

California Special District

Volume 8, Issue 6, Nov - Dec 2013

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Green issue

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Greenhouse gas
reduction: Interview
with Dave Clegern

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**Greenhouse Gas Reduction:
Interview with Dave Clegern**

**Emergency Preparedness
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Dia de los Muertos
Palm Springs
Cemetery District



California Special District

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Stanley Caldwell
Board President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What does it mean to go green?

We have had a busy and rewarding 2013 at CSDA. Another successful year is now drawing to a close. Thank you for a fantastic year! What a privilege to serve as CSDA President this year and get to know and work closely with the staff and board of directors at CSDA. Thank you all for fully participating and contributing to the success of CSDA. We have had many successful events including the first-ever Special District Leadership Academy Conference, our educational offerings and the Annual Conference and Exhibitor Showcase!

This is our "green issue" of *California Special District* magazine. Going green is a popular term used to describe the process of changing one's lifestyle for the safety and benefit of the environment. People who "go green" make decisions about their daily lives while considering what impact the outcome of those decisions may have on global warming, pollution, loss of animal habitats and other environmental concerns.

What does going green mean? Going green does not only involve recycling. Going green involves much more. Basically, going green means to live life, as an individual as well as a community, in a way that is friendly to the natural environment and is sustainable for the earth. It means contributing toward maintaining the natural ecological balance in the environment, and preserving the planet and its natural systems and resources. It also means taking steps,

whether big or small, to minimize the harm you do to the environment as a result of inhabiting the planet.

In practice, going green means practicing and adopting five basic principles in your daily life:

- reduce pollution
- conserve resources
- conserve energy
- reduce consumption and waste
- protect the earth's ecological balance

Join me and others by embracing "green" and "sustainability." These two words have become two of the most widely used words in the English language. But what do they mean in terms of your district?









Going green means reducing the overall environmental impact of your district. That holistic approach includes compliance issues that protect both you and the environment. When you combine those initiatives with energy efficiency measures that conserve the earth's resources, you make your district more efficient and reduce costs.

Conserving resources, preventing pollution, and reducing waste are all part of being green. By going green we all contribute to a healthy and prosperous future for California, which depends on a clean, green and efficient economy. ■









For complete program descriptions and information about registration and accommodations, visit the Education section of the CSDA website at www.csdanet.net or call CSDA at (877) 924-2732.

Professional Development Calendar

JANUARY

- 
Jan 14 **Special District Leadership Academy: Board's Role in Finance and Fiscal Accountability**, Kern County
- 
Jan 15 **Required Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for Special Districts - WEBINAR**
- 
Jan 16 **How to be an Effective Board Member**, San Luis Obispo
- 
Jan 22 **Finding Balance: Special District Reserve Guidelines - WEBINAR**
- 
Jan 23 **How to be an Effective Board Member**, Orange County
- 
Jan 28 **Report the Right Way! GASB 2014 Update - WEBINAR**
- 
Jan 29 **Rules of Order Made Easy! - WEBINAR**
- 
Jan 30 **How to be an Effective Board Member**, Sacramento

FEBRUARY

- 
Feb 4 **Must Have Communication Protocols for District Board Members and Staff - WEBINAR**
- 
Feb 6 **Special District Leadership Academy: Board's Role in Human Resources**, Sacramento
- 
Feb 7 **Special District Leadership Academy: Board's Role in Finance and Fiscal Accountability**, Sacramento
- 
Feb 11 **Spot the Fraud! Fraud Detection/Prevention for Special Districts - WEBINAR**
- 
Feb 13 **The Essential Guide to the Brown Act - WEBINAR**
- 
Feb 19 **Understanding Board Member and District Liability Issues - WEBINAR**
- 
Feb 25 **Maximize your CSDA Membership - WEBINAR**
- 
Feb 27 - Feb 28 **Board Secretary/Clerk Conference**, Napa

JANUARY						
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Register online for CSDA classes and workshops by visiting www.csdanet.net and clicking on Education.

CSDA NEWS

NEW TRANSPARENCY TOOLS SPREAD UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS

In 2012, CSDA put special districts on the map, literally, when it partnered with California CAD Solutions to map the locations and boundaries of California's independent special districts on an interactive web-based map at www.csda.net. Now, CSDA is partnering with California Forward to link the mapped districts to pertinent financial information, giving the public an unparalleled transparency tool.

"Special districts are accustomed to innovation and responsive local service," stated CSDA Executive Director, Neil McCormick. "The CSDA mapping project, combined with California Forward's Transparency Portal, builds upon local transparency efforts in order to continue advancing statewide awareness and understanding of special districts."

Knowing CSDA's ongoing efforts to promote transparency in local government, California Forward approached CSDA earlier this year to seek partnership in the development of a new online transparency program it was developing for cities, counties and special districts. In response, CSDA formed an advisory group, made up of special district general managers, legal counsel, public affairs specialists and finance experts, to guide the process.

Together, California Forward and CSDA's advisory group collaborated in the development of what is now a fully functioning, interactive transparency portal and map, offering the public the most important financial information relating to the local agencies that deliver their core local services.

This unprecedented technology allows anyone to view revenues, expenditures, reserves and more. More importantly, it helps to place these figures in context for the viewer. District officials are welcomed to submit commentary to California Forward, should extenuating financial circumstances call for background explanation.

CSDA wishes to thank those members participating through its advisory group, as well as California Forward, for their dedication to this significant effort. All members are encouraged to visit www.csda.net or www.cafwd.org to access, review and offer your feedback.



BOARD SECRETARY/CLERK CONFERENCE

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR 2014

The popular CSDA Board Secretary/Clerk Conference returns February 27 & 28, 2014 in the beautiful Napa Valley.

The conference has a schedule full of classes for new and returning attendees. This year all attendees will participate in an opening session entitled: The Ralph M. Brown Act – A Local Government Drama. This session, facilitated by Mike Dean of Meyers Nave, will help attendees learn about the Brown Act by attending the fictional and humorous board meeting of a special agency. Witness what governing boards do right and wrong in preparing agendas and running their meetings. Be a member of the public at the regular meeting along with several board members, staff, interested citizens and a very persnickety general counsel.

New classes for returning attendees (current certificate holders) include: How to Juggle It All Without Looking Like a Clown; Building Better Board/Manager/Staff Roles and Relationships – And How You Can Help; and Get the Elephant Off Your Chest: Be Creative, Innovative and Have Fun at Your Job. Watch your mailbox for the full brochure or register now online at www.csda.net!

You can reserve your room now at the Embassy Suites Napa at the special CSDA rate of only \$139 plus tax per night single/double occupancy by calling 1-800-EMBASSY and using the group code CSD or the group name California Special Districts Association. The room reservation cut-off is February 5, 2014.

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Co-sponsored by the
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CSDA news [continued]

INAUGURAL SPECIAL DISTRICTS TOUR FEATURES EAST BAY DISTRICTS

In a first of its kind outreach effort, CSDA led a two-day Special Districts Tour attended by key legislative staff. The tour was designed to take a new approach in educating State Assembly, Senate and policy committee offices on the value of special districts. The inaugural tour, themed “Rooted in Service, Grounded in Community,” gave a snapshot of the diversity of special districts and the vital local services they provide throughout the state. The tour featured four different types of districts serving the Greater East Bay Area region: East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), El Camino Healthcare District and Suisun Fairfield Rockville Cemetery District.

Beginning at the foot of the State Capitol, legislative staff and tour partners from the Association of California Healthcare Districts, Association of California Water Agencies and the California Association of Public Cemeteries gathered together.



At the second featured district, EBRPD greeted attendees by showcasing its public safety department fleet, which is responsible for first response to emergencies and ensuring the public safety in the district’s service area. District board members and department leadership shared the district’s history and community engagement in park planning. A site visit to the Tidewater Boating Center further showcased EBRPD’s youth engagement, including displaying the district’s educational outreach program through its Mobile Education Outreach van, which brings nature to classrooms when children could not otherwise experience nature first hand.

During the second day, attendees toured El Camino Healthcare District and Suisun Fairfield Rockville Cemetery District.

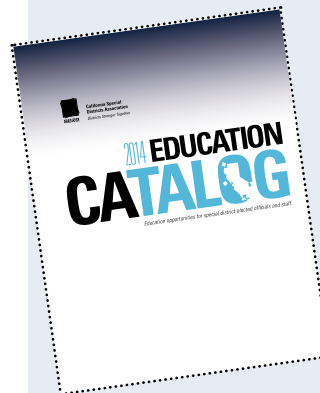


The first stop was the Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery at the base of EBMUD’s Camanche Dam. Tour attendees learned firsthand about the partnership of EBMUD with other state and federal departments to mitigate environmental impacts on fish populations while ensuring a steady and secure water source in the adjacent reservoir. Next, the tour of EBMUD sent participants to Pardee Reservoir where attendees

learned how EBMUD’s board and governance structure ensures effective delivery of drinking water to East Bay customers.



At El Camino, tour attendees learned about the collaboration between El Camino Healthcare District and El Camino Hospital to bring about a variety of programs and services that benefit the community. The El Camino Health Care District is on the cutting edge of delivering community benefits with both technology and healthcare programs that specifically address the unique and diverse community the district serves. In addition, attendees had the opportunity to tour the hospital and see firsthand the innovations at work.



2014 CSDA EDUCATION CATALOG

It's that time of the year again! Keep an eye on your mailboxes

for the 2014 CSDA Education Catalog. Next year's education program will include popular workshops such as How to Be an Effective Board Member, Board Secretary/Clerk Foundations and Staying in Compliance. Once again there will be over 30 webinars on the calendar including new titles such as: Public Record Act Reimbursement; Report the Right Way!; GASB 2014 Update; Top Ten Tips for Trouble Free Construction Projects; and Understanding the Brown Act: Beyond the Basics. CSDA will once again be offering the trainings required of special district elected officials and/or staff with our Ethics AB 1234 and Sexual Harassment Prevention webinars. CSDA's webinar curriculum offers special districts an easy and cost-effective way to receive the training they need without incurring travel costs. Many workshops and webinars are also eligible for Credit Incentive Points (CIPs) through the Special District Risk Management Authority. Registration is open now at www.csd.net.



The final stop on the tour was at the Suisun Fairfield Rockville Cemetery District. It provided a unique look at the historical significance districts play in California. Meeting at a state historical landmark dating back to 1851, the attendees learned about the pioneers who first settled in Solano County. District staff provided a tour to pioneer gravesites who, during their lifetime, donated the land for the cemetery. The district board members and staff led attendees through the cemetery pointing out founder gravesites and explaining the vital role that the public cemeteries play in preserving historical and personal memories of those who passed.

Throughout the tour, district staff provided background information about the formation of each district, the services they provide to their constituents, and the innovation behind their services and infrastructure.

Designed as a learning opportunity, the tour sought to provide a greater understanding of how special districts conduct their business and strive to

effectively and efficiently deliver core local services; promote accessible and responsive government; serve unique neighborhoods or regions based on local needs; build, operate and sustain critical infrastructure and protect public health and safety.

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conference highlights



2013 CSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE HIGHLIGHTS

The 2013 CSDA Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase, September 16-19, drew over 500 attendees to the Monterey Marriott Hotel and Monterey Conference Center. The conference included two pre-conference workshops, a golf

tournament and tours of both the Moss Landing Harbor District and Elkhorn Slough Safari™ and Monterey Regional Waste Management District. Monday culminated in the President's Reception with the Exhibitors sponsored by BNY Mellon. Over 50 exhibitors participated in this year's showcase, which included networking with attendees, a

new lunch and learn event, and technical presentations.

The first full day of conference, Tuesday, began with opening keynote speaker Mike Abrashoff, former Commander of the USS Bennfold and author of "It's Your Ship." During the gripping session, sponsored by the California Special Districts Alliance, Abrashoff shared with the group the value of empowering every individual to share the responsibility of achieving excellence.

Tuesday afternoon's Super Session, sponsored by NBS, highlighted Malcom Kushner's session "Leading with Laughter." Tuesday afternoon also included valuable breakout sessions on topics ranging from GASB pension standards to the Ralph M. Brown Act; the exhibit hall dessert finale sponsored by BHI Management Consulting; and was



Congratulations 2013 CSDA Award Winners

A big congratulations to all of this year's CSDA Annual Awards winners. Individuals and districts both received awards acknowledging their achievements in various areas including exceptional public outreach, leadership and innovations. The awards were presented at this year's Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase held September 16 – 19 in Monterey. Winning submissions from each category are as follows:

BOARD PRESIDENT OF THE YEAR
Lois Henry, Lompico County Water District

GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR
Scott Carroll, Costa Mesa Sanitary District

STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR
Lidia Santos, Castroville Community Services District

CSDA CHAPTER OF THE YEAR
Gold Country Regional Chapter

INNOVATIVE PROGRAM AWARD (SMALL DISTRICT)
Port San Luis Harbor District, Cooperative Agreement Project

INNOVATIVE PROGRAM AWARD (LARGE DISTRICT)
Vista Irrigation District, Workplace Planning & Career Development Program

EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC OUTREACH & ADVOCACY AWARD (SMALL DISTRICT)
Los Medanos Community Healthcare District, Summer Intern Program

EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC OUTREACH & ADVOCACY AWARD (LARGE DISTRICT)
Midway City Sanitary District, Solid Waste Commercial Recycling Program

HOLLINGSWORTH AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
Bette Boatmun, Contra Cost Water District



topped off with over 200 CSDA attendees enjoying dinner and an amazing view at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Sponsors of the Evening at the Monterey Bay Aquarium included Bank of the West, CH2M Hill, California Special Districts Alliance, CSDA Finance Corporation, Special District Risk Management Authority and Special District Leadership Foundation.

Wednesday included the SDRMA full plated breakfast, Safety Awards and keynote presentation by Charles Marshall who shared “The Character Question – How Character Impacts Business and Community.” The day included more breakout sessions, including some from legal experts presenting “AB1234 Required Ethics Training” and “The New Normal: Impacts of Recent Court Decisions on Assessments.”

Attendees were able to utilize a mobile app again this year for tracking their schedules and learning more about speakers, sponsors and exhibitors.

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FREE ETHICS TRAINING FOR RENEWING MEMBERS

Here’s a big “Thank you!” for returning CSDA members! District members that renew by January 1, 2014 will receive access to online AB 1234 Ethics Compliance training for their entire Board of Directors. This special web-based training will be available between January 1 and February 28, 2014 only. If you have not yet received your dues invoice and accompanying offer, please contact CSDA Member Services at 877.924.2732.



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What CSDA is watching



The first year of the 2013-2014 Legislative Session is now adjourned with legislators returning to work in the Capitol on January 6. Hundreds of new laws will be enacted on January 1, unless otherwise specified. The following list highlights key new laws impacting special districts. Log onto www.cstda.net and visit the Legislative Access Services page, located under Legislative Resources for a current, comprehensive list of every bill CSDA tracks, to request meetings with your legislator, download Legislative Committee documents and much more.

Assembly Bill 10 (Alejo): Minimum Wage

Increases the minimum wage, on and after July 1, 2014, to no less than \$9 per hour. The measure further increases the minimum wage, on and after January 1, 2016, to no less than \$10 per hour.

AB 115 (Perea): Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

Authorizes special districts and other legal entities to apply together for grant funding from the Department of Public Health for clean water funding for water systems that serve disadvantaged communities. It empowers local water systems with additional flexibility to develop compelling, effective and efficient solutions to their local challenges. This measure takes effect on January 1, 2014.

AB 218 (Dickinson): Hiring Practices for Public Agencies

Restricts the ability of local agencies and the state to request criminal history information for potential new hires until after the candidate's qualifications for the position sought have been verified, undermining local control and creating new liabilities for public agencies. Mirror legislation (AB 1831; Dickinson) was held last year in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee due to the very limited exemptions for certain law enforcement employees, amongst other reasons. This measure takes effect on July 1, 2014.

AB 327 (Perea): Net Energy Metering

Changes the existing Net Energy Metering (NEM) tariff for special districts and other local agencies that constructed projects based on the current tariff. CSDA requested Governor Brown direct the Public Utilities Commission to protect these existing customers for the life of their systems, which he did in his signing message. This measure takes effect on January 1, 2014.

AB 748 (Eggman): Judgments Against a Public Entity: Interest

Ensures special districts and other local agencies do not pay a higher rate of interest than other parties in judgments made against them in a tax or fee claim. It ties the interest rate charged a public agency to that of the weekly average one year constant maturity U.S. Treasury yield, but shall not exceed seven percent per year. Currently local governments are charged seven percent interest, while federal court judgments utilize the methodology described in this measure. Lowering the interest rate also protects taxpayer resources and the core services they provide while creating consistency in state and federal law. This measure takes effect on January 1, 2014.

AB 1149 (Campos): Breach Notification

Creates new requirements for local data management practices for secure personal information, such as date of birth, driver license number, social security number, user names and passwords, and more. This law takes existing breach notification procedures that applied previously only to private vendors and state agencies, and mandates them for all local agencies. This measure takes effect January 1 and will need to go before the Commission on State Mandates to determine if local agencies are eligible for partial or full reimbursement of related expenses.

Senate Bill 184 (Senate Governance and Finance Committee): Interagency Intercept Collections Program

Includes the CSDA-sponsored provision to afford new debt-recovery services to all special districts. As part of the Senate Governance and Finance Committee omnibus package, SB 184, amongst other things, allows special districts to participate in the Interagency Intercept Collections program in order to collect unpaid fees, assessments and charges in the same capacity afforded to cities and counties. Previously, special districts could only recoup unpaid bridge tolls or high-occupancy vehicle tolls. This measure takes effect on January 1, 2014.

SB 377 (Lieu): Public Works Wage and Penalty Assessments

Requires, when a request is made to the Director of Industrial Relations for a determination of whether a specific project or type of work awarded or undertaken is a public work, the director to make that determination within 60 days of receipt of the last support or opposition letter relating to that project or type of work, and for projects or types of work that are otherwise private development projects receiving public funds, within 120 days of receipt. Additionally, the measure requires the person filing a notice of completion in the office of a county recorder to also provide notice to the Labor Commissioner, and requires the awarding body accepting a public work to provide notice of that acceptance to the Labor Commissioner within five days. Governor Brown included a signing message asking the Legislature to send him a bill early in 2014 to streamline the notice of completion process. This measure takes effect on January 1, 2014. ■

District Snapshots



PHOTOS: The Howe/Santa Anita Parks Pathway Restoration Project ribbon cutting ceremony, conducted on October 31, by the Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District. The pathways in Howe and Santa Anita Parks are some of the most heavily utilized amenities in the parks, enjoyed by people of all ages. As part of the ceremony, children in the district's after-school program trick-or-treated at designated spots along the pathway.





Ask the Experts



How long does an agency need to retain and maintain public records? How long does an agency need to retain the taping or recording of a public meeting?

The purpose of the Public Records Act (PRA) is to give the public access to information in the possession of public agencies. Any citizen may request access to public records. A public record is “any writing(s) containing information relating to the conduct of the business, prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.” Upon a request for public records, an agency generally must determine within ten (10) days after receipt of the request whether to comply with the request and must also notify the person making the request of its decision.

The first question posed was: How long does an agency need to retain and maintain public records? The answer to this question will vary, depending on the nature of the public record. There are several records retention requirements that overlap and stem from state and federal statutes, plus an agency may have its own record retention policy. For example, under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, job applications must be maintained for at least two years after their creation or receipt. Under Title VII and the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment records

related to hiring must be retained for at least one year from the date of hiring or from the date of any relevant employment action. As a further example, the Fair Labor Standards Act requires that payroll records be maintained for three years. The California Labor Code requires that the names and addresses of all employees, daily hours worked, and wages paid to all employees be maintained for at least two years. As another example, with regard to work-related injuries, employers are required to maintain their OSHA Log 200 and annual summaries of illnesses and injuries for five years beyond the work-related illnesses and injuries. Employers who are self-administered for workers’ compensation claims, must maintain workers’ compensation files for five years from the date of injury or when benefits were last paid, whichever is later. And as a final example, employers subject to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) must retain FMLA records, including hours taken, notices, and policies, for three years.

The second question posed was: How long does an agency need to retain the taping or recording of a public meeting? Any tape or film recording of an open and public meeting, made for whatever purpose, by or at the direction of the local agency, is subject to inspection pursuant to the PRA. This means that a member of the public may submit a request and view a copy of the recording of the meeting on a player provided by the agency at no charge. The recording of the meeting may be erased or destroyed by the agency 30 days after the recording. ■

Morin I. Jacob is a partner in the San Francisco office of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore. Jacob is a litigator, and counsels and represents public agencies on all labor and employment law matters, primarily working with public safety agencies, but also representing cities, counties, and special districts. More information can be found at www.lcwlegal.com or by phone at (415) 512-3000.

Do you have a question for any of our CSDA “experts”? Send your question to Nicole Dunn, editor, at nicoled@cgsda.net.



MOVERS & SHAKERS

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Does your district have an individual recently appointed as general manager or a top staff position? Have you recently elected a new board president? Have any district personnel been appointed to other community boards or positions? Email your district's movers and shakers to Nicole Dunn, communication specialist, at Nicoled@cstda.net and we will include them in our next issue!

Camarillo Health Care District's Chief Operating Officer **Kara Ralston** has been appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to the California Health Professions Education Foundation Board of Trustees. The foundation is the state's only non-profit foundation statutorily created to encourage persons from underrepresented communities to become health professionals and increase access to health providers in medically underserved areas.

Conejo Recreation and Park District General Manager **Jim Friedl** and Cucamonga Valley Water District and CSDA Board Member **Kathy Tiegs** have been appointed to the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership's Advisory Council. The institute supports and promotes participatory governance efforts at the local level through consulting, grant-making and training.



Robert Bernardo

Robert Bernardo was selected president of the San Mateo County Harbor District by his fellow commissioners. Prior to being elected to the Harbor Commission in 2010, he served on both the South San Francisco Planning Commission and Personnel Board.



Robert Hunter

Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) welcomes **Robert Hunter** as general manager. "Robert Hunter is a well-respected and well-known entity in the national water community," said MWDOC Vice President Jeff Thomas. "His background in leadership, utility management and strategic initiatives make him a real asset for MWDOC."

Placer County Water Agency welcomes **Jim Boyle** as the agency's new chief information officer. Boyle will oversee the agency's information technology and data processing functions.

Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District welcomes new fire chief, **Tony Michel**. Michel fills the position vacated by former chief, **Nick Pavone**, who retired.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has installed **Chief William R. Metcalf** of North County Fire Protection District as IAFC president and chairman of the board for 2013-2014. In this position, Chief Metcalf will provide leadership to the association's board of directors and will serve as the primary spokesperson for the association on matters of national and international interest.

Monte Vista Water District has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its comprehensive annual financial report for 2011-12. The award was granted by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

The Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) announces **Rafael Payan Ph.D.**, as general manager. Dr. Payan is filling the position left by **James Sulentich**. He brings a wealth of dedication and experience in parks and recreation management to the MPRPD from the Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department in Tucson, Arizona where he was most recently the department's director.



Craig D. Miller



Diana Leibrich

Western Municipal Water District announces the hiring of **Craig D. Miller** as deputy general manager and **Diana Leibrich** as human resources manager. ■

In Brief



Vehicle Charging Stations to be Available at Grocery Stores in 2014

Starting in 2014, electric car owners in Southern California will be able to charge their vehicles while doing their grocery shopping. Thanks to the efforts of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), 20 smart-grid enabled fast charging stations will be installed at grocery stores on freeway corridors in Southern California. “This project is important to Southern California because it will help create a viable DC fast charging network that will be accessible, convenient and affordable for plug-in electric vehicle drivers,” says SCAQMD spokesperson Tina Cox. Part of the funding for the \$1.2 million project comes from the California Energy Commission (CEC). The CEC gave the district \$300,000 toward the total cost of the project. According to CEC EV Program Manager Leslie Baroody, “The main reason for grocery store charging infrastructure placement is because of parking availability, and driver dwell time consistent with the time it takes to charge and electric capacity is usually sufficient at these sites.” Fast charging stations can take as little as 20 minutes to fill 80 percent of an electric car’s battery. Grocery stores are interested in the stations as there is evidence shoppers will stay longer in the store if their cars are charging. Nissan is currently another partner in SCAQMD’s project and the district is in the process of seeking more partners.

District Custodian Develops Popular Web App for Parks

In fall 2011, Conejo Recreation and Park’s administrator of parks and planning, Tom Hare, was working in the field with district Custodian Matthew Jones, when Jones posed to Hare an interesting idea. Jones asked Hare if the district had ever considered developing a mobile app for residents. According to Jones, several people would ask him for information on the parks while he was working and thought an app would be an excellent solution to make the information readily available anywhere a resident may be. Matthew Jones, in addition to working as a custodian with the district, also had a background in interactive design and game development and believed he and his now business partner Matthew Edwards could develop the app for the district. Hare thought an app would be a great move for the district and it could be launched as part of the district’s 50th anniversary celebration in August 2013.

Jones and Edwards worked with district staff closely in developing the CRPD Explorer App, which includes CRPD contact information and an interactive map of CRPD. The app also allows users to check field status and get information on all of their favorite parks and facilities, including the history, amenities and detailed maps of each park. Within two months, the app – currently only available on iPhones – had been downloaded over 330 times and received five-star reviews from users. Since the launch, the district has reviewed the app and even created an outside focus group for feedback, and will be launching a second version with even more features. A version for Android phones is also in the works.

Regional Water System Intertie Does Its Job

The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) and the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) recently completed a transfer of water through the joint agency intertie pipeline that connects the EBMUD and CCWD systems in Brentwood. The transfer is a real-time demonstration of regional cooperation in water deliveries through existing facilities. In 2007, CCWD and EBMUD completed construction on an intertie located in Brentwood to allow the transfer of water between EBMUD’s Mokelumne Aqueduct and CCWD’s conveyance facilities. In September, using this intertie, 2,000 acre-feet of water from the Woodbridge Irrigation District, near Lodi, was transferred through EBMUD’s aqueduct, to the intertie, and into CCWD’s facilities. This successful transfer demonstrates how local agencies are working cooperatively to move water efficiently, for the benefit of Bay Area customers. The benefit to the Bay Area customers goes beyond a planned transfer in the regular course of business, and highlights the importance of these connections for emergency situations.

GOT NEWS?

California Special District wants to hear about newsworthy people, projects, events and accomplishments in your district. To submit a news item for In Brief, contact Nicole Dunn at nicoled@csda.net or (877) 924-2732.



Flood Control District Granted \$7.24 Million for Improvements

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District has been awarded three grants totaling \$7.24 million for flood control, groundwater recharge and recreation projects. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) awarded two of the grants and the Fansler Foundation awarded the third. The first grant, totaling \$225,000, awarded by the DWR was through its Local Groundwater Assistance Program. The grant was awarded for the district to collect and analyze soil samples at five low-performing groundwater recharge basins, and test the effectiveness of replacing basin soils with more permeable soil in increasing the volume of water returned to the groundwater supply. The second DWR grant, totaling \$6.89 million, was offered through the department's Stormwater Flood Management Program. The grant will be used toward efforts to improve the structure integrity of Big Dry Creek Dam and improve flood control and groundwater recharge at three sites downstream of the dam. The Fansler Foundation awarded the district a grant of \$124,400 to replace an aging little kids' play structure and rubberized play-safe matting at the local Sloan Johnson Oso de Oro Lake Park. Says District General Manager Bob Van Wyk, "The district regularly pursues grants to augment local infrastructure funding. We are grateful to secure \$7.24 million in grant funds to build and improve flood control and groundwater recharge services, and restore a well-used, fully-accessible park."



Open Space District Unveils Vision Plan

This fall, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District unveiled its "vision plan." The plan was developed over 14 months with input from community members, consultants and representatives from nonprofit organizations. The preliminary plan encompasses the district's 62,000 acres of open space preserves and lays out considerations for buying and managing new properties. Some items included in the plan are: outdoor and recreational opportunities, education and interpretive centers, improvement of habitats and protection of culturally significant areas that are at risk of development. Currently about half the land does not have improvements, such as trails, and the plan prioritizes opening some currently closed areas and improving open ones for the enjoyment of families.

Seniors Get Together through Friendship Connection

A program developed and administered by the Camarillo Health Care District called Friendship Connection allows seniors in the area, who may experience loneliness, to get together and get to know new people. The district sensed a need for seniors to have a place to meet others in 2012 and began the Friendship Connection program. According to district Senior Support Manager Jenica Polakow, the seniors "didn't have a specific need that a support group would address, but they just wanted an opportunity to meet other people like them." Friendship Connection meets once a month at the district's wellness and caregiver center and about a dozen seniors attend the meeting. At meetings, attendees have the opportunity to talk about their lives, current events and any other topics of interest. "Seniors want their own relationships and independence," says Polakow. "They don't want to rely on their family members for everything and don't want to burden them with all their worries and needs." Many times, seniors who meet at Friendship Connection exchange numbers and get together on their own to go for walks or out to lunch.

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Sources: Camarillo Acorn, Conejo Recreation and Park District, Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Regional Park District, Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, Mountain View Voice, Plugincars.com, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Ventura County Star

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Interview with ARB Public Information Officer, Climate Change Programs, Dave Clegern



Dave Clegern
Spokesperson for ARB

In recent years, California's policy makers have focused on direct actions the state, local governments and private businesses can take to reduce the state's overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In 2008, the Air Resources Board (ARB) developed a Scoping Plan to identify steps the state should take to meet the GHG emissions reduction goals of AB 32. Updated every five years, the Scoping Plan is currently under revision by the ARB.

The Scoping Plan partially relies on the carbon cap-and-trade auction program to reduce the emissions of covered entities. The five quarterly auctions held to date have generated over \$500 million in revenue for the state that must be used to further the emissions reduction goals of AB 32.

California Special District interviewed Dave Clegern, spokesperson for ARB, about the cap-and-trade program and the Scoping Plan update to learn more about opportunities for special districts to participate in the state's efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

Where does the money from the greenhouse gas auction come from?

Auction proceeds come from the sale of carbon allowances at Air Resources Board (ARB)-run auctions. There are four auctions a year, and to date more than 95 percent of allowances have been purchased by companies with a cap-and-trade compliance obligation.

There is currently a three-year investment plan that identifies the State's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and priority programs for investment of proceeds to support achievement of those goals. Can you provide a brief outline of that plan?

The investment plan is not a spending plan. It is a plan put together by ARB, the Department of Finance and the governor outlining the kinds of programs that might

The investment plan is
not a spending plan...

Many of these programs already exist and deal with things like transportation, natural resources protection, sustainable energy, etc.

qualify under the AB 32 requirement, which auction proceeds go to further the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of AB 32. Many of these programs already exist and deal with things like transportation, natural resources protection, sustainable energy, etc.

The governor's budget provides the actual spending plan and any money must be authorized by the Legislature.

Additionally, the legislation passed this last session requires that 25 percent of proceeds be spent to assist environmentally underserved communities.

Most special districts are uncapped entities under the Cap-and-Trade program. What opportunities are out there for local renewable power and energy efficiency projects to be at least partially funded from allowance revenue? Is the Air Board looking at some future opportunities in this area?

Under some circumstances uncovered facilities can opt into the program in situations where they might receive more free carbon allowances they need to comply—those can then be sold.

A special district with a fleet or worksite vehicle charging or alternative refueling operation might want to look into the possibility of generating credits under the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, as well. Under certain circumstances credits are generated by the use of clean fuels which can then be sold to help fuel producers lower the carbon intensity of their products.

The regulations governing all this are very stringent, but opportunities do exist.

Could you tell us about any of the Air Board's offset protocols that might be of use to special districts in the area of GHG reductions or CO2 capture?

Right now there are four offset protocols, for forestry, urban forestry, manure digesters and destruction of ozone depleting substances (ODS). There is also a protocol being developed for fugitive mine methane capture.

These protocols all require very stringent verification, and the requirements are quite specific. For instance, under the forest protocol, trees must be managed specifically to maximize carbon sequestration and left in place for 100 years.

The four protocols can be found here: www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/offsets/offsets.htm#protocols.

What do you see as the most important opportunities out there for special districts to support and advance the State's effort to reduce GHG emissions?

All the AB 32 programs are essentially about energy efficiency. Anything that reduces consumption of energy is helpful. It can be as simple as keeping vehicles properly tuned, tires properly inflated and caulking building windows.

Many commercial operations and government facilities are also investing in solar, electric vehicles, replacing diesel fuel with bio-diesel, investing in green building construction and so on. Efficient resource management is key.

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David Clegern [continued]



As work continues on revising the AB-32 Scoping Plan, will the Air Board be looking into developing a focused Local Government/Special District program that can capture the enormous potential in this area?

We are looking at those opportunities and would love to receive specific input from district managers. We have an extensive stakeholder and public comment process to help us understand the business and operating nuances which might ordinarily escape regulators.

All public proceedings are noticed and many are webcast or available by dialing in on the phone. We have list serves available for all programs and many program sectors. Anyone can sign up to receive those public notices through this link: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/listserv/listserv.php>.

Is the Air Board looking at new strategies to reach the challenging emissions goals for 2050?

The ARB is now putting together the required five year revision of the AB 32 Scoping Plan. This is basically the road map to greenhouse gas emission reduction programs and how California will get to a cleaner future.

This is the first official, public document to look beyond our 2020 goals and will focus on developing reduction targets for the time period around 2030. Our programs must be adjusted to reach those goals and will require further innovation and development to reach 2050. Much will change, and we work to ensure our regulations and programs are flexible enough to adapt to those changes in a way that benefits Californians' public and environmental health while maintaining and encouraging sustainable economic growth. ■



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Neighboring Districts Affected by Rim Fire

On August 17, 2013, the third largest wildfire to hit California was ignited. The fire, named the Rim Fire after its proximity to the Rim of the World vista point in the Stanislaus National Forest, burned 257,314 acres and destroyed eleven residences, three commercial buildings, and 98 outbuildings. The fire was difficult to fight due to its inaccessible terrain and winds, and over 5,000 firefighters worked to contain the fire until October 24, 2013.

For those long months the fire was burning, areas in and around the Sierra Nevada were crucially affected. Water resources, air quality and, of course, danger of the fire itself were all top concerns in the surrounding communities. During that time, special districts in the region were vital in ensuring the critical public services they provide continued. Because districts are a form of government close to the people, they were able to reach out to the public, stay in contact with them and focus on the specific services they were formed to deliver. Now, in the aftermath of the fire, it is possible to examine the efforts undertaken during its blaze, the challenges the districts faced and what they have learned through the experience.

Mi-Wuk/Sugar Pine Fire Protection District

Mi-Wuk/Sugar Pine FPD (MWSP FPD) is located in Tuolumne County, in a location the fire was pointed straight at for several days, but never reached. MWSP FPD supplied one fire engine to assist in the firefighting efforts and held town hall meetings every day for over a week during the fire's peak – at times with attendance of over 450 residents. “During the height of the fire, at the town hall meetings, I coined and continue to use the phrase ‘Community of Neighbors’ to describe how our communities pulled together in common defense,” says Fire Chief Larry Crabtree. “The members of our communities joined in a volunteer program for the future where they will be part of a larger organization engaged in fire prevention efforts and defensible space education (Cal Fire’s Volunteers in Prevention [VIP] program.)”

The district made sure to keep in constant contact with other agencies throughout the fire. The Sheriff’s Office and a local member of the Board of Supervisors were represented at every town hall meeting. In addition, MWSP FPD kept in contact with the three water agencies within the district: Tuolumne Utilities District, Mi Wuk Mutual Water Company and Mi Wuk Heights Water District. All of these communication efforts were proactive ways of making sure the community was as prepared as possible in the event the fire became a sudden danger to the community.

The Rim fire had a substantial financial impact on MWSP FPD. Due to the direct threat of the fire, and the eventual evacuation orders from the Sheriff’s Office, the district held all of its fire fighters on duty. This resulted in the expenditure of 75 percent of MWSP FPD’s annual overtime budget in less than 14 days. Every effort of the district throughout the fire was to be proactive and fully prepared to protect its residents.

Crabtree’s advice to any districts that may experience a similar threat in the future: “Remember that even if you want to go play with the firefighters on the line, if your community is the target of the fire, your place is with your community and its citizens. Use your expertise to do everything you can to be sure that your own community is informed, educated, supported and ready to react if and when that potential threat becomes a fire in your streets and homes.”

Tuolumne Utilities District

The area served by Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) was also threatened by the fire. Thousands of residences were on stand-by evacuation warnings and more than 200,000 acres of forest were burned. Air quality was severely poor and visibility was reduced from the average 100-plus miles to less than half a mile. Fortunately, the district already had an emergency response plan in place and activated it for a full week while the fire grew. Throughout the fire, TUD staffed four alternative filling

locations for fire personnel - which allowed for drawing of raw water and allowed for less stress on the treated water distribution system - and decreased the chances of draining water systems in critically impacted areas.

TUD was sure to be represented at Tuolumne County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during the first few weeks of the fire, to be a part of as much information sharing as possible. Other agencies on the EOC included Twain Harte Community Services District, Groveland Community Services District, Cal Fire, the Sheriff’s Department and an Incident Command Team. Throughout the fire, TUD worked to distribute information to the local population. According to TUD Safety Compliance Coordinator Abby Parcon, “Disseminating information in the first 48-72 hours of an emergency is typically the biggest challenge in events of this magnitude.” The district is currently identifying ways to improve communication at this level for the future. And, says Parcon of any districts who may face emergency situations in the future, “Have a plan. Create, maintain and regularly exercise and follow your Emergency Response Plan.”

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Rim fire [continued from page 23]

Twain Harte Community Services District

Twain Harte CSD (THCSD) faced the distinct experience of responding to the fire as a fire, water and parks and recreation district. The district's fire chief was part of a team that took command of the fire after the first 24 hours and the district supplied an engine and staff to the efforts. Throughout the duration of the fire, THCSD undertook emergency water preparations and maintained full water tank levels to support fire suppression efforts. It also identified hydrants and facilities that could support staging areas in the district. The district's park facilities were used to host firefighter and law enforcement benefit dinners and public information meetings.

Like other districts, THCSD worked hard to ensure the public stayed aware of the fire's status and any immediate dangers to the community. It held numerous town hall meetings that gave updates on the fire and requests to limit water usage. Says Tom Trott, general manager, "From a fire perspective, we realized that accurate and frequent public information needs to be provided to the public as soon as possible. With social media, rumors

and inaccurate information spread quickly causing fear and panic." Though the district was able to reach the community directly through the use of the town hall meetings, it noticed ways it can improve upon emergency communications in the future.

The district also stayed in close contact with other agencies, including Tuolumne Utilities District, the county-wide EOC, and the fire department strike teams from Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. THCSD was responsible for all of these operations while still maintaining their regular service for residents – service they provide during times of no emergency. Says Trott, "All other districts that could potentially face this type of incident should maintain good working relationships with all of the agencies involved and practice EOC activations. They should make emergency management planning a top priority."

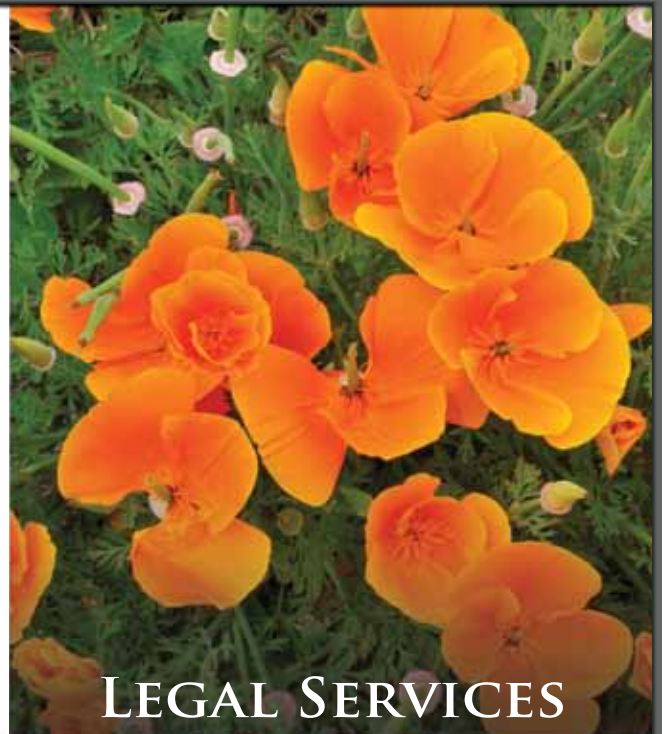
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Modesto Irrigation District & Turlock Irrigation District

Modesto Irrigation (MID) and Turlock Irrigation Districts (TID) faced a unique threat by the Rim fire. Together they own the Don Pedro Project – a dam, reservoir and powerhouse on the Tuolumne River. It is California's sixth largest reservoir and between the two districts, it provides irrigation water to approximately 210,000 acres of Central Valley farmland. The districts worked hard throughout the fire to keep abreast of fire advancement and suppression progress. The districts' primary concerns were hypothetical changes in runoff timing, magnitude and duration as a result of a winter storm. While the fire did not pose an immediate threat to the districts' residents, a massive amount of proactive work was performed in regard to public safety. A strong enough storm could send the remains of the charred forest – trees, ash and mud – downstream into the local water supplies.

In response to this challenge, the districts have in place a plan to use floating barriers to stop the debris in the Tuolumne River from flowing into the Don Pedro Reservoir. The districts also laud the value of planning for a crisis – regardless of how remote the possibility of it happening may be.

Be Prepared, Be In Touch and Communicate

These districts all faced unique challenges and threats throughout the duration of the Rim fire but all found the same things to be critical in times of emergency. The first – be prepared. Have an emergency plan in place. Even if it never has to be used, the value of a strong emergency plan is priceless. Be in touch with the various agencies you will need to contact during times of emergencies. Have relationships built with your county emergency operations center, and other agencies who will help you coordinate efforts to keep the public safe and services sound. And, finally, have strong methods of communication with the public already in place. Be it through community meetings, your district website or even social media, make sure your district has reliable and efficient means of reaching constituents in the event of a crisis. ■



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Coastside County Water District: From zero to GIS in eight weeks



Coastside County Water District (CCWD) was in a predicament common to many water districts and small agencies in general. They needed a geographic information system (GIS) to help in decision-making, assessing maintenance operations, and having a single point where information can be found. Thus, CCWD began its search for a GIS and a firm to help them get started.

CCWD is a coastal water district that maintains a distribution system that includes three pressure zones, five pump stations, 600 hydrants and over 90 miles of water pipelines. It had paper engineering drawings of their water system that had been accumulated over the years, but did not have anything in digital format. Trying to find the location of pipes was a manual process of going through those drawings or relying upon the institutional knowledge of the field maintenance staff. This was an unsustainable process that needed to be rectified.

The search started by talking to various software manufacturers and consultants. What CCWD was looking for was a GIS consultant that would tailor a solution to the size and needs of the district. The solution they were looking for would address specific needs of the district.

Their needs included a seamless digital map of their infrastructure, a GIS portal to distribute information to staff, and a direct connection from that portal to the district's billing system. California CAD Solutions (CCS) was selected to do these tasks because they displayed an understanding of the unique requirements of a district the size of CCWD. CCS has created and implemented GIS websites as well as created digital maps for dozens of special districts and agencies over the last 27 years.

Since the map is the gateway to the data, getting the map created was the first step to achieving their goal. California CAD Solutions, Inc. started the data creation process concurrently with the development of the GIS website. For efficiency and inventory accuracy the infrastructure assets were drawn onto the parcel GIS layer obtained from the county using AutoCAD Map instead of scanning and digitizing. Pipes were put on to different layers according to their size and material type. The assets were put in as attributed blocks containing all of the information available for each one. The quality control process was rigorous with duplicates, gaps, conflicting information thoroughly investigated by cross checking the engineering drawings and having field staff verification. The entire infrastructure system along with pressure zones was completed in five weeks from the start date.

"For a little more than the cost of the preliminary GIS studies some vendors proposed, we were able to digitize all of our paper maps, create new field mapbooks, and access our map information in a working GIS"

David Dickson – General Manager

A GIS is not worth its salt if it cannot connect to external data sources such as billing, maintenance, work order, permitting, and other such valuable business-related information sources. At CCWD the billing data was held by Springbrook software using

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“As a small utility, CCWD was not in a position to dedicate staff time to GIS development and maintenance or to pay the high licensing fees some GIS software requires”

David Dickson – General Manager

a Progress database. CCS worked with a new read-only ODBC driver to access the meter information contained in the database providing a risk-free way to see the data.

Circumventing the business rules in Springbrook, or any other database application, by writing directly to the database would not be a best management practice. Later on, CCWD added the ability to add attribute information on valves, pipes, and other assets directly to a different database to increase the intelligence level of the asset data.

With a functioning GIS delivered within eight weeks of the project start date, CCWD had an experience not common to most agencies using GIS. However, their experience does not need to be that unique or extreme. CCWD outsourced where needed, avoided unnecessary expenses, and made smart decisions concerning total cost of ownership. By following their example, other agencies within the California Special Districts Association can reap the same cost-saving benefits. ■



NEW CSDA MEMBER BENEFIT: Discount on Digital Mapping Solutions

For over a year, California CAD Solutions (CCS) has worked closely with CSDA in an online, interactive map of all the special districts in the state. In the process we learned that more and more districts, large

and small, are realizing the need for digital data files of their boundaries and infrastructure. In response, CCS developed a cost-effective solution for CSDA members seeking to replace those hardcopy paper drawings with digital maps.

CCS will create digitized district boundary maps from the best available public data sources at the discounted flat rate of \$500 for CSDA members – at least half off the regular non-member price.

For districts that already have digital data, CCS is offering members the same discounted \$500 flat rate to perform a data “checkup” to cross reference your mapping data with your database information to ensure your service connections, district assets and other critical records are matched. ■



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Advancing sustainability through local leadership and innovation

By Yvonne Hunter, Co-Program Director, Institute for Local Government

Warren G. Bennis, founding chairman of The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, wrote, “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”

Bennis easily could have been describing the sustainability activities of today’s California local officials and their agencies. Thanks to their vision, California local agencies are at the forefront of embracing sustainability at the local level. At the same time, they are saving taxpayer dollars, natural resources and making their communities better places to work, live and play.

Over the last five years, the Institute for Local Government (www.ca-ilg.org), the non-profit research affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties, has been gathering information about innovative ways local agencies are reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving energy, and adopting policies and programs that promote sustainability. Their experiences relate to most other public agencies as well.

Leadership at the Local Level

All local officials understand this has been a challenging time in California. Continued population growth coupled with a weakened economy has stretched fiscal and natural resources to the limit. Because of this, local officials are taking new and creative approaches to provide services, manage budgets and plan for the future in ways that,



over time, will improve the quality of life of their communities.

What is especially exciting about the sustainability activities of local agencies is that they include large, small, urban, suburban and rural agencies, as well as those not often included in the usual lists of “sustainable” communities. For example, fifty-one cities and counties are currently participating in the sustainability recognition program, the Beacon Award: Local Leadership toward Solving Climate Change (www.ca-ilg.org/BeaconAward). These include such diverse communities as Pleasanton, La Mesa, South Gate, Apple Valley, Redlands, San Rafael, Simi Valley, Sonoma County, San Diego County, Arcata, Benicia, Chula Vista and Santa Monica.

The Beacon Award program celebrates cities and counties that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and promote sustainability policies

and programs.¹ What follows are examples of local sustainability activities undertaken by Beacon program participants.

Energy Efficiency

Investing in energy efficiency in agency buildings reduces energy use and saves money. California municipal and investor-owned energy utilities offer financial incentives, including rebates and no or low interest loans, to local government agencies (including special districts) to help reduce upfront costs for energy efficiency improvements. For those new to utility incentive or financing opportunities, utility representatives or account managers are a good place to start to learn about options and financial incentive opportunities.

The City of Beaumont saved energy and money by reducing the number of lights at a city baseball field. Working with a sports lighting designer, Beaumont achieved a higher lighting level by exchanging

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Beginning in 2011, Sacramento began replacing more than 4,000 existing lights at city owned parking garages with energy efficient lights that use two-thirds less energy. The city also installed motion sensors that switch to lower light levels when no motion is detected, such as on weekends or at night, further reducing energy use by about 40 percent. The project saves nearly 2.8 million kilowatt hours and just over \$300,000 annually. It also has a public safety benefit, as police are alerted at possible criminal activity if they see brighter lights at a parking garage late at night.

Sonoma County implemented 38 energy efficiency retrofit measures in 24 county buildings, including lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, and vending machines. The project reduced the county's energy utility bills by about one-third, translating to \$1.6 million in annual savings, or \$38 million over the lifetime of the project.

Chula Vista installed new high-efficiency boilers at two municipal aquatic centers, saving more than 75,000 therms annually. The city also saves about 300,000 kilowatt hours annually from heating and air conditioning energy efficiency upgrades at the city's public works facility. Combined, the projects save the city about \$97,000 annually.

Water Efficiency

Simi Valley, Woodland and Santa Clarita demonstrate the benefits of

using "smart irrigation" systems. The systems function like a thermostat by responding to weather and moisture content in the soil and adjust the amount of water dispensed accordingly. With the smart irrigation system, Santa Clarita has reduced its irrigated water use by about 150 to 180 million gallons annually after investing about \$1.9 million in the project, resulting in savings of \$300,000 to \$400,000 each year.

Alternative Energy

Starting in 2009, Pleasanton has installed solar photovoltaic systems on four municipal buildings. The largest system, on the Operations Service Center, generates 614,800 kilowatts annually and saves about \$140,000 each year. The \$1.7 million project was partially offset by a \$637,000 rebate from the California Solar Initiative. The payback period is just over seven years.

Efficient Transportation

Numerous agencies are converting their fleets to use fuel efficient or alternative fuel vehicles. San Diego County is turning to fuel-efficient vehicles to help save money and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. The county is replacing six-cylinder vehicles with more efficient four-cylinder vehicles, while also integrating a variety of hybrid fuel vehicles into its fleet. The county estimates that the use of these more fuel-efficient vehicles saved the county an estimated \$1 million in fuel costs in 2011 alone.

In addition to integrating fuel efficient vehicles into its fleet, the county is working to reduce vehicle miles traveled by county employees through its "County Without Walls" program. The program uses technology to encourage employees to complete work assignments from remote worksites instead of driving back to the office to submit paper reports.

Public Engagement and Sustainability

A key element to a successful sustainability program is including local residents and businesses in those efforts. Whether the topic is saving energy or water, or increasing accessibility to parks and open space, engaging the community so that they genuinely are part of the process and solution helps ensure success. Public engagement activities often include advisory committees for developing green building ordinances or bicycle and pedestrian master plans, and preparing climate action plans.

Conclusion

By voluntarily implementing sustainable activities at the local level, local agencies in California are helping meet ambitious state goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, they are improving the quality of life for their residents, saving money, resources and energy and setting a stable foundation for the future.

Since 2004, 29 cities and counties participating in the Beacon Award program have reported saving approximately 30.2 million kilowatt hours of electricity as of June 2013 in agency buildings and facilities. This is enough to power 5,250 average California homes annually.

continued on page 34

Legal Brief

IGNORING ENVIRONMENTAL DUE DILIGENCE COULD BE COSTLY

By Danielle G. Sakai, Best Best & Krieger LLP



We have all heard the saying “ignorance is bliss,” but in the area of real property acquisition, the more important idiom is “what you don’t know can kill you.” That may be a bit dramatic, but what you don’t know about a property’s condition could certainly cost the acquiring special district a lot of taxpayer money – money that would be better spent fulfilling the agency’s statutory purpose, rather than cleaning up someone else’s toxic mess.

On any property, there is always the potential that contamination undetected by the human eye is hidden in the soil, lurking in the groundwater or tainting the buildings. Take, for instance, the true story of a public agency in California, whose name has been changed to protect its identity. “Public Agency X” identified a certain parcel of property that it could use for a future development project. It later discovered that the property owner defaulted on its taxes and the property was up for a tax sale by the county, meaning it could be nabbed at a great bargain.

Public Agency X contacted the county and purchased the property for the cost of the unpaid taxes at a fraction of what the property would presumably sell for on the open market. Sounds like a great deal, right? The next thing the agency knows, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is knocking at its door. The federal agency identified the property as a source of major contamination and designated the local agency as a “responsible party,” ordering it to clean up the property or face penalties of up to \$32,500 per day, in addition to potential damages.

Under federal and state law, a property owner is strictly liable for contamination discovered on its property unless it qualifies for one of a very few limited exceptions or defenses to liability. In the case of Public Agency X, there was no legal defense and it wound up spending nearly \$500,000 to clean up the pollution created by the prior owners. Had Public Agency X undertaken environmental due diligence prior to purchasing the property, it could have discovered the pollution and avoided that nearly half-million dollar liability.

So, what is environmental due diligence? A key part of the property acquisition process, its purpose is to evaluate potential liabilities associated with land quality and other environmental and health and safety issues. Generally speaking, environmental due diligence consists of a Phase I environmental site assessment that could lead to an investigation depending on what is discovered during the assessment. The first step is essentially a paper search intended to evaluate past and present uses of the property, and their potential for having impacted soil, soil vapor and groundwater. An environmental professional reviews historic and current agency records of the property, interviews current and past owners, visits the site to look for obvious signs (to a professional) of concern and prepares a report. If, during the assessment, the environmental professional identifies any potential problems then additional field work will likely be recommended as part of a follow-up investigation. Known as a Phase II investigation, it usually consists of taking soil, soil vapor or water samples and comparing the results to local, state and federal standards. The test results will tell the potential buyer whether there is contamination and help identify the extent and required remedy, if any.

If the results of the assessment and/or investigation indicate there are no concerns, the agency can proceed with the purchase without any concerns. In addition to providing peace of mind, by conducting the environmental due diligence, the agency has engaged in what is called an “all appropriate inquiry,” which is the legal foundation to providing the agency with the limited defenses

So, what is environmental due diligence?

A key part of the property acquisition process, its purpose is to evaluate potential liabilities associated with land quality and other environmental and health and safety issues.

available to liability, in the event that contamination that was not known or discovered as part of the due diligence process is later discovered.

In contrast, if the due diligence finds contamination on the property, the agency can still acquire the property. Under these circumstances, the agency has the following options: Require the owner to remediate the property at its cost prior to the sale; have a portion of the purchase price held in escrow to cover the cleanup costs; negotiate a reduction in the purchase price to reflect the contamination and cost of remediation, or require that the seller purchase environmental insurance.

If the agency decides to acquire the property and undertake the remediation itself, prior to closing the deal, it should work with either local environmental regulators or the federal EPA to negotiate a bona fide prospective purchaser agreement, which will give the agency credit for the remedial costs and help avoid future liability. Additionally, to the extent that the agency must acquire the property, if it has the power of eminent domain, it may want to consider condemning the property as condemnation is considered an involuntary acquisition under federal environmental law, which could exempt the agency from being a responsible party.

This is, of course, a simplification of the process. As with all things, work with your attorney and hire reputable and experienced environmental professionals to make sure the process has been strictly complied with and that the reports include all necessary elements. By

doing so, you will save your agency from being on the receiving end of an EPA order and having to explain to ratepayers or board members why money is being spent to clean up someone else's mess. ■

Danielle G Sakai is a partner in the environmental law & natural resources practice group at Best Best & Krieger LLP. Based in Riverside, her practice focuses on environmental contamination, land use and real property disputes. She has significant experience with the environmental due diligence process and litigating contamination issues, including one of the state's most contentious superfund sites involving perchlorate groundwater contamination. She can be reached at Danielle.Sakai@BBKlaw.com.



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Once criticized, district now shines with transparency



earning the certificate, the district put all of its board members through ethics training, adopted policies for responding to public records act requests and made a number of updates to its website for the public to find key information.

“This award is a true testament to the hard work and collaboration between the district and our community over the past several years,” says District Chair Patricia Einarson, M.D. Adds Chris Ernst, the district’s vice president of marketing and corporate communication, “Our board got

In 2011, El Camino Healthcare District (ECHD) was facing criticism from its county LAFCo and the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury. The groups felt the district faced a lack of openness and questionable business practices. The district took the criticism to heart and decided to make changes designed to increase its level of transparency. “From what we’ve seen, it seems (ECHD has) actually made quite a few changes and a lot of progress has been made,” according to Margaret Abe-Koga, a member of the LAFCo board.

Part of the process for the district improving its level of openness was the acquisition of the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence. As part of

behind us and collaborated really, really well with LAFCo. (The commissioners) told us we’re a model for other districts and I think that’s the thing we’ve been wanting to hear.”

Thanks to the district’s efforts to promote transparency to the public, and due to their work to follow the guidelines set forth to achieve the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence, ECHD is now receiving great reviews from the LAFCo once publicly criticizing it, and positive response from the media and community at large. ■

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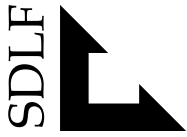
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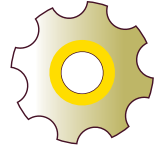
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The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) is an independent, non-profit organization formed to promote good governance and best practices among California's special districts through certification, accreditation and other recognition programs. The SDLF and its activities are supported through the California Special Districts Association and Special District Risk Management Authority.

Advanced sustainability [continued from page 29]

Resources to Learn More

The Institute for Local Government offers free, online resources to help local officials and others learn more about options to consider to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

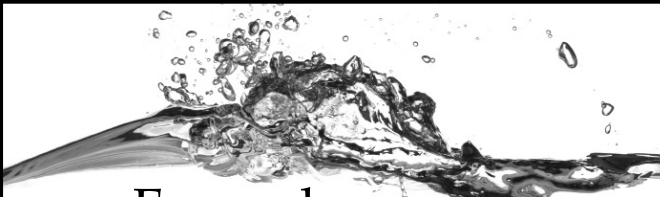
- The “Sustainability Best Practices Framework” offers options for local action in ten areas. They are drawn from practical experiences of local agencies throughout California. The options vary in complexity and are adaptable to fit the unique needs and circumstances of individual agencies. www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability-best-practices-framework
- Information about the Beacon Award program, including participating cities and counties and accomplishments of award winners. www.ca-ilg.org/BeaconAward
- Celebrating Local Leadership in Sustainability highlights to efforts of Beacon participants in one

document. www.ca-ilg.org/post/celebrating-local-leadership-sustainability-1

- The Institute’s Sustainable Communities Learning Network provides opportunities for local agency officials to learn, share, connect and lead. The Network’s LinkedIn group offers links to peers to exchange ideas and pose questions. www.ca-ilg.org/SCLN
- The Sustainable Communities Resource Centers offer information about financing sustainability, SB 375, commercial recycling, green fleets, creating safe walking and biking communities, and sustainable economic development. ■

www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability-resource-centers


1. The Beacon Award program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC – www.californiaeec.org). SEEC is a partnership between three statewide non-profit organizations (including the Institute for Local Government) and California’s four investor owned utilities.



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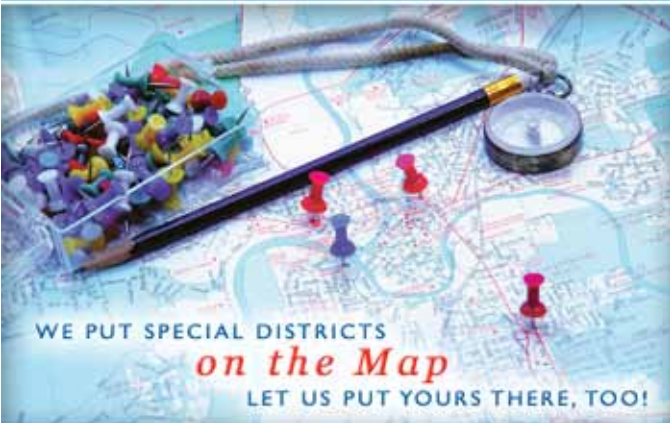
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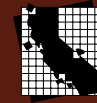
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Safety awards and legal update

SDRMA held its Fall Safety/Claims Education Day in conjunction with the 2013 CSDA Annual Conference in Monterey. SDRMA Board President David Aranda and CEO Greg Hall welcomed attendees to the SDRMA sponsored full plated breakfast and introduced the current SDRMA board members along with new 2014 director-elect Mike Scheafer. President Aranda and Chief Risk Officer Dennis Timoney presented the Annual Safety Awards to the following SDRMA members:

EARL F. SAYRE EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY AWARD – PROPERTY/LIABILITY PROGRAM

- **Santa Ynez Community Services District - Small Member Category**
Accepting Award - Wendy Berry, Secretary/Treasurer
- **Squaw Valley Public Service District - Large Member Category**
Accepting Award - Mike Geary, General Manager



MCMURCHIE EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY AWARD – WORKERS’ COMPENSATION PROGRAM

- **Pomerado Cemetery District - Small Member Category**
Accepting Award - Linda Robison, General Manager
- **Olivenhain Municipal Water District - Large Member Category**
Accepting Award - Christy Guerin, Board of Directors Vice President



Following the awards presentation, Charles Marshall gave the morning Keynote presentation “The Character Question – How Character Impacts Business and Community”. SDRMA also sponsored four individual training sessions on Wednesday.

SDRMA’s upcoming Spring Safety/Claims Education Day is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at the Hilton Sacramento Arden West Hotel. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Legal Update

AB 218, which takes effect July 1, 2014, adds Section 432.9 to the Labor Code. The new legislation will prohibit a state or local agency from asking an applicant to disclose information regarding a criminal conviction, except in specified situations such as criminal justice positions or jobs that legally require a criminal



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background check, until the agency has determined the applicant meets the minimum employment qualifications for the position. The law provides that the minimum qualifications are those that are stated in any notice for the position. This changes current law which allows both public and private employers to ask an applicant for employment to disclose information concerning a conviction. Public employers should review job applications and hiring practices to ensure compliance.

Section 432.9 states:

- (a) A state or local agency shall not ask an applicant for employment to disclose, orally or in writing, information concerning the conviction history of the applicant, including any inquiry about conviction history on any employment application, until the agency has determined the applicant meets the minimum employment qualifications, as stated in any notice issued for the position.
- (b) This section shall not apply to a position for which a state or local agency is otherwise required by law to conduct a conviction history background check, to any position within a criminal justice agency, as that term is defined in Section 13101 of the Penal Code, or to any individual working on a temporary or permanent basis for a criminal justice agency on a contract basis or on loan from another governmental entity.

- (c) This section shall not be construed to prevent a state or local agency from conducting a conviction history background check after complying with all of the provisions of subdivision (a).
- (d) As used in this section, "state agency" means any state office, officer, department, division, bureau, board, commission, or agency.
- (e) As used in this section, "local agency" means any county, city, city and county, including a charter city or county, or any special district.
- (f) Section 433 does not apply to this section.
- (g) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2014.

Public Entities – Immunity for Natural Conditions

Meddock v. County of Yolo

California Third District Court of Appeal (October 4, 2013)

There are certain sections of the Government Code that provide immunities to public entities as a matter of public policy. This case considered the extent of immunity for natural conditions under Government Code § 831.2.

On March 21, 2009, plaintiff Dwight Meddock was on a paved parking lot in a park along the Sacramento River. He was there to go boating. Trees lined the river and many of those trees leaned away from the river and over the parking lot - some of the trees were diseased. While in the parking lot, one of the diseased trees fell on him.

Meddock sued the County of Yolo for personal injuries. In its Answer to the Complaint, the County pled Section 831.2 as an affirmative defense. The provision states, in full: "[n]either a public entity nor a public employee is liable for an injury caused by a natural condition of any unimproved public property, including but not limited to any natural condition of any lake, stream, bay river or beach." The County moved for summary judgment based on Section 831.2, and the trial court granted it. Meddock appealed.

The Court's ruling turned upon the meaning of Section 831.2. Meddock argued that for the immunity to apply, the injury must also occur on unimproved property. Because his injury occurred on improved property (the paved parking lot) Meddock argued that Section 831.2 was inapplicable.

The Third District Court of Appeal firmly rejected this argument. "Because Meddock's injuries were caused by decaying trees located on unimproved property, the County is immune from liability." In reaching this conclusion, the appellate court meticulously reviewed (1) the rules for statutory construction; (2) the history of Section 831.2 immunity; (3) appellate and Supreme Court precedent; and (4) the public policy for public land-related immunities. All supported the Court's ruling.

Comment

When a provision contains straightforward language -- such as "an injury caused by a natural condition" -- a party cannot read his/her own meaning into it. The opinion also affirms the scope of Section 831.2 immunity. As long as the injury is caused by a natural condition of unimproved property, regardless of where the injury occurs, immunity will apply. © 2013 Low, Ball & Lynch, October 17, 2013

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of SDRMA we would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season. ♡

Changes in conflict of interest laws and regulations

By Ruthann Ziegler, Meyers Nave

There are two key areas of changes, effective January 1, 2014, in California conflict of interest laws and regulations: first, Assembly Bill 1090 grants authority to the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) as to conflicts of interest under Government Code sections 1090 et seq. and, second, new regulations, adopted by the FPPC, affect when travel payments are reportable as gifts by the FPPC.

AB 1090

Effective January 1, 2014, California's Fair Political Practices Commission ("FPPC") will be able to provide advice to public officials and employees about Government Code Sections 1090 et seq. ("Section 1090"), the prohibition on self-dealing in making a contract. In addition, the FPPC will for the first time be able to seek civil and administrative fines for violations of Section 1090.

Section 1090 prohibits a public official or employee from participating in the process by which a contract is developed, negotiated, or executed, if the public official or employee has a financial interest in that contract, as defined in Section 1090. Prior to passage of the new legislation, Section 1090 was exclusively a criminal prohibition that could be prosecuted as a felony by a local district attorney or the Attorney General. Conviction of a 1090 violation could be punished by being sentenced to prison and being barred from holding public office.

The FPPC, created by the Political Reform Act to enforce that law's extensive ethics rules, has never had authority to enforce or provide advice about Section 1090. Now, public officials and employees may seek

advice or opinions from the FPPC about potential future violations of Section 1090, whether by phone or in writing. The advice or opinions can only relate to future, not prior, conduct. The FPPC must first give the Attorney General and the local district attorney the opportunity to provide feedback before the FPPC can provide formal, written advice or opinions on potential violations.

In addition to providing advice, the FPPC may for the first time enforce Section 1090 through administrative and civil fines. To pursue an investigation or to seek fines under Section 1090, the FPPC must first receive written authorization from the district attorney in the county where an alleged violation took place.

Overall, the new law will allow the FPPC to be a more comprehensive "one-stop shop" for public officials and employees with questions about California's ethics rules.

New Gift and Travel Regulations

The FPPC has restructured its existing regulations as to when payments for travel are considered gifts and must be reported by public officials and designated public employees. The FPPC recognizes that travel, when provided by a governmental agency or certain other specified entities, is not a gift. (Government Code section 89506(a), 2 CCR 18950 (c) (2).) However, payments for travel from other sources may be gifts, subject to gift limits and reporting. This can also include when those other sources provide funds to the public agency which, in turn, funds the public official's travel.

FPPC regulations make clear that the term "travel" includes not only actual transportation, but also lodging,





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food, and other expenses related to the travel. (2 CCR 18950 (a).) The general rule is that a payment for travel is a gift, which must be reported. (2 CCR 18950.) There are, however, several key exceptions to this rule.

Travel in connection with a bona fide business

Payment for travel in connection with a bona fide business of the public official or designated public employee is not considered a

gift and, therefore, does not have to be reported as long as the payment meets two other conditions. First, the payment must meet the criteria for federal income tax deduction for business expenses, as specified in the Internal Revenue Code and, second, the predominant activity of the business, trade or profession cannot be speech making. (2 CCR 18950.2.) (Note; There is a separate regulation governing speech making, discussed below.) Thus, when an official's employer pays for the official's work-related travel, that payment is not a gift and is not reportable.

Travel in connection with official agency business

A travel payment is not a gift, subject to the gift limit or to reporting by the public official, if the payment meets each of the following six elements:

- The payment must be made directly to the public agency, and not to the official or employee who will be using the travel payment.
- The payment must be used for official agency business, as defined by the FPPC.
- The agency must decide which official or employee will use the travel payment.
- The payment cannot provide any personal benefit to the official or employee using the payment.
- The duration of the travel is limited to that needed to accomplish the purpose of the public agency (i.e., no extra days before or after the event).

continued on page 44

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**Desert Recreation District
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**Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District
 Building Construction - \$1,500,000**

**Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District
 Furnishings & Fixtures - \$300,000**

**Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District
 Counterparty Services - \$29,610,000**

**Saratoga Fire Protection District
 Refinancing - \$2,100,000**

**Twain Harte Community Services District
 Fire Truck - \$363,732**

**Valley Center Cemetery
 Land Improvements - \$85,000**

**Yuima Municipal Water District
 Pump Station - \$900,000**

Dia de los Muertos

Palm Springs Cemetery District



Kathleen Jurasky
General Manager

There are many ways to honor the memories of loved ones and Palm Springs Cemetery District (PSCD) began a new tradition this year to help pay tribute to those who have passed. This year the district launched its first Dia de los Muertos celebration. Dia de los Muertos – or Day of the Dead – is celebrated widely throughout Mexico and other parts of the world. The festivities included many aspects of traditional Day of the Dead celebrations and offered residents a new way to come together to pay homage to those no longer with us.

California Special District asked PSCD General Manager Kathleen Jurasky to explain what the Dia de los Muertos celebration was and why the district felt it would be a great way to bring the community together.

What is the significance of Dia de los Muertos?

Dia de los Muertos - Day of the Dead - is a culturally rich celebration honoring the memory of loved ones who have passed. This tradition is celebrated throughout Mexico and around the world, where families and friends gather to pay tribute to, and remember those who have died.

What prompted Palm Springs Cemetery District to participate in a celebration of Dia de los Muertos?

The Palm Springs Art Museum has, for several years, hosted this celebration and has done so wonderfully. However, for more than eight years I have wanted to create an annual celebration for the community at-large on a more grassroots level.



Palm Springs Cemetery District

Established: 1917
Size: 504 sq. miles
Population: 153,771
Budget: \$922,262

Location: Welwood Murray Cemetery started in 1894 and is a historic landmark Desert Memorial Park, Cathedral City ~ District office is located here
Website: www.pscemetery.com

What activities took place at the festival?

As a welcome to everyone entering the cemetery, we had both sides of the entrance lined with “flor de Muerto” Marigolds, which is the traditional flower for Dia de los Muertos ~ Day of the Dead.

The stage area at the cemetery, the areas around the stage and all the vendor booths were colorfully decorated with festive papel picado ~ paper banners.

We provided a community altar for anyone to place a remembrance to a beloved person whom they wished to commemorate.

There were also altars in memory of Frank Sinatra and Frieda Kahlo; arts and crafts for children, where they could make luminaries out of empty tennis ball cans, paper flowers and paint and color; free haircuts and face painting. During the celebration, a mariachi band, Banda Gardenia, and Mariachi Nuevo Almanecer played and dancers from the local community college and high school performed. Food, merchandise and informational vendors were also on site.

We partnered with the Palm Springs Unified School District for the 1st Annual Dia de los Muertos Student Art Contest for Middle School and High School students. Cash prizes were awarded to the first, second and third place winners from both grade levels. A booth was provided to display the artwork of the contest winners, as well as the artwork that received honorable mentions.

The district intended this event to promote



education, awareness, understanding and community building. How did this event accomplish those things?

Over 3,000 attendees at the celebration represented the district’s culturally diverse population. Several guests stated that it was their first time attending such an event and that they were glad they came. They also were going to share their experience with others and look forward to next year’s event.

Some of the regular visitors to the cemetery were excited about and pleased with the event. They expressed how grateful they were and offered to help any way they could for next year.

All comments regarding the event were overwhelmingly positive, and the most asked question was: “Are you going to do it again next year?”

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the team, all of our event sponsors and dedicated volunteers!

What are other innovative ways Palm Springs Cemetery District reaches out to the community?

PSCD is a Chamber of Commerce member with all of the Chambers in our district; I attend numerous chamber events and have given power point presentations at their meetings covering the district’s history, operation, and our strategic planning and goals. I also give the same presentation to local service organizations, government and public agencies.

The district accumulates a vast quantity of glass flower

vases and easels that have been placed periodically at gravesites which need to be disposed. Rather than placing these items in our recycling bins, the district has an arrangement with the local florists where they can, on a first come first serve basis, purchase the vases and easels for pennies on the dollar for re-use.

This issue of *California Special District* is our “Green” issue. What green efforts does Palm Springs Cemetery District take part in?

Recently, PSCD removed grass and annual flowers from its two surrounding curbsides at Desert Memorial Park. That is a combined total of 1,750 feet of curbside. The turf was replaced with desert-friendly plants, a drip irrigation system, decomposed granite and large boulders. The goal was to reduce the district’s water consumption at the park. We have received many wonderful compliments on the updated landscaping.

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Money matters [continued from page 39]

- The agency must publicly report the payment on FPPC Form 801, which essentially provides details of who, when, where, source, what and how much.

A common example of this situation is when a company wants to demonstrate a new product or process to a public agency in the hope that the agency will purchase the product or process from the company. The travel payment, if it meets all of the above requirements, would not have to be reported as a gift by the individual who traveled but would have to be reported by the agency on Form 801.

Travel in connection with a campaign committee

Payment to an official, who is a candidate, in connection with the candidate's campaign activities is a contribution, rather than a gift, to that official's campaign committee. Furthermore, any payment to an official at the behest of a campaign committee for the official's travel must be reported by that committee under applicable law, whether state (if a state campaign) or federal (if a federal campaign) law. (2 CCR 18950.3, formerly 18950.4.)

Travel in connection with giving a speech or other presentation

When a public official gives a speech, participates in a panel, or is otherwise making a "substantive formal presentation" at a seminar or similar event, the costs of admission (if provided by the event's organizer) and food is not a gift subject to the FPPC gift limits. But, the public official still has to report the payment. (See Government Code section 85906; 2 CCR 18942, 2 CCR 18950.)

The FPPC's goal in adopting these new provisions, which both restructure and expand pre-existing FPPC regulations concerning travel, was to clarify and streamline existing regulations. Public officials and designated employees may have differing opinions as to whether the new regulations meet that goal. However, there is probably clear agreement that the rules must be reviewed carefully as to travel payments to avoid any missteps. ■

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CSDA news [continued from page 11]

conference highlights



The conference mobile app was sponsored by the California Special Districts Alliance. CSDA staff was also on hand to show attendees how to interact with CSDA on Facebook and Twitter.

CSDA's Award Luncheon was sponsored by the Special District Leadership Foundation. Attendees were able to gather to celebrate the best of special districts with awards including: The Hollingsworth Award of Excellence, Board President of the Year, General Manager of the Year and Staff Member of the Year.

Wednesday afternoon included more breakout sessions for board members/trustees and staff including an expert panel gathered by CSDA Finance Corporation regarding "Reserves: Prudent Measures to Assure the Long-Term Solvency of Your District."

The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF), an independent, non-profit 501c3 organization formed to promote good governance and best practices among

California's special districts through certification, accreditation and other recognition sponsored the "Taste of the City" event on Wednesday night at the Museum of Monterey. This evening of local food and wine sampling and entertainment featured a silent auction featuring fabulous California hotel getaways and a wine raffle. The wine raffle included 35 bottles of wine donated by SDRMA, SDLF and CSDA board members. The "Taste of the City" silent auction and wine raffle raised over \$5,000 this year. All of the money raised will fund scholarships available through the Special District Leadership Foundation. Watch your CSDA e-News for information on how to apply.

Thursday included more education opportunities, including the Chapter Roundtable and a closing brunch, sponsored by the CSDA Finance Corporation: "Legislative Roundup: What 2013 in the Capitol Means for Your District in 2014." Ralph Heim of Public Policy Advocates joined CSDA lobbyists Kyle Packham, Dorothy Holzem and Christina Lokke as they provided attendees with the most up-to-date information on the outcome of the biggest state budget and legislative issues impacting special districts in 2013.

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend next year's CSDA Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase, September 29 – October 2 in Palm Springs! ■

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In brief [continued from page 17]

East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan Update

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) just completed a two-year update of its Master Plan, which will serve as the park district's guiding principles for the next decade. EBPRD manages regional parks in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, a 1,400 square mile area with 2.6 million residents forming the eastern shoreline of the San Francisco Bay. The Master Plan defines the district's mission and vision and contains policies and guidelines for achieving the highest standards of service in resource conservation, management, interpretation, public access and recreation while maintaining a careful balance between protection and conservation of resources and opportunities for recreational access. The district's first master plan was approved in 1973. The Master Plan is revised and updated periodically to reflect new circumstances to which the district must respond. The document was prepared with extensive public participation and the oversight of the Parks Advisory Committee. The update retained the essence of the 1997 Mater Plan while focusing on specific high priority issues determined through public, staff and board surveys, meetings and workshops, including: affirming the role and identity of the regional parks; responding to changes in demographics; leading the movement for healthy parks, healthy people; climate change; and developing productive partnerships. More information about the unique strategy used for the Master Plan update can be found at <http://www.ebparks.org/planning/mp>.

More Than \$2 million for Watershed Improvements

The Santa Clara Valley Water District opened a grant application process to award up to \$2.057 million in funds to implement projects that will improve the health of local watersheds. Cities, the county, open space districts, non-profit organizations and schools are all encouraged to submit project proposals, which are due in late November. This is the first cycle of grant funding from the voter-approved Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program, approved by voters in 2012. This cycle funds grants in three categories: pollution prevention, volunteer cleanup efforts and education, and restoration of wildlife habitat. For this round of funding, the water district board chose priority themes for each of the three categories, based on input solicited from community members. The three priority themes in the pollution prevention category for this grant cycle are to increase the permeability of urban areas—which reduces runoff into streams, to increase trash free areas around creeks, and to prevent medications and other pollutants from entering our waterways. The priority themes for volunteer cleanup efforts and education category are education and outreach related to the three pollution prevention themes. The grants for restoring wildlife habitat will focus on four priority themes: to restore and protect riparian corridors, to protect or improve habitat of special status species, to restore tidal habitat, and to emphasize projects with ecosystem/watershed-scale benefits.

During the 15-year life of the Safe, Clean Water Program, the district expects to distribute nearly \$35 million in grants, partnerships and rebate programs. Every year, one grant program or another will be available, including future grant cycles that will prioritize access to new trails. ■

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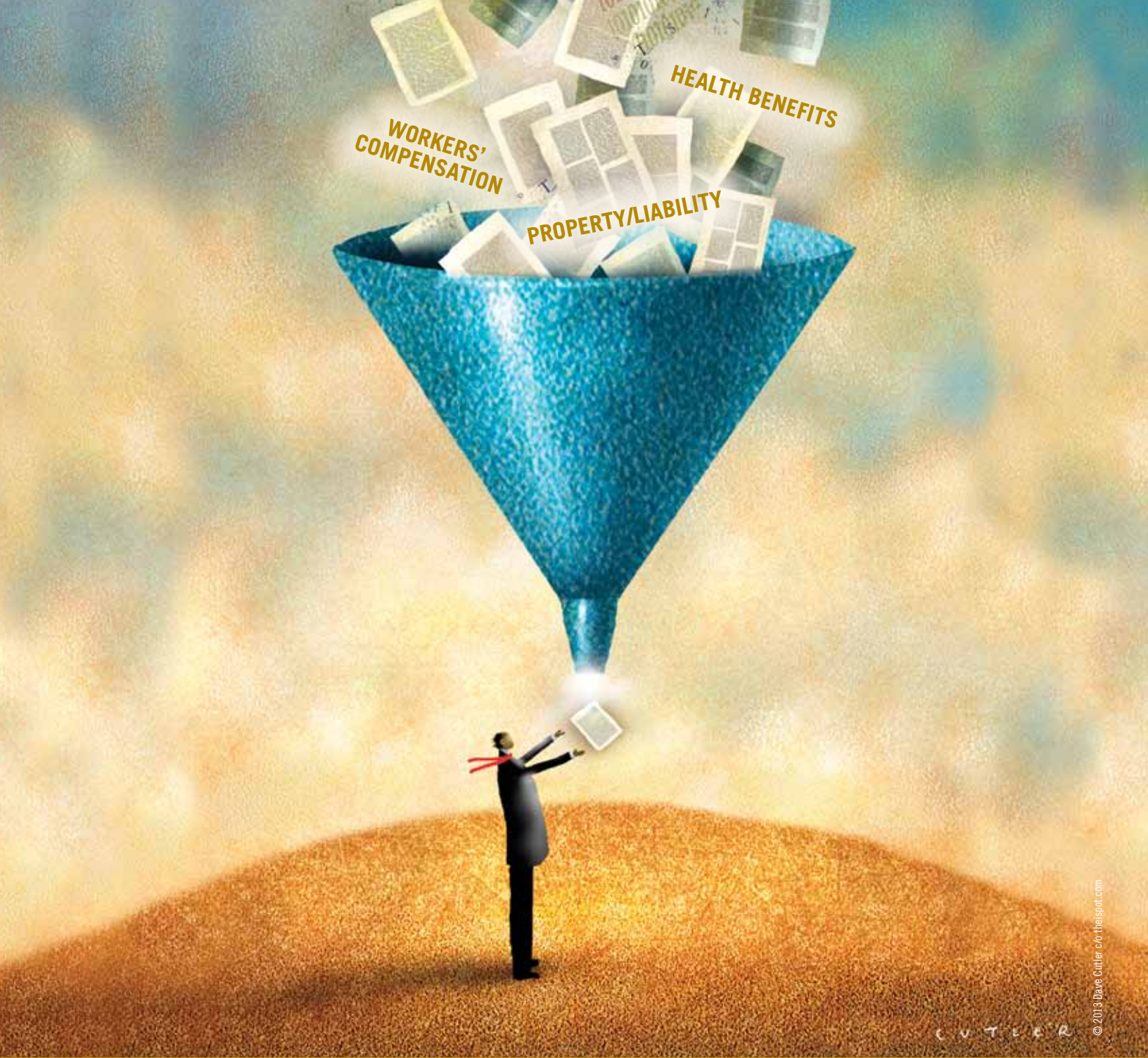


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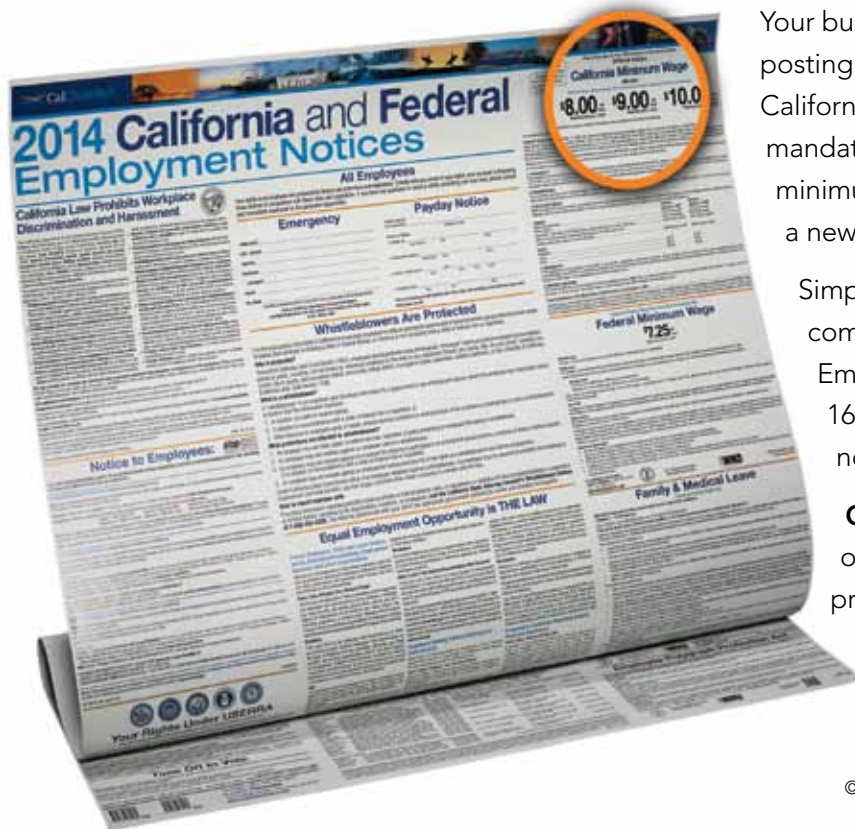


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