



THE PIPELINE

News from the Ventura County Public Works Agency



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PUBLIC

From the UCPWA Director:

Public Works Week provides all of us in the public works field the opportunity to share our passion and the importance of what we do to keep our communities healthy, safe, and well-maintained. This year's theme is "Public Works, Always There." These words ring simple and true. Whether maintaining County roads, building new public structures, fulfilling their role as first responders to all disasters, clearing the watersheds, or keeping the water and sanitation services running, UCPWA employees are always there behind the scenes making sure everything runs smoothly for residents.

Public Works Week Awareness Day, Tuesday May 17th, is an exciting, fun-filled day to explore and learn more about the important role Public Works plays in our communities. This year's event features educational tours and interactive booths where participants can make their own street signs or take home a native drought-tolerant plant. By far, the biggest crowds are expected around the heavy equipment displays and demonstrations. Our UCPWA employees do a great job at explaining how this very important equipment is used to clear our waterways, maintain our roads, and help keep our communities safe.

We were honored to be the host County for the 31st Annual Public Works Secretarial Seminar, where our teams shared best practices with fellow PWA professionals. Seminar highlights included talks on El Niño preparation, a behind-the-scenes tour of the nearly completed UCMC hospital replacement wing, and benefits of implementing Lean Six Sigma practices to help departments run more efficiently.

And be sure to read about UCPWA's exciting new Raptor Program! This pilot program is designed to determine if raptors can replace traditional rodenticides for rodent control on critical levees and dams. We also take a look at the new lab in construction at the Moorpark Reclamation center and learn how the state of the art facility keeps our water clean. Read on to learn how Public Works is "Always There."

- Jeff Pratt

Public Works Agency Director



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VCPWA HONORED TO HOST CEAC'S 31ST ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKS SECRETARIAL SEMINAR

Ventura County Public Works Agency's five departments encompass such a wide variety of services and projects that you'd almost need a boot camp to fully understand the scope of work VCPWA does on a daily basis. The 31st Annual Public Works Secretarial Seminar, sponsored by the County Engineer's Association of California (CEAC), was just that for attendees! VCPWA was honored to host this year's seminar, and provide valuable insight to other counties across the state on Ventura County's more innovative services – from critical El Niño preparation to Lean Six Sigma practices – that help VCPWA run more efficiently and cost effectively. "It's always nice no matter where the conference is," said Elizabeth DeHayes of Riverside County Flood Control. "Just to be up here with other professionals that are doing the same thing that you're doing, dealing with the same problems that you're dealing with and learning in a relaxed environment."

The event took place April 27-29, 2016 in various places throughout Ventura County, with attendees staying at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, while the seminar activities started each day at VCPWA's Saticoy Conference Room. As this year's hosting county, VCPWA had the opportunity to focus on education and issues specific to our area, while also showcasing larger, more unique projects.

"This conference is all about networking with each other to find out what works with your department," explained Connie Strottrup, a

retired Administrative Assistant from Santa Clara County. "Hearing everybody talk about new ways and new procedures is really helpful as things are changing so fast."

The seminar kicked off on Wednesday with a cocktail reception and dinner followed by a welcome by David Fleisch, VCPWA's Transportation Department Director, and a keynote speech by Bill Nash, Ventura County Public Information Officer. The following day was filled with information, including a presentation on El Niño storm preparation by Kevin McGowan, Assistant Director of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services; a Lean Six Sigma presentation by Steve Huber, consultant, and Derrick Wilson, Staff Services Manager



"Groundwater is an issue in Sacramento because the basins are draining and they're not able to refill as expected, so, learning more about groundwater issues here," said Terri Lyn Larsen, County of Sacramento, Executive Assistant to the director of Water Resources, "I am able to take that back and actually have a lot of questions to ask our engineers."



THERE!



with Integrated Waste Management Division; and a discussion with Watershed Protection District Director Tully Clifford on groundwater sustainability.

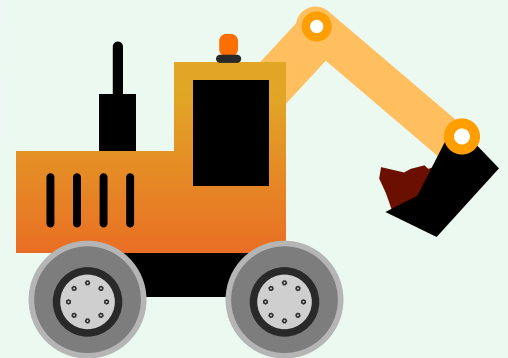
Attendees also watched a skid-steer demonstration, before an afternoon tour of the new state-of-the-art Ventura County Medical Center hospital replacement wing. "I really liked the hospital tour," said DeHayes. "We were all amazed at the level of detail. Having the Chief Deputy Director, who is also an RN, on the project was so helpful."

Friday brought another busy day of presentations and field trips, this time focusing on the Donlon Road Realignment Project and site tour, with a tour guided by Transportation Department engineers Alison Sweet and Sujin Beck. "The Donlon Road tour was a really good experience," said Denae Davis, Administrative Secretary of Stanislaus County. "We deal with a lot of paperwork and plans behind the scenes. So

being able to go to the field and see the project firsthand was a great experience."

An update on the plans for next year's seminar, which will be hosted by Stanislaus County, was also provided. After lunch, the attendees were taken to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and treated to a docent-led tour, before returning to the Crowne Plaza or departing for home.

VCPWA's own Glenna Inouye, Adrienne Burks, Tammy Butterworth, Maryann Jordan, and Denise Santoyo spent months planning an effective, interesting program that focused on education and issues specific to Ventura County. Thanks to all who helped and presented.





RAPTOR RODENT CONTROL PILOT PROGRAM

When you think of Public Works, you may not immediately envision owl houses and hawk platforms, but our innovative teams are exploring unique techniques to maintain local dams and levees. VCWPD maintains 56 dams and over 30 miles of levees. These facilities are highly susceptible to rodent burrow damage, particularly in agricultural areas that have abundant food sources for the California Ground Squirrel. By turning to Mother Nature, we might just have a great solution to reduce the rodent populations on levees and dams without using rodenticides.

Discussions with Kim Stroud, Director of the Ojai Raptor Center, and staff at the Santa Barbara County PWA, resulted in the development of a pilot program to install raptor perches and nesting facilities designed to attract Barn Owls, Red Tail Hawks, and Red Shouldered Hawks. The pilot program will help determine if raptors can replace traditional rodenticides for rodent control on critical levees and dams. The raptor program has already been expanded with five perches placed at the Arroyo Conejo North Fork.

Raptor perches have been placed at 500-foot intervals along Revolon Slough in the Oxnard plain. Two Barn Owl boxes and a Red Tail Hawk platform have also been placed on adjacent parcels. The Raptor facilities are monitored every week to record bird species occupying the perches, boxes, and platforms and to record if rodent populations are reestablishing. "Ventura County Watershed Protection District is very committed to exploring ways to work with nature to protect our facilities while preserving our watershed," said Karl Novak.

Inspection teams have already observed a variety of raptors, including Red Tail Hawks, Ospreys, kites, and Northern Harriers, using the perches.

Ventura County Watershed Protection District's Karl Novak and David Torfeh met with 40 kids at the Laguna Vista Elementary School to talk about the Owl Box and Raptor platforms that the District installed on their campus. The new raptor facilities will attract owls and hawks that will help control the rodents that are making burrows into the neighboring Revlon Slough levee. The District brought hawk and owl exhibits borrowed from the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology museum in Camarillo.



NEW MOORPARK LAB WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY.

Every year on Public Works Week Appreciation Day, hundreds of students from throughout Ventura County visit the various exhibits and booths at the County of Ventura Government Center. They not only learn about potential careers in Public Works, but also obtain a better understanding of what the men and women of VCPWA do to provide a better quality of life for the residents of Ventura County. Soon, students and members of the community will have the opportunity to learn more about VCPWA by engaging in the fascinating field of water treatment and water quality testing at the Moorpark Water Reclamation Facility (MWRF).

The new 5,200 square-foot office and laboratory building at MWRF will replace the existing aging administration building and provide a highly functional, productive work environment and improve the workers' quality of life. Currently under construction, the facility will include offices, a laboratory, a conference room, and the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Operations Center. The new building will open its doors in September 2016.

The SCADA Operations Center will provide central monitoring, control, and operations of all the facilities within Ventura County Waterworks District No. 1 and redundancy and reliability to the existing SCADA Operations Center at the County of Ventura Water and Sanitation Department's Moorpark office. The new state-of-the-art laboratory will provide a highly functional and cost-effective work environment with full, in-house capabilities to perform water quality testing. In addition, the new Public Education Center will provide public outreach on water and natural resources management and conservation efforts taking place at the facility and throughout the District.

"This modern building was designed to be a LEED Gold environmental sustainable building and will use a solar photovoltaic system to provide most of the building's electricity needs," explains Susan Pan, Deputy Director, Manager of Engineering Division for the Water and Sanitation Department. "The facility has dual plumbing systems, which use potable water for drinking and recycled water for landscape irrigation and flushing toilets."

When the facility opens in September, you may schedule a tour by contacting Eric Keller, Deputy Director and Manager of the Water and Sanitation Department's Operations and Maintenance Division at (805) 378-3015 to learn how water, one of our most precious resources, is carefully managed and conserved. You may also visit SlowYourH2O.org to learn more about the drought and water conservation measures.

