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Public Works Week Event Offers Demonstrations, Explanations

By David Goldstein, Ventura County Public Works Agency, IWMD

In celebration of Public Works Week, more than 600 grade and high school students will arrive at the Ventura County Government Center's Lot G on Tuesday, May 22 from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.

The public is also invited to view 26 booths and 27 pieces of large equipment used to keep local roadways and waterways in working order. Human Resources staff will highlight career opportunities in public works.

One booth will provide an opportunity to plant native seedlings and instructions for how to plant them, along with native seeds, at home. The booth will explain how these plants offer color and texture, while attracting native wildlife and requiring little water.

Other booths will explain biodynamics, water testing, bike safety, and some of the newest technology for mapping such as LiDAR.

In addition to booths from the five departments of the Ventura County Public Works Agency, interactive displays and outreach will also be provided by the General Services Agency, Edison, Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services, Ventura County Human Resources, and the cities of Oxnard and Ventura.

The Ventura County Public Works Agency's Watershed Protection District will display pervious concrete, showing how rain water goes through this material to underground aquifers. The public will have the opportunity to pour water through a seemingly solid piece of concrete suspended over a container.

The District's raptor display, featuring stuffed birds and recorded bird calls, will show how the District uses perches, owl boxes, and other measures to attract and assist birds of prey. These raptors prey on rodents which damage levees and dams by burrowing, thereby reducing the use of anticoagulant toxins which pose a threat to wildlife.

Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services and VCPWA's Storm Tracking Center will simulate operation of an Emergency Operations Center. Students will be given emergency scenarios to resolve. They will also be taught the importance of a "go kit" and what to pack in emergencies.

The Integrated Waste Management Division will coordinate worm races to teach composting with worms, hold contests explaining which materials go into which curbside bins, and provide a giant poster to record students' recycling pledges and conservation ideas. They will also show options for reusable materials for packed lunches including bags, bottles, utensils, and containers.

A similar educational Public Works Week event will take place in Thousand Oaks at the Municipal Service Center on May 22 & 23. The city asks attendees to reserve tours times by visiting: <http://www.toaks.org> .

The City of Oxnard will commemorate Public Works Week with a display at a Farmers Market booth from 9 AM to 1:30 PM on May 24 at Downtown Plaza Park and will host a “touch a truck” event and facility tours on June 2, from 9 AM to noon at four facilities (see www.oxnard.org for details). Information about the County’s event is available at www.vcpublicworks.org

Contact:

Katie Yates at katie@consortium-media.com or 805.654.1564 ext. 118