

# 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,

Happy New Year to all of our valued team members at VCPWA! In this first issue of 2016, we offer an opportunity to folks and departments who might want to contribute to our monthly *Pipeline* online newsletter and printed newsletters. It's simple! Write up what you are working on, or what you'd like folks to know about a project, take some good clear pictures, and send them on. We'll forward your drafts to our *Pipeline* editors and you may see your work in an upcoming *Pipeline*, or on our social media networks, and even more.

In March, we'll hold our annual State of the Agency meeting. Our theme this year is health, safety, and quality of life, and we have some exciting things planned for this year's meeting. I hope to see you all there.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Pratt".

Jeff Pratt  
Director

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**State of Agency**  
**March 15 -17, 2016**

**T**wo  
new  
memorial

roadway signs were installed in Ojai to honor our friend and colleague, Adan Lara.

The 1.5-mile stretch of Creek Road from Highway 33 to Encino Drive was named the Adan Lara Memorial Roadway. Adan Lara was a VCPWA Transportation Department Road Maintenance employee who died October 30 after being struck by an oncoming car while flagging traffic as his crew conducted road maintenance.

Adan was a lifelong Ojai resident, an exceptional citizen who was very active in his community and in his church, as well as an advocate for education in Ojai schools. He started a nonprofit group called LUPE—Latinos Unidos Por Educación—to inform Latino parents in Ojai about school issues and to encourage them to participate at area school campuses. In addition, he began the “Amigos” program to encourage children to read in Spanish and English at their local libraries. He also volunteered to teach classes at Nordhoff High School, and he helped to register voters and worked at polling places during elections.

Adan genuinely took great pride in his work and thoroughly enjoyed his job. Ventura County Public Works Agency is honored to name the Roadway after him. “He was a pretty special individual,” VCPWA Transportation Department Director David Fleisch said. Every time we see these signs, may we all be reminded to think about those who work to keep our community safe and protect us.







# First Winter Storms Test Ventura County

The first week of January brought the first winter storms of the new year to Ventura County, heightening concern for the Solimar burn area, which was devastated by a brush fire just weeks prior. A flash-flood warning issued by the National Weather Service in Oxnard warned of mud and debris flows.

Ventura County Public Works Agency's Watershed Protection District reported the following rainfall totals: Ventura - 1.70, La Conchita - 1.68, Ojai - 1.64, Santa Paula - 1.43, Thousand Oaks - 1.47, Oxnard - 1.33, Fillmore - 1.09, Moorpark - 0.96, Camarillo Springs - 0.83, Port Hueneme - 0.79, Simi Valley - 0.62.

Approximately 4 inches of rain fell in the Solimar area, making it the biggest storm to hit the county in more than a year. Hydrologist Scott Holder reported that the January 6th storm produced a half-inch of rain in just 15 minutes. Despite the heavy rainfall, the burned hillsides above Highway 101 near Solimar Beach withstood the first storm of the year without significant issues. El Niño conditions are expected to bring high rainfall totals in the first few months of 2016 and experts continue to warn residents to be prepared.

"Quite a bit has come down," VCPWA's own geologist Jim O'Tousa told the *Ventura County Star* newspaper of the debris on the steep hills in the burn area. But much of the rocks and debris washed into drains that run under the highway and toward the coast. Those drains were helped by crews who responded day and night to keep them clear. However, O'Tousa noted that "this week's storms have just started to soften up the slopes." As the hillsides become more saturated, a lot more debris could come down, creating a bigger test for the drainage system.

VCPWA will continue to monitor the hillside and clean out debris in preparation for future rainfall. The first storm of the season was a good test and reminds us all just how prepared we need to be as El Niño brings more turbulent weather conditions to Ventura County.

## DO YOU...

...have great stories to share about some of the successful and exciting current or upcoming projects your department is working on? Or perhaps you think a fellow employee's incredible work should be highlighted in a future issue of *Pipeline*? The *Pipeline* is looking for new stories from VCPWA team members to help bring informative content, writing, and photography to our 2016 editions!

Contact your department's representative for more information on how to contribute!

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