

● External Affairs December 2005 Activity Report

Summary

In December, the press office handled about three press calls each day on Bay-Delta matters, Colorado River matters, water supply, conservation, California Friendly homes, water quality, Solar Cup and other District concerns (58 calls total), and issued five press releases. Education staff provided in-service training to 108 teachers and DVL field trips for 214 students, and conducted two inspection trips reaching up to 80 community members; customer service staff provided a tour of Diamond Valley Lake for members of Congresswoman Mary Bono's staff. External Affairs staff made more than 25 presentations to the public or legislative offices during the month. The District's Web sites received 58,200 hits during the same time.

Detailed Report

Initiatives

Bay-Delta

The group continued to promote the South Delta Improvements 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:

- The launch of a special "Straight from the Tap" program being broadcast on public access channels and leased air time throughout the state. "Tap" marked a major milestone when San Francisco public television station KQED also requested to air the show – a first for this Metropolitan product. The program, designed to increase general awareness about Bay-Delta matters, is in two parts. The first segment provides an overview of the Bay-Delta. After a transitional interview with Senator Dianne Feinstein, the second part is the MWD-arranged panel discussion about the future of CALFED that involved Vice President Tim Quinn and key players in the CALFED debate.
- Outreach focused on encouraging member agencies, businesses and community groups to join the California's Water Future coalition; to participate in public workshops in December and public hearings in January; and to send in comment letters supporting the SDIP. Jerry Johns, Deputy Director of the Department of Water Resources, joined Tim Quinn and Debra Man in a detailed discussion of SDIP and the future of CALFED with a small group of member agency staff and Southern California Water Dialogue participants.

Education Outreach

- Metropolitan, in collaboration with Pasadena City College, held a legislative preview of the college's water reclamation project funded in part by MWD's World Water Forum program. California State Sen. Jack Scott (D-Pasadena) and Assembly Member Carol Liu (D-La Canada-Flintridge) toured the project, one of 12 at Southland colleges and universities under MWD's program to assist research of local water-supply solutions that could also have global application. Director Tim Brick and Pasadena Water and Power General Manager Phyllis Currie were on hand to encourage the students in their work.
- More than 500 students from the record 40 high school teams in the 2006 Solar Cup program spent two Saturdays at the Three Valleys Municipal Water District headquarters, building their boats for the upcoming spring contest sponsored by MWD and several member agencies.
- Metropolitan unveiled the annual "Water is Life" calendar art exhibit featuring 50 winning artworks to be used in the 2006 calendar, and on water bottles.
- Metropolitan provided hands-on activities for nearly 800 attendees to the Los Angeles Natural History Museum's "family day" event.

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Community Outreach

Community Outreach highlights for December include:

- The community leaders breakfast meeting for state Assembly Member Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar) was also hosted by Chairman Wes Bannister and Vice Chair Larry Dick. Also, in attendance were Directors Jack Foley and Ergun Bakall. Interim Chief Executive Officer Debra Man updated more than 70 businesses, community and elected leaders in Orange County on current water supply and reliability issues.
- Metropolitan sponsored events during the month for groups such as: The Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles County Science Fair, Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, San Diego River Park Foundation, St. John Bosco High School, Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles Chapter, and the Orange County American Chemical Society.

California Friendly™

- Metropolitan, in collaboration with Eastern Municipal Water District, promoted the opening of the latest California Friendly™ home project – the John Laing Homes' Holiday development in Sun City.
- Metropolitan held two significant meetings with Pardee Homes and Ryan Homes as it relates to the California Friendly™ Model Home Program. Pardee Homes and its regional landscape manager were given an orientation and training on how to participate in the California Friendly Model Home program. As a result, next year Pardee Homes will be submitting up to 12 new projects for inclusion in Metropolitan's program.
- Bob Yoder, Inland Empire Division President for Shea Homes, testified at the SB 60 public hearing at MWD about the benefits of using California Friendly designs and devices at Shea's new home developments in Southwest Riverside County.

Legislative Outreach

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

Tim Quinn testified at the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee hearing on SB 1024, which would authorize a \$7.825 billion general obligation bonds for a spectrum of capital improvements throughout the state, including transportation, facilities, clean air, environmental enhancement, goods movement and port security, affordable housing incentives, levee protection, and the repayment of Proposition 42 loans, upon voter approval at a statewide general election. Mr. Quinn explained that Metropolitan's Board had not taken a position on the bill, and offered observations on how the bond could be improved to protect Delta levees in a manner that was consistent with the board's existing CALFED positions.

Metropolitan worked closely with Imperial Irrigation District and state of Arizona representatives to promote increased funding for regulatory storage in the lower basin of the Colorado River, including the effort to dredge the reservoir behind Laguna Dam, as well as the objective of moving forward with a reservoir along the alignment of the All-American Canal. The result was an increase in spending under the Colorado River Front and Levee Works Line item as provided in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, now signed into law by the president at a figure of \$4.75 million in fiscal 2006, as compared to the \$500,000 allocated in the previous fiscal year.

Chairman Bannister attended meetings in Washington, D.C., to promote MWD's support for a variety of member-agency-backed Title XVI bills. These briefings included U.S. senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico), Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-Tracy), Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman George Radanovich (R-Mariposa), and representatives Grace Napolitano (D-Norwalk), Ken Calvert (R-Riverside/Corona), Gary Miller (R-Diamond Bar) and Loretta Sanchez (D-Santa Ana). One result of this trip was a commitment by the chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Water and Power to conduct a hearing early next year on the efficacy of the Title XVI program.

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Metropolitan attended stakeholder meetings—arranged by Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee Chair Lois Wolk (D-Davis)—aimed at developing legislation to strengthen the connection between land-use planning and flood protection. The focus is on levee integrity and flood management in the Bay-Delta in light of post-Hurricane Katrina examinations of California’s vulnerabilities and preparedness.

Following the governor’s veto of SB820—a bill that would have enhanced surface water and groundwater use reporting in California—Metropolitan initiated discussions with member agencies to review new options for potential changes in state law pertaining to water use and water planning (urban water management plans).

Metropolitan attended 13 regularly scheduled executive and legislative committees of various local chambers of commerce, business associations and water associations as a part of its local grass roots networking and communication efforts.