our community and beyond.”



WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

The Oxnard Channels Dedication Ceremony

Saturday, November 7th was a beautiful, windy morning as Zoë Carlson and the Ventura County Public Works Agency's Watershed Protection District (WPD) team set up for the official Oxnard Channels Dedication Ceremony. As the speakers stepped up to the podium, the wind settled down and, looking out over the waterways, nature seemed to be at peace. The event opened with a traditional Chumash ceremony lead by local Chumash Tribe Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, Julie Tumamait-Stenslie and Matthew Vestuto.

The ceremony celebrated a successful Watershed Awareness Campaign and a historic public selection of new names for two WPD channels: Ormond Lagoon Waterway and tšumaš (Chumash) creek. Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long, City of Oxnard Mayor Pro Tem Carmen Ramirez, WPD Director Tully Clifford, and other officials helped reveal the new signage for the channels.

"The Oxnard Channels renaming opportunity acknowledges a longstanding desire in the community to increase watershed awareness among the public, and to understand the connection to a unique coastal ecosystem in our county," said Chair of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Kathy Long.

Supervisor Kathy Long and Supervisor John Zaragoza selected a committee of local stakeholders, consisting of the WPD, City of Oxnard, The Nature Conservancy, Coastal Conservancy, Chumash representatives and Central Coast Alliance United for Sustainable Economy. The committee reviewed new name suggestions that were submitted from community members and selected six new name options for each of the two WPD facilities. The public was then given a chance to vote on their favorite names, which is how the new names were selected.

Ormond Lagoon Waterway – formerly known as Oxnard Industrial Drain – extends approximately four miles from Wooley Road to the outlet near Ormond Beach. The name Ormond Lagoon Waterway captures the connection between the channel and the ecological community it supports. tšumaš (Chumash) creek, formerly known as J Street Drain, extends over two miles from Redwood Street to the Ormond Beach Lagoon. The name tšumaš (Chumash) creek was selected to honor the region's native people, culture, and language.

Matthew Vestuto, of the Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, explained, "This spelling of tšumaš uses the orthography (writing system) we use today. It's still pronounced the same. With this decision we recognize, and are grateful for, the County of Ventura and its residents' support of our orthography and language revitalization."

Both channels flow to Ormond Beach, a 1,500-acre area comprised of agriculture, industry and wetlands, that serve as a home to more than 200 migratory bird species. The habitat is recorded as having more shorebird species than any other site in Ventura County, and has been recognized as the most important wetland restoration opportunity in Southern California.



THE VCPWA *"Fair Fun"* PICNIC WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!



Everyone who attended the VCPWA picnic at Soule Park in Ojai had a great time participating in the various activities, or just relaxing and enjoying a beautiful afternoon and listening to great music from Tony Cuccio's band "Blue Vice" throughout the afternoon.

This year's event featured unique midway-style games designed and manned by each of VCPWA's five departments, as well as the always popular volleyball, rope bridge, kids' field games competition, and horseshoe toss competition. The grills were fired up and everyone enjoyed a fair-themed BBQ of chicken, hot dogs, tacos, pulled-pork sandwiches, coleslaw, and corn on the cob. For those with a sweet tooth, cakes, cotton candy, and snow cones were dessert. The first ever salsa and baking contests were a huge hit, with Elaine and Ben Reiger taking home the blue ribbons! A special thank you to our managers, and the local businesses whose cash and prize donations helped to make our 30th annual picnic a huge success! A big "shout out" of thanks as well to our Picnic Committee members: Denise Bean-White, Claudia Castaneda, Debra Cavaletto, Dave Fleisch, David Hazen, John Lagomarsino, Karen Mendoza, Phil Raba, Gabe Ramirez, Herb Schwind, Tony Sheppard, Kristine Stratas, Frances Tamayo, Janice Turner, Eric Weinstein, Derrick Wilson, and all those who helped out on the day of the picnic.





SOLAR PANELS AT THE GOVERNMENT CENTER'S LOT F

In an effort to continue to implement environmental and energy-saving strategies, VCPWA and the County of Ventura's General Services Agency took the lead in installing solar panels at the Government Center's Lot F. The plan is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and electricity used.

Solar panels will be placed on a canopy over the parking lot, providing more than 500 shaded parking spaces once installation is complete. In the first year of service, the solar system will generate about \$227,000 in savings, equivalent to providing electricity to about 150 homes.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT



On October 14, VCPWA engineers Anitha Balan, Alison Sweet, and Sujin Beck with PWA Transportation gave an in-depth presentation to the members of the Society of Women Engineers about the Transportation Department's role in keeping Ventura County moving. Discussion topics included state, federal, and grant funding, and an overview of the variety of projects underway in Ventura County. These included slope repair, traffic calming, sidewalk construction in unincorporated neighborhoods without them, and the realignment of a major arterial road in the County, Donlon Road in Somis. Pavement resurfacing alternatives were also discussed. The meeting was filled with lots of interaction from attendees.