

Issue# 5  
Volume 8



Ventura County Public Works Agency  
**THE WORKS**  
2017 | Bridging Foundations



**PUBLIC**  
VENTURA COUNTY  
**WORKS**





## **Jeff Pratt, Public Works Agency Director**

### **Greetings!**

Ventura County Public Works Agency recently hosted our annual National Public Works Week event – our biggest one to date, with over 1,000 people in attendance. It's an opportunity for us to share the work we do and connect with the community we serve, as well as encourage young people to consider the many career opportunities in public works. Thank you to all of the 286 volunteers and committee members that helped make the day a huge success!

Every year for National Public Works Week, we not only celebrate all of the public works agencies and departments for their relentless efforts to provide an array of life-enhancing services to communities nation-wide, but we also take the opportunity to recognize our own team of 400 employees who always go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure our work is exceptional. In this issue we highlight our VCPWA employees of the year. Be sure to congratulate them!

Hope you enjoy this edition of The Works!

Jeff Pratt



# NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

## Wrapping Up a Successful Public Works Day 2017

As part of National Public Works Week, more than 700 youth and 300 adults attended Ventura County Public Works Agency's (VCPWA) annual event. The Government Center's Parking Lot G and VCPWA conference rooms were filled with heavy-equipment demonstrations, interactive displays, and career and informational booths.

## Community Connections

Each year, the American Public Works Association chooses a theme for us to focus upon. This year's theme is "Public Works Connects Us." Through the participation and collaboration with Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, Ventura and other nearby cities, we demonstrated this connection in many ways. Visitors toured the Government Center to learn about the various departments within the Agency and the role they play to protect Ventura County's quality of life – and how they are interconnected. The City of Ventura joined us for Public Works Day with designated booths educating the public about environmental sustainability programs as well as how traffic signals work. Alongside VCPWA's impressive heavy-equipment displays was the pot hole filler from the City of Ventura. The cities of Thousand Oaks and Oxnard also had educational events during Public Works Week to ensure all residents in the County could learn more about the important work we all do.

**"This annual fair is an ideal opportunity to share with the public, and especially the next generation, the amazing work these dedicated employees do every day; it really does connect us all."**

**-Jeff Pratt, VCPWA Director**



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### **Interactive Activities**

Students of all ages participated in the many kid-friendly attractions such as live demonstrations of heavy-equipment, skid steer remote controls, and a booth that had kids planting their own native drought tolerant plants to take home. The newest addition, a Ventura County Sheriff's vehicle and SoCal Edison's inventions and their use of electricity, were a huge hit amongst the younger children, as was the "construction work site" in a sandbox.



Students learned about aquifers and the need for conservation, worm composting, sign making, hands-on augmented topography and even took a pledge to recycle. VCPWA professionals from every department were on hand to teach the kids about the VCPWA's inner workings. Each child received their very own goodie bag packed full with an activity book, seed packets and a special rubber duckie from the PWA Transportation Department to take home.



Education was a huge part of this event, highlighting the many career opportunities at a public works agency and encouraging students to focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects to prepare for their future – and to ensure future generations have the resources they need to thrive.

High school students interested in STEM-related careers were able to interact with various personnel, asking them questions about internships and career opportunities available at VCPWA.

Among the hands-on activities and STEM booths that the older students visited, were the Ventura County's Operation Emergency Services, various construction materials and job site inspection activities, the First-Aid mobile command post and clean water sampling.



### **Connecting us to the Environment**

The VCPWA fair aimed to educate adults on the need for resource conservation and recycling. Our staff promoted the use of drought tolerant landscaping, composting, and other means of water conservation. Environmental sustainability is an important topic, and we demonstrated how pervious concrete and other technologies control storm water.






## THANK YOU!

From the volunteers that helped set-up the event to the tour guides and display presenters who connected with their tour groups and other visitors, the National Public Works Week planning committee would like to extend a sincere Thank You to all for your hard work and dedication in making this the best VCPWA event in its history!







## QUESTION of the MONTH

What kind of impact did VCPWA's Public Works Week event make on the public?

"WOW! Thank you so much for arranging such a wonderful day for our students – they had a great experience and learned so much! Abel was a kind leader, and each activity helped us gain a better understanding of all the people and effort that make our communities work."

—J Keri Collier, Briggs, Santa Paula

"This event was a true joy! My students learned so much and were very excited to attend. I appreciated seeing all the different grade levels and having presentations adapted for us. This was a well-organized event that provided so much more to my students than I could offer in the classroom setting. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to attend."

— Irma De Candia, McAuliffe Elementary School, Oxnard,

Everyone there was so friendly and gave wonderful, informative presentations. We are a homeschooling family that came with a group of other homeschoolers. We will definitely be back next year! Thank you for this event and for all of the hard work you do around the county!"

— Tina Calasin

## Media Blitz: Hot off the Press!





## MATT EHRET, MARIANN KOVATS & JOHN BRYSON

This year, our department directors once again nominated team members for VCPWA's 2017 Employees of the Year. Nominees were selected for their superior accomplishments and leadership which were integral to our team's success over the last year.

### 2017 NOMINEES:

**Central Services:** Mariann Kovats and Kathryn Pierce

**Engineering Services:** April Hernandez and Matt Ehret

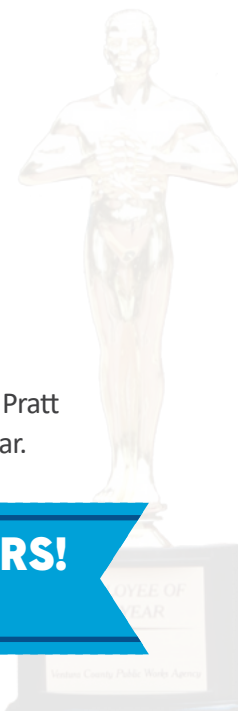
**Transportation:** John Bryson, JoeAnn Heredia and Jess Lemos

**Water & Sanitation:** Sky Stanley, Gianna Pourarien and Derrick Wilson

**Watershed Protection District:** Kirk Madary, Atika Marsela and Pam Lindsey

At the Board of Supervisors' National Public Works Week proclamation, VCPWA Director Jeff Pratt announced Mariann Kovats, John Bryson and Matt Ehret as our 2017 Employees of the Year.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NOMINEES & WINNERS!**  
**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!**





# 2017 Employee of the Year

**Q: How does it feel to be honored for this recognition?** I was speechless to be announced as one of this year's winners! I admire many people I work with on a day-to-day basis, and I believe so many other employees are worthy of this award. It is an honor to receive this recognition and I am grateful to know that my work is appreciated.

**A: What about your work are you most proud of?** I love coming to work every day because I know our team makes a positive impact on our community which benefits the well-being of our county's citizens. From paving roads, to cleaning channels, and delivering clean water, these are the services VCPWA provide that people may not see every day, but without them life would be negatively impacted.



**MARIANN KOVATS**

Supervising Accounting Technician (Central Services)



**MATT EHRET**

Project Director (Engineering Services)

**Q: What projects are you looking forward to sharing with the community this year?** This has been a very busy year for our team, and I've had the privilege of serving as Project Director for the Hospital Replacement Wing (HRW) project, which has been the largest undertaking of VCPWA to date.

**A: What do you do as Project Director for the HWR project?** As Project Director, I help manage a variety of people involved in the HRW development such as contractors, OSHPD representatives, HCA management, CEO, construction inspectors, and my direct-report staff. I also develop complex procedures to track the flow of documents along the approval process. For instance, for this project we've been utilizing a new, innovating, cloud-based project management software to track Construction Administration activities. Overseeing and applying the latest technologies to support our project management efforts has been vital in our work to efficiently complete this project in a timely manner.



**Q: As Public Works Maintenance Worker III, what do you do on a day-to-day basis?** I currently manage the Transportation O&M supply warehouse and sign fabrication operation. I order supplies for our crews and make the bulk of all of our road signs.

**A: What was your reaction to finding out you won this recognition?** I was surprised to win! I didn't feel like I did anything different than I typically do every day. I just try to manage our facility the best and most efficient way I can. It's an honor to be recognized by my peers and management.



**JOHN BRYSON**

Public Works Maintenance Worker III (Transportation)

EMPLOYEE OF  
THE YEAR

Ventura County Public Works Agency