

• External Affairs Activity Report**Summary**

This report discusses significant activities in which External Affairs was involved during June 2004

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Highlights

- Community outreach, coordination with Member Agencies and media relations efforts contributed to a successful repair of the Rialto feeder through increased awareness of the need to conserve water within the impacted area. Press office staff held press conferences, issued press releases and advisories to secure news coverage of the repair work. News coverage included multiple stories in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Inland Valley (Ontario) Daily Bulletin*, radio stations and several television stations. Staff also designed and paid for advertising to further promote conservation, and then published “thank you” advertisements after repairs were completed. “Thank you” public service announcements featuring the chief executive officer were produced and issued to television stations.
- MWD completed, as a pilot project, its first-ever Los Angeles Children’s Water & Energy Festival at the West Los Angeles College campus. There were 26 exhibitors who made stage presentations and prepared hands-on activities for nearly 1,000 fourth-graders from 15 Los Angeles Unified School District schools. Partners included Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, The Gas Co. and West LA College. Other sponsors were Farmers Insurance and Helms Bakery.
- The latest edition of Straight from the Tap was mailed to statewide cable outlets, directors and Member Agency managers. Titled “Heritage Gardening for Today,” the episode teaches viewers how to effectively plan for a California native garden. Featured are three different residential landscape models; experts from Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, Tree of Life Nursery, Toyon Design and Armstrong Centers provide practical step-by-step advice; and Adán Ortega, Jr. highlights Metropolitan’s outdoor conservation campaign efforts. External Affairs is receiving a steady stream of positive calls in response to this episode.
- Staff, in collaboration with member agencies, communicated the value of outdoor water conservation through landscaping with native and California Friendly plants during community and media events organized to celebrate the grand opening of two City Makeover gardens in Oceanside and Rancho Cucamonga. The events garnered positive media coverage in local outlets, including the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, *North County Times*, *Claremont Courier* and *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*. Metropolitan received awards of commendation from both cities and positive remarks from community groups including the Buena Vista Audubon Society, Buena Vista Native Plant Society, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, and the Inland Empire Master Gardener Club.
- Staff worked with Water System Operations to hold a ceremony marking the opening of the North Hills hiking and horseback riding trail at Diamond Valley Lake. The ceremony featured remarks from the CEO and board chairman, locally elected officials and representatives from the management committee for the local land reserve.
- The 2002-03 annual financial report was recognized as the best report by a water and power utility by the League of American Communications Professionals. The report received the Platinum Award and was lauded for its message clarity, accessibility of information, front cover creativity, report narrative and financials.

Media, Outdoor Conservation Outreach, Publications, Web, Video

- Staff managed news inquiries on the release of the state audit of MWD. Coverage included an Associated Press wire story. Staff assisted with communicating the audit results to employees, including posting the complete audit and related documents on both the external and internal Web sites.

- Staff designed and produced, in collaboration with Water Quality, MWD's annual Consumer Confidence Report. The report featured a special section on what consumers can do improve water quality at home. The report was also printed in Spanish, and Asian language versions were to be posted on the mwdh2o.com Web site.
- Staff managed various other news media inquiries, including a taste-and-smell situation involving the Jensen plant.
- Staff wrote and issued several press releases, including one announcing the appointment of Deni Elliott as ethics officer.
- Staff produced a video highlighting the recent Solar Cup event to be used for sponsorship solicitation efforts.
- Staff produced Spanish versions of the district's fact sheet.
- Staff arranged for MWD staff and a winning student team from the 2004 Solar Cup competition to appear on the "Straight Talk" cable television show in Long Beach.
- Staff responded to dozens of viewer calls in response to Straight from the Tap episodes on Diamond Valley Lake fishing and Heritage Gardening. Callers were mailed fishing maps and certificates for entrance at DVL, and a native plant CD-Rom and garden journal, respectively.
- There were: 24,400 visitors to Metropolitan's Internet Web site; 10,000 visitors to Bewaterwise.com; 19,500 visitors to DVLake.com; 2,000 visitors to the *People*.Interactive magazine; 1,355 visitors to Aqueduct magazine; 26 visitors to the Member Agency site; 31 visitors to the BOD site; 375 visitors to the Ethics area (majority from MWD internal); and 43 visitors to the Water Quality Reports site.
- Staff updated and distributed the second printing of the DVL rate card.
- Staff updated content on all Web sites, including the intraMet internal site and creating an interface for the new geographic information system programming.
- Staff produced a Lunch Money Series presentation for employees on eliminating clutter from our offices and homes.
- Staff assisted Human Resources to advertise and produce a Lunch Money style demonstration of the new PeopleSoft self-service tools for employees to better manage their benefits and personal information.
- Staff produced and submitted letters to the editor and editorial columns in response to news articles involving issues important to MWD.
- The world's top advertising executives picked one of Metropolitan's 60-second water conservation radio ads as a finalist for the prestigious Clio Award. "All the Things Dave Waters," which chronicles the saga of Southern California's most irresponsible lawn over-waterer, competed for the top prize in the radio category against such heavy-hitters as Anheuser-Busch, Volkswagen and Cherry Coke. (Anheuser-Busch ultimately won for its "Real Men of Genius" series). Nearly 17,000 entries from more than 65 countries were received for the 2004 Clio Awards.
- A total of nearly 28,000 Heritage Garden Guide CD-ROMs and 35,000 Heritage Garden Journals have been distributed to members of the community to date, through member agency, MWD and community events to date.

Community Outreach, Education and Customer Service

- Staff continued to assist WRM by coordinating the arrangements for CALFED South Delta Improvements Package briefings. Tim Quinn spoke at the Riverside County Water Symposium on June 23 and the National Association of Industrial Office Properties on June 24.
- Staff assisted WRM with the final IRP Outreach Forum June 24 in Pasadena, with an audience of about 80 people.
- Staff continued to assist WSO and Real Estate Services with community and government relation's issues regarding the Weymouth Plant ozone project and the Jensen solids handling project, Garvey Reservoir maintenance and Diemer Plant ozone project.
- Metropolitan participated in community events/professional association meetings with the following organizations: Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce; Dolphin Rents; Ornelas Graphics; Southern California

Water Committee; The Dr. Wilderness Show; Torrance Cultural Arts Center Foundation; and West Los Angeles College.

- The 2004-05 Community Partnering Program was approved at the June board meeting with 139 applicants qualified for sponsorships. Staff began notifying all applicants.
- Staff provided training to 158 K-5 teachers from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties.
- Staff conducted the DVL education program for 170 kindergarten, fifth- and sixth-grade students from the Perris and Lake Elsinore school districts.
- Staff conducted “Know Your Water” programs for students at Eastwood School (LAUSD) and Our Lady of Victory elementary school; a water quality workshop to 12 Los Angeles High School teachers; and the “H2O show” to Washington O.H. Elementary School (Redondo Beach).
- Staff conducted Colorado River Aqueduct trips for Director DeJesus, the CEO with the Palo Verde Irrigation District Ad Hoc Committee and the Women for Agriculture organization; and State Water Project trips for directors Dick, Mejia, Loveland and Turner, and for the Orange County grand jury. An inspection trip for employees focused on the Inland Feeder and other infrastructure projects as well as conservation efforts.
- Staff hosted Inland Empire school districts principals, administrators and superintendents in a presentation of the programs available at DVL and with Western and Eastern MWD. Included was a brainstorming session on environmental education and industry partnerships that can foster more support for education in the region.
- Staff held a recognition reception for the 15 dedicated docents who interacted and taught the more than 3,000 young people in the education program this school year.
- Staff conducted business outreach networking efforts by attending events and meetings with various organizations and representatives including: the Minority Business Development Administration, the 100 Blackmen of Orange County, the EWomen Network, the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, the California African American Summit, the Alliance West Business Expo, and the Montebello Chamber of Commerce.
- At DVL, there were 1,756 visitors to the Visitor Center and 1,456 visitors to the Clayton Record Viewpoint.

Legislation and Government Relations

(Complete and updated reports for Sacramento and Washington, D.C., are given orally during the Communications, Outreach and Legislation Committee).

Federal

- Both houses of Congress are focused on trying to assemble appropriations bills in an attempt to complete action on spending bills before the August recess, which will last about 30 days.

State

- During the weeks of June 14 and June 21, Kathy Cole met with members of the Senate Local Government Committee to register Metropolitan’s opposition to AB 3084 (Horton) – a bill that seeks to limit Metropolitan’s ability to contract for services. Metropolitan is opposed because the bill would single out Metropolitan and impose contracting restrictions that are not imposed on other local government entities, would effectively stop the district’s ability to contract for services associated with peak workloads and would undermine Metropolitan’s successful and well-respected small business outreach program. Assemblyman Horton requested that the hearing on the bill be postponed until June 30.
- On June 22, Kathy Cole testified in support of SB 1155 (Machado) in its new form as amended during the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee hearing. While Metropolitan opposed several prior versions of the measure due to concerns regarding the bill’s attempts to slow the conveyance portion of the CALFED program in favor of making water quality improvements first, Metropolitan – in coordination with the Association of California Water Agencies – struck an agreement with the Senator to amend the bill in a manner that removed the opposition of Metropolitan, ACWA and several other export interests. Specifically, the bill now requires the Director of DWR, in collaboration with the Secretary of Interior, to develop a plan to meet the existing permit and license conditions for which the department has an obligation as described in the State Water Resources Control Board Decision No. 1641.

- On June 22, Kathy Cole testified before the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee in opposition to SB 1374 (Machado) – a bill which Metropolitan believes would harm the water transfer market by requiring the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to establish a duplicative process for the consideration of water transfer agreements and their impacts on third parties. Moreover, the bill effectively presumes that third-party impacts will be negative and requires SWCRB consideration of any claim of a third-party impact and of county recommendations – yet does not establish an evidentiary standard for the SWRCB's consideration of these recommendations or direction as to how the board is to handle such recommendations. The bill failed passage in committee.

Regional

- On June 3, Ron Gastelum was the keynote speaker at the Building Industry Association of Southern California's annual "water summit," where he spoke to about 30 homebuilding executives about Metropolitan's legislative agenda and business plan. Additionally, Tim Blair and Charles Gale, Jr., presented Metropolitan's conservation program. As a result, the BIA of Southern California endorsed Metropolitan's pilot programs: "California Friendly" Landscape Rebate Program for New Homes and the "California Friendly" Model Home Make-over Program. Also, eight new homebuilders, including Pulte Homes, Centex Homes and DR Horton expressed interest in Metropolitan's enhanced conservation programs.
- From June 9 to 11, staff coordinated and conducted a three-day inspection of Southern California water facilities for the International Boundary and Water Commission. Newly appointed U.S. Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran, his deputy commissioner, Carlos Marin, and Mexican Commissioner J. Arturo Herrera and engineer F. Antonio Sandoval, representing the state water commission of Baja California, toured the Mills Filtration and Hinds Pumping plants, Diamond Valley Lake and Metropolitan's Headquarters with Vice President Dennis Underwood. The group also met with city of Corona officials and toured the Corona Department of Water and Power's Temescal Basin Desalting Facility.
- On June 10, staff coordinated a visit by Brigadier General Joseph Schroedel, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Pacific Division, and his guest Deputy Commander Colonel Leonardo Flor, and from the Los Angeles District, Deputy Engineer Brian Moore. They were briefed about Metropolitan's resource portfolios on both the State Water Project and the Colorado River. They also toured the Inland Feeder site and Diamond Valley Lake, where they met with the IBWC group. Later, the combined group, along with Bob Johnson, regional director for the Bureau of Reclamation, met with Metropolitan General Counsel Jeff Kightlinger and Vice President Dennis Underwood to discuss Colorado River resource efforts.
- On June 11, MWD co-sponsored the United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley's annual "small business awards" breakfast. About 400 representatives from 26 chambers as well as 10 state and local elected officials attended the event. Metropolitan promoted its small business outreach program.
- June 15 to 17, staff attended the 42nd annual Pacific Coast Builders conference and discussed several of Metropolitan's conservation programs with Southern California homebuilders and their staff. Furthermore, staff members met with several vendors during the conference to discuss the promotion and implementation of new water conservation devices--such as dual-flush toilets and improved water circulation pumps.
- On June 16, the Valley Industry and Commerce Association honored six outstanding businesses that have made significant contributions to the business community. Metropolitan's small business outreach program was one of the top three finalists in the "outstanding large business" category.
- From June 23 to 25, staff conducted a third annual Colorado River Water Users' workshop and inspection trip for the Palo Verde Ad Hoc Capital Improvement Programs scope committee. Participants toured Metropolitan's Whitsett Intake, Copper Basin and Diamond Valley Lake facilities as well as Long Beach, Inland Empire Utilities and Orange County Water District facilities. They also met and discussed transfer agreement issues and Metropolitan policy objectives with Mr. Underwood and Mr. Gastelum.
- From June 25 to 27, staff conducted a three-day tour and workshop for the California Women for Agriculture. Participants met with Coachella Valley Water District General Manager Steve Robbins and Ed Smith, general manager of the Palo Verde Irrigation District, and toured Hinds pumping plant, Mills Filtration plant, Diamond Valley Lake and Eastern Municipal Water District's Perris Valley Reclamation Facility.