

• External Affairs Activity Report

Summary

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

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Highlights

- The *Los Angeles Times* published a favorable feature article on Metropolitan's flavor profile panel. The story led to a live interview of Water Quality chemist Peggy Moylan with Los Angeles morning radio host Jonathan Brandmeier about Peggy's duties as a member of the panel that tastes and tests MWD's treated water.
- Staff responded to articles in the *Los Angeles Times* and *San Diego Union Tribune* regarding Metropolitan policies and oversight of professional services contracts for public and community affairs. A letter to the editor from the CEO appeared in the *Union-Tribune*.
- More than 60 representatives from the native plant and environmental communities, water agencies, and the nursery and landscaping industries attended Heritage Landscape Forum IV, held at Metropolitan on Aug. 3. Attendees discussed changes and improvements to Metropolitan's City Makeover program.
- The vice president of External Affairs was featured in a Fox 11 (KTTV) newscast about a water-efficient garden demonstration in the City of Santa Monica. The "Garden Garden" project was a City Makeover Program recipient.
- The outdoor conservation advertising campaign launched region wide on Aug. 23 and will extend through November 2004 with radio and Web site banner advertisements, along with highlights of the watering index on San Diego area television stations.
- A 10-minute interview with CEO Ron Gastelum and television journalist David Garcia about water reliability and conservation issues was the topic of a special Straight from the Tap segment. Together with the "Heritage Gardening for Today" episode, this half-hour program will air for six weeks on participating stations.
- Staff assisted Water System Operations with outreach to affected residents and businesses on the Orange County Feeder repair project in Costa Mesa and the West Valley Feeder No. 1 repair.
- Staff produced and began distribution to member agencies a colorful, informative brochure – "Water Wise Living" – full of helpful water conservation tips for inside and outside the home.
- Metropolitan received "statement of interests" from Southern California homebuilders for the region-wide model home pilot program. Interested homebuilders within the Inland Empire Utilities Agency include Lennar Homes, John Laing Homes, K. Hovnanian of California and Shea Homes. Under the model home program, Metropolitan and member agencies encourage homebuilders to design and implement "California Friendly" landscapes and figures into model homes and market "California Friendly" water efficiency upgrades to homebuyers.
- Staff received the Outstanding Diversity Outreach Award from the California Black Chamber of Commerce for Metropolitan's efforts to reach out to minority businesses for opportunities at the district.

Media, Outdoor Conservation Outreach, Publications, Web, Video

- Staff wrote and distributed a press release announcing Community Partnering Program recipients in San Diego County. Executive Vice President Gilbert Ivey attended the presentation ceremony.
- Staff met with officials at Armstrong Garden Centers, Home Depot, OSH and Lowe's about showcasing native and California Friendly plants in Southern California stores beginning in October. Armstrong has signed on as a partner and will feature the plants as well as our Web site and logo in their in-store signage; talks continue with the others.

- Staff presented conservation advertising campaign overviews to Municipal Water District of Orange County and its sub-agencies, and the city of San Diego.
- Staff met with representatives from the Irrigation Association and the California Landscape Contractors Association regarding conservation campaign partnerships.
- Staff worked with the Anaheim public information office to manage an Associated Press writer's planned story on the artificial turf project in that city.
- Staff wrote and distributed the August issue of the *Metrospectives* newsletter.
- Staff helped coordinate a radio interview in Mandarin Chinese for MWD water quality lab employee Sun Liang. A special phone number was created in Mandarin for listeners to call in and request Metropolitan's water quality brochure "What You've Always Wanted to Know about Your Tapwater." The brochure is available in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Khmer, Korean and Vietnamese.
- Staff provided background material to a staff writer for Southern California Builder magazine about the District's efforts to have homebuilders install California Friendly landscapes and other water-efficiency devices. The article is scheduled to appear in November.
- Staff produced and began distribution of a Spanish-language version of the annual water quality report, or Consumer Confidence Report, as well as Spanish-language versions of the DVL boating rules brochure and Water Wise Living brochure.
- Staff wrote and published the latest Diamond Valley Lake update email newsletter.
- Straight from the Tap will broadcast in San Bernardino in response to a request from the city cable channel to air the series. The latest episode on heritage gardening has generated more than 140 viewer responses.
- Staff fulfilled requests from Western MWD, Inland Empire Utilities Agency and the West Basin and Central Basin municipal water districts for cards and door hangers promoting water saving steps for guests at local hotels and motels.
- Staff wrote and issued a few press releases, including one announcing the board's approval of financial incentives to expand two water recycling projects in Orange County, which was reported by the *Orange County Register* as well as KFWB 980 news radio, and Director W.D. "Bud" Pocklington being named to the board as a representative of the San Diego County Water Authority.
- Staff provided updates to all district Web sites, including a new, more attractive and user-friendly design for Straight from the Tap and other district video projects.
- Staff assisted with an employee presentation on the new self-serve PeopleSoft application.
- There were 18,800 visitors to Metropolitan's Internet Web site, 8,400 visitors to Bewaterwise.com, 19,900 visitors to DVLake.com, 1,770 visitors to the *People.Interactive* magazine, 980 visitors to Aqueduct magazine, 20 visitors to the member agency site, 20 visitors to the BOD site, 25 visitors to the Water Quality Reports site and 170 visitors to the Straight from the Tap site.

Community Outreach, Education and Customer Service

- Staff conducted business outreach networking efforts by attending events and meetings with various organizations and representatives including: Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce, Irvine Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles County Office of Small Business/Supervisor Don Knabe's office, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Orange County, Fullerton Chamber of Commerce, Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, eWomen Network, Women in Business - Los Angeles, Southern California Minority Business Development Council, California Black Chamber of Commerce, Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Administration, Orange County Hispanic Professional Association, Engineering Contractors Association, Riverside Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Women Business Owners - Ventura County, Minority Business Development Agency
- Staff conducted a business outreach matchmaking and certification event at Union Station.
- Outreach staff assisted with preparations for an emergency drill with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department at Diamond Valley Lake.
- There were 1,798 visitors to the DVL Visitor Center and 3,728 visitors to the Clayton Record Viewpoint.

- Staff completed the DVL 2004-2005 Year-End Report detailing the field trips, visit and school-related events centered on the DVL program.
- Staff presented water quality hands-on experiments for the Young Scientists Workshop at Cal State Long Beach.
- Staff presented to the Special Committee on Water Education the World Water Forum, Solar Cup 2005 and the sixth-grade curriculum program “Water Times.”
- Staff managed an inspection trip to Northern California for the Salvadoran American Leadership and Educational Fund.
- Staff organized and attended Western Municipal Water District’s tour of the Mills Ozone facility.
- Staff planned and developed hands-on activities for the Pasadena Museum of History’s “Water History Exhibit,” which is scheduled to open Sept. 4 and run through January 2005.
- Metropolitan participated in community events/professional association with the following organization: Water Education Foundation.
- Distributed more than half of the 2004-05 approved Community Partnering Program sponsorships.
- Staff applied for the Governor’s Environmental Award, submitting Solar Cup 2004 as an outstanding program achievement in environmental education outreach.

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

- Senator Feinstein’s CALFED legislation is in position to move forward in the Senate once Congress returns from its summer recess, September 8. Congress’ biggest job at that time will be on appropriations bills, including those for the interior, energy and water development.
- On July 20, U.S. Representatives Mary Bono (R-Palm Springs) and Grace Napolitano (D-Montebello) initiated a bi-partisan request that Chairman Don Young, House Transportation Committee, include \$2 million in FY05 for the construction of trails at Diamond Valley Lake.

State

- On Aug. 9, Metropolitan Legislative Representative Kathy Cole provided a presentation on water policy and the legislative process to a group of Salvadoran American Leadership and Education Fund (SALEF) program participants. The group’s briefing was organized in coordination with Senator Liz Figueroa’s office.
- On Aug. 19, the Assembly sent AB 2528 (Lowenthal) to the Governor on a 79-0 vote. The measure, which is sponsored by Metropolitan and several member agencies, would clarify existing statutory drinking water quality terminology and would modify and update existing contaminant notification requirements.
- On Aug. 16, the Governor signed the “resources” budget trailer bill, SB 1107, which did not include language authorizing a CALFED user fee. As noted last month, the Legislature’s Budget Conference Committee reversed their prior adoption of trailer bill language for the resources budget trailer bill that would have provided the California Bay Delta Authority with the authority to impose fees on water users to support the CALFED program. Metropolitan – along with many other water user interests – was opposed to such language, which Metropolitan views as an unconstrained “blank check” for the CALFED program. Metropolitan will continue to monitor this issue should there be any attempts to revive such language this year.

Regional

- On July 30, 14 Metropolitan directors, lead by Director Terry Mylne, attended the National Water Resources Association Municipal Caucus Meeting in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico, where the special guest speaker was Mark S. Sanchez, Executive Director of the Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utility Authority.

- On Aug. 30, Metropolitan's legislative unit participated in a joint briefing with Municipal Water District of Orange County for the South Orange County Board of Realtors. About 35 people attended the briefing, which centered on conservation, how MWD is working with the development community and the Integrated Resource Plan.