

● External Affairs October 2005 Activity Report

Summary

In October, the press office handled about three press calls each day on conservation, water quality and other district concerns (61 calls total), and issued two press releases. The education unit conducted 10 inspections trips, reaching up to 400 community members, provided in-service training to 274 teachers and DVL field trips for 279 students. There were 31 presentations to the public or legislative offices by staff from across the group. The district's Web sites received 63,275 hits during the same time.

Detailed Report

Initiatives

Bay/Delta

Much of the group's work in recent weeks has been to promote the South Delta Improvement Program (SDIP) to statewide and regional groups, including legislators, business groups, developers and others with a stake in the region's water supply and our conservation efforts. Two of the noteworthy efforts in this regard are:

- Vice President Timothy Quinn participated on a panel discussing the future of CALFED, coordinated by Metropolitan and moderated by Sacramento Bee editor/writer Tom Philp. The panel also included Tom Birmingham of the Westlands Water District; John Cain of the Natural Heritage Institute; Jon Herrick of the South Delta Water Agency; Joe Grindstaff of CALFED; and Barry Nelson from NRDC. The *Sacramento Bee* and *Stockton Record* newspapers covered the event.
- Chairman Wes Bannister authored an article about the benefits of the SDIP and its effect on homebuilders and developers statewide, which will appear in the November issue of the California Building magazine. The magazine is mailed statewide to about 10,000 building industry professionals.

Community Outreach

Community Outreach highlights for October include:

- Metropolitan was featured in a Flex Your Power congratulatory ad in the Orange County Register on Sunday, October 23, for reducing electricity use by 43% and cutting \$550,000 in energy costs by modifying the piping and four existing large pumps at OC-88.
- As part of the Regional/Small Business outreach efforts, Metropolitan met with its MOU Partners to adopt a plan of action and form subcommittees to explore cooperative outreach and training to better align what partners efforts with the others. Representatives attending from the various Metropolitan MOU partners included: the Small Business Administration, the Small Business Development Center, the Los Angeles Community College District, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Port of Los Angeles, the City of San Diego, San Diego County Water Authority and the California Community College District. The next meeting is scheduled for January 2006.
- Seven directors and staff attended the Southern California Water Committee's 21st Annual Meeting and Dinner honoring Director Emeritus Harold Ball, Assemblywoman Christine Kehoe and former NWRI Executive Director Ronald Linsky. Speaker Art Bagget, Chairman of the State Water Resources Control Board, spoke about the steps SWRCB is taking to address the state's water problems by examining the nexus between water quality and water supply.
- Metropolitan offered sponsored events during the month for groups such as: the City of Beverly Hills, Cucamonga Valley Water District, Science & Technology Education Partnership 6, and the Water Education Foundation.

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Water Quality/Reliability

Metropolitan presented its 1997-98 consumer research on attitudes towards water quality and water utilities, as well as the district's 2001-02 water quality pilot programs in the Hispanic and Asian communities to the ACWA Communications Committee.

Chief Operating Officer Debra Man was interviewed by two newspapers in response to the 2005 Southern California Environmental Report Card released by UCLA's Institute of the Environment. Water reliability in Southern California is among the four issues of environmental concern analyzed in this year's report. The report praises Metropolitan for its conservation efforts but raises questions about the region's future reliability in response to the recent cutbacks in Colorado River supplies. Ms. Man's interviews highlighted Metropolitan's success in implementing its diversified portfolio and promoted our conservation programs, particularly the California Friendly initiative to help ensure long-term reliabilities.

California Friendly

Chairman Bannister authored two stories promoting our California Friendly Model Home Program, for the November issue of the Southern California Builder Magazine and the Building Industry of America Builder Magazine for San Diego County. Both stories will appear in November. The articles are timely because the program will be beginning its 2006 push for participation with Southern California builders and developers. Staff has educated this group about the benefits of the SDIP and these articles reinforce those messages.

Metropolitan discussed the environmental benefits of the "California Friendly" Model Home program at the Building Industry Association of Southern California's Green Building 101 Seminar in Downey and encouraged builders to participate in the program in coordination with their member agency and to visit model homes already developed by home builders in Riverside County – including KBHome, Shea Homes and the Preserve in Chino. Steve Ruffner, Riverside County Division President for KBHome, gave a personal testimonial on the program and illustrated the positive environmental benefits and media exposure that his company has received.

Legislative Outreach

While the Legislature is in session, detailed information about pending legislation will be included in an attached Legislative Matrix, with any changes since the previous month's meeting highlighted in grey. Because the Legislature is not in session, there will be no matrix in November or December.

Chief Operating Officer Debra Man presented Metropolitan's water reliability picture at a community leaders breakfast briefing held in coordination with the legislative offices of state Sen. Nell Soto (D-Pomona) and Assemblyman Joe Baca, Jr. (D- San Bernardino). Director emeritus and Vice Chair of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency Wyatt Troxel introduced Ms. Man and helped with responses during the question and answer session. Senator Soto and Assemblyman Baca each provided comments during the briefing.

Directors Bill Wright and Carol Kwan and Metropolitan staff met with newly elected Assemblyman Ted Lieu (D-El Segundo) to discuss water issues and some of the major legislative issues that were addressed during the 2005 legislative session. Topics included the SDIP, conjunctive use projects in the local groundwater basin, and the many educational and conservation programs that Metropolitan had to offer to his constituents.

Metropolitan's federal initiatives continue to focus on the eventual outcome of the House and Senate Conference Report on Energy and Water Development Appropriations. Directors John Morris, Larry Dick and Jim Edwards promoted the District's legislative agenda, attending various Committee Hearings, meeting with key Members of the Senate and House on a variety of topics, including a detailed policy discussion on Southern California water issues with Reps. Dana Rohrabacher (R-46) and Ed Royce (R-40), as well as with Mark Limbaugh, U.S. Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has agreed to cosponsor S. 1016, the Senate version of the desalination legislation originally introduced by Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fla). Efforts of the California members of the U.S. Desalination Coalition were helpful in this effort.

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Bobbi Becker, Interim Vice President of External Affairs, met with Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-39) to discuss the SDIP and conservation issues.

Dennis Majors provided expert technical testimony in connection with a House Resources Water and Power Subcommittee Hearing to provide Congress with current information about the risks and areas in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River might potentially experience levee failure. Mr. Majors was also asked to comment on specific recommendations for strategies that might be undertaken by state and federal government that could result in minimizing or possibly avoiding disasters in the delta as related to levees.