

● External Affairs November 2005 Activity Report

Summary

In November, the press office averaged about three press calls a day on conservation, water quality and other District concerns (60 calls total), and issued press releases about Dennis Underwood's death, new statewide green building standards, and recreational plans at DVL. Stories appeared after each release. Education and Community Outreach staff conducted inspection trips for three directors, and tours for educators, Department of Water Resources staff, MetVets, Eastern MWD interns and Sacramento Legislative staff. Education staff provided in-service training for 277 teachers and led 11 Diamond Valley Lake field trips for 317 students. The District's Web sites received a combined 69,990 hits during the same time. Twenty-six new cable stations, including three in Northern California and one in Arizona, picked up Straight From the Tap. The show now airs on 120 statewide cable stations, as well as stations in Vail, Colorado and Tampa, Florida. The District also offered \$72,150 in accumulated special events and activities sponsorships covering six counties in our service area.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Initiatives

Bay/Delta

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the draft Environmental Impact Report for the South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP). The release of the draft will begin a formal public process on a plan to improve water quality and protect fish in the southern part of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, while increasing the reliability and amount of water supplies for all Californians. As part of an outreach effort, a new Web site dedicated to information about the South Delta Improvements Program is online and can be found at www.calwaterfuture.org. California's Water Future is a broad coalition of more than 60 statewide water, agricultural, business, planning organizations, and local government officials supporting the upcoming environmental review process for the SDIP, the next step forward in California's long-term plan to better manage the Bay-Delta's water resources and ecosystem. MWD staff assisted in creating this Web site.

In preparation of workshops and hearings scheduled on the SDIP draft EIR, participants from legislative offices, business and community groups are being encouraged to participate as supporters of the program. On December 14, the Department of Water Resources will conduct a workshop in Los Angeles to respond to questions and will follow with a hearing on January 24 to accept comments from the public.

Community Business Outreach

The Education Strategic Plan to assess how to expand the District's message on issues related to California's water science, sources, supply and use; along with distribution systems, water conservation, and stewardship across the region and among different groups of people is currently being developed with input from member agency education coordinators and others. The formal document is circulating for comment with member agency staff and directors. The finalized document will be presented at the Jan. 24 Education and Outreach Committee meeting to obtain additional input from Board members.

The 2006 Solar Cup teams will be presented to the board in January to provide directors a chance to meet student participants. The event falls so late in the school year that teams are out of school and unavailable to meet with the board after the competition.

The Education unit is currently identifying which World Water Forum grant recipients will receive site visits. Metropolitan has invited Rep. Carol Liu (D-La Cañada-Flintridge) to attend a site visit. Staff is currently building

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on a process, initiated with the Long Beach Municipal Water Department, to create better communication about the program among schools, member agencies and Metropolitan.

Staff is currently working with Director Tim Brick, Friends of the United Nations, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the University of Southern California to continue planning of an all-day water issues conference at USC on Feb. 10, 2006.

External Affairs is assisting Water System Operations and Engineering with outreach to cities, residents and businesses affected by capital improvement projects at Weymouth, Diemer, Mills and Skinner water treatment plants. Metropolitan will present the Weymouth Master "Site Plan" to the City of La Verne's Design Review Committee in December. A study workshop with the city planning commission will follow in January. The City of Yorba Linda has requested that Metropolitan hold a community briefing on Jan. 19 to inform residents about construction work at Diemer. External Affairs staff also provided outreach to the community affected by the San Fernando Valley Feeder repair project, and assisted and coordinated with communications and member agency customer service representatives for the emergency repairs to the Santa Ana Valley Pipeline.

Metropolitan held a "Strategies in Procurement" seminar on Nov. 2 at the Diemer facility and a "Strategies in Construction" class in San Diego on Nov. 30. Attendees learned the history of Metropolitan, strategies on bidding public sector procurement, and construction contracts and upcoming opportunities.

Metropolitan received an award Nov. 10 from the Black Business Association during its annual Public Utilities Procurement Conference. This award was given to Metropolitan for its commitment to diversity in contracting, as well as its strong results in keeping the business community informed through its weekly e-newsletter. Accepting the award for Metropolitan were Directors Willard Murray and Isadore Hall.

The Business Outreach Program held its second "Connect 2 Met" outreach seminar on Nov. 16 in Long Beach. The event featured Director Helen Z. Hansen and the City of Long Beach Water Department. The conference included a panel that consisted of a certified public accountant, an attorney, a bonding company, a lender and a representative of the Small Business Administration. About 100 people attended.

Business Outreach presented its soon-to-be released Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE) program on November 10 and 17 at the California State Alliance meetings in Los Angeles and Sacramento. These meetings were hosted by the California Veteran's Affairs Department and were attended by staff from the State of California as well as an advisory board made up of DVBEs. Metropolitan's presentation covered the history and the status of our current small business program and how we would incorporate DVBEs into this program. Metropolitan also touched upon apprenticeship and internship programs that will be launched after the first of the year.

Staff continues to assist WSO, Engineering and Real Estate Services with community and government relations related to the West Valley Feeder, San Diego Pipeline 6, Perris Valley Pipeline and Cross Connection construction work and encroachment on Metropolitan property.

Water Quality/Reliability

On November 11, Director Dan Griset and External Affairs staff attended a meeting in the 68th District Office of Assemblyman Van Tran. Discussions involved SDIP and water supply as well as other issues pertinent to his constituents.

On November 3 and 4, Metropolitan Water District and several member agencies promoted and unveiled the latest on the "California Friendly" Model Home Program to home builders and developers at the 2005 Building Industry Show in Long Beach, California. Metropolitan staff hosted homebuilders and developers for a special educational seminar on Nov. 3 entitled "Building Value Through Today's Conservation Incentive Program." Additionally, Metropolitan and staff from several member agencies provided program information materials on the program to BIS show attendees when they visited the "California Friendly" Programs booth. The California Building Industry Association is partnering with Metropolitan to establish state standards for water-saving goals in its Green Builder Program. A cornerstone of CBIA's voluntary California Green Builder Program will be the use of several California Friendly water-saving features developed by Metropolitan, including landscaping

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featuring smart, sustainable design, plants that are right for the climate, and state-of-the-art irrigation systems. Homebuilders who install the latest water-saving devices and practices will reduce water use in new homes by at least 12 percent, or about 20,000 gallons annually.

External Affairs, in cooperation with Water Resources Management, distributed more than 110 "smart" or weather-based sprinkler controllers via a pilot program organized by Metropolitan in conjunction with Los Angeles Department of Water & Power. Participating DWP customers swapped old controllers for state-of-the-art weather-based irrigation controllers and attended a 20-minute training session on how to install and program the devices. KFWB-AM covered the event, as did the Los Angeles Daily News. The program is important because it will help us assess and encourage market acceptance of these controllers.

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.

Regional

External Affairs attended the League of California Cities, Inland Empire Division's Third Annual James S. Thalman Memorial Public Service Award Dinner in Ontario where Metropolitan was recognized for its efforts to support the League as a partner. Also attending were Senators Nell Soto (D-Ontario), and Bob Dutton (R-Rancho Cucamonga); Assemblyman Bill Emmerson (R-Redlands); and legislative staff from the offices of Assembly members John Benoit (R-Palm Desert), Russ Bogh (R-Cherry Valley) and Bonnie Garcia (R-Cathedral City). Larry Gable represented the Governor's office.

Directors Brown, Edwards, Morris and Brick visited with the cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale on Nov. 8-9 to discuss water conservation and management programs of interest. The directors met with several agencies to coordinate and learn about innovative local water resource management practices – including water conservation, recycling, and salinity management. Additionally, they were provided an aerial tour of the Salt River Project – the historic Arizona backbone regional water supply for the greater Phoenix valley that is similar in size to Metropolitan's service area.

State

On Nov. 10, legislative affairs and water resources management staff conducted a joint meeting of conservation coordinators and legislative coordinators from several member agencies to discuss potential 2006 water conservation legislation. Conservation topics discussed included likely legislation pertaining to upcoming recommendations of the AB 2717 task force – a task force that has been conducting meetings over the past year to suggest means to improve landscape water efficiency and conservation. Additional meetings will be held as necessary to review and discuss input on AB 2717 recommendations and other legislative efforts related to water conservation.

Following the Governor's veto of SB 820 – a wide-ranging bill that would have enhanced surface water and groundwater use reporting in the state -- Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee staff have begun a series of meetings to discuss follow-up legislation pertaining to water use and water planning. In large part, committee staff is focusing on potential improvements to state law pertaining to urban water management plans. Meetings with Metropolitan and member agency staff to discuss the UWMP process and policy concerns are being conducted.

Levee integrity and flood management continue to be primary topics of concern to legislators in light of post-Hurricane Katrina examinations of California's vulnerabilities and flood-management preparedness. Recent legislative hearings have focused on these issues. Metropolitan staff continues to monitor future hearings and legislative debate.

On Nov. 15-17, a group of key legislative and administration staff toured Metropolitan facilities. Trip itinerary included a tour of the Hoover Dam and portion of the Colorado River, Whitsett Intake Pumping Plant, Diamond

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Valley Lake and updates on issues such as Quantification Settlement Agreement implementation, Metropolitan's land management program with Palo Verde Irrigation District and Metropolitan's Integrated Resources Plan.

Federal

During his last few weeks as CEO/General Manager, Dennis Underwood was successful in promoting some of the District's key initiatives, one of which was to persuade the Congress to dramatically increase funding for the effort to develop regulatory storage in the Lower Basin of the Colorado River. This was accomplished through a line item in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill known as the Colorado River Front Works and Levee Program. Congress increased funding for this effort from \$500,000 in prior years to more than \$4 million.

The District worked closely with the Utah congressional delegation, the Secretary of Energy and the USEPA to promote \$28 million in appropriations for the 2006 effort to move forward with the clean up of uranium mine tailings in Moab, Utah. The appropriations bill also includes \$37 million in federal cost sharing for programs related to Bay-Delta restoration and operations for 2005-06.

Chairman Bannister traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with the leadership of the Senate Energy Committee, including Chairman Pete Domenici, Senators Bingaman, Murkowski, and Feinstein. In addition, Bannister met with House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, and Ranking Democratic member, Rep. Grace Napolitano to discuss efforts to support House-passed water project bills currently pending in the Senate.

Special Item

The National Water Resources Association presented Dennis Underwood with a posthumous "Lifetime Achievement Award" for his accomplishments over the tenure of his service to water users at the Colorado River Board, as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, and as CEO and General Manager of the Metropolitan Water District. Dennis was recognized by Assistant Secretary Mark Limbaugh, who presented, along with NWRA Executive Director, Tom Donnelly, the award to MWD Director Jim Blake, who received it on behalf of Mr. Underwood.

Save the date

- Dec. 1 -- City Makeover public check presentation to Temecula Valley Rose Society
- Dec. 1 -- CPP application deadline for the over \$3K category
- Dec. 10 -- Boat building workshop at Three Valleys for Solar Cup participants.
- Dec. 13 -- Metropolitan/Small Business Administration Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony. The ceremony will take place in the boardroom immediately following the meeting.