



Public Works Officers Department
2010 WINTER NEWSLETTER



Message from the President



By Larry Patterson, Director of Public Works, City of San Mateo
2009-2010 Public Works Officers Department President

It is hard to imagine that the conditions facing all California cities today will ever be referred to as the "Good Old Days." No one that I have talked with can remember a time in recent history when City finances were impacted by declines in virtually every funding source. In addition, traditional sources of funding for our local transportation infrastructure and services are in jeopardy. These traditional funding sources of gas tax and the excise tax on gasoline are coveted by the State of California in their efforts to identify a solution to their pending budget deficit of almost \$20 billion.

Specifically, the Governor has proposed a restructuring of Proposition 42 and Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA) funding. Under the proposal, five percent of the existing sales tax on gasoline would be eliminated (temporarily six percent through FY 2010-11). This loss in Proposition 42 funding would be partially offset by a 10.8 cent increase in the excise tax on gasoline which provides the HUTA funds. The changes could result in a net loss of transportation funding. More importantly, the change would remove the Proposition 42 and Proposition 1A protections of transportation funding.

The impacts of the proposed changes in taxes on gasoline and the amount and allocation of the transportation funding is not yet clear. What is known is that there will be an immediate impact on transit operations funding. Under the Governor's proposal, Proposition 42 funding for the Public Transit Account and the Spillover is eliminated. This means a reduction of transit funding of \$1.5 billion in FY 2010-11.

Nothing can be more frustrating than feeling helpless under difficult circumstances. The current condition of State and local finances are difficult and frustrating, but you are not helpless. There are things that you can do to have an impact.

First, come join your contemporaries at the Public Works Officials Institute in Monterey, California from March 24 through 26. There is still time to register online at www.cacities.org/events. The Institute provides you with a great opportunity to share your successes and learn of the successes of others. Second, become actively involved in the League of California Cities and its Public Works Officers Department. The League is our strongest voice in Sacramento. If there was ever a time when we needed a strong voice, that time is now. I look forward to seeing you in Monterey. ◀

"Nothing can be more frustrating than feeling helpless under difficult circumstances."

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Message from the Director

By Lisa Ann Rapp, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, City of Lakewood
2008-2010 Public Works Officers Department Director



Hello Everyone! I am very exciting to be participating in my second year on the Board of Directors, representing the Public Works Officers Department. Last year, the League faced some exciting challenges, and 2010 will prove to hold the same challenges.

On November 19 and 20, 2009, I attended the annual League Leaders Seminar and Board of Director's meeting in Anaheim, California. At this meeting each year, League leadership from the Board, Departments, regional Divisions, and Policy Committees work together to develop our organization's strategic goals for the coming year. The goals for 2010 were very similar to the previous year, however, they focused on the statewide ballot measure as the primary goal for the year. The following are the three overarching goals approved by the Board:

Protect Local Control and Funding for Vital Local Services. Use statewide ballot measure and legislative and legal advocacy to achieve reforms that protect local control and abolish the power of the state to borrow, divert or impose restrictions on the use of all local revenue sources, including locally imposed or levied taxes, the local shares of all transportation tax revenues (including public transit funding), the redevelopment tax increment, and any other local revenue source used to fund vital local services.

Support Reform of the Structure, Governance, Management and Financing of State Government. Build on the success of the 2009 Local Government Summit on State Governance Reform by working collaboratively with other stakeholder groups to advance reforms to modernize the structure, governance, management and method of financing state government.

Promote Economic Stimulus, Infrastructure Investment, Business Development and Job Creation. Promote federal, state and local investment in transportation, water, redevelopment and other critical infrastructure projects that will support the retention and creation of new private businesses and jobs in our cities and the state.

Toward fulfillment of the first goal, signature gathering is now underway for the "Local Taxpayers and Public Safety Protection Act". The plan is to qualify this ballot measure for the November 2010 election with signatures gathered by volunteers from our organization. The purpose of the measure is to constitutionally protect local tax revenues from state take-ways. Although Prop 1A provided some measure of protection from State raids, the new ballot measure will expand the protections to locally established sales taxes and transportation funds, as well as others. Please visit www.SaveLocalServices.com for further information. ◀

League Launches New Look for Web site

By Dorothy Johnson, Legislative Analyst, League of California Cities

The League of California Cities Web site has a new updated look with the same resources and information in a more user-friendly format. This undertaking was motivated by the need to increase accessibility and better organize the wealth of legislative, communications, and member tools currently housed on the Web site.

The remodel includes the Public Works Officers Department page, where you can find information on our current slate of officers, links to local transportation partners, and past issues of the quarterly newsletter. We invite you to check it out at and let us know what you think. You can find us online at: www.cacities.org/publicworks. ◀



Have you registered yet?

**2010 Public Works Officers Institute
March 24th—26th, 2010**

Monterey Marriott, Downtown Monterey

Registration open online at: www.cacities.org/events



EPA recognizes City of Tulare Wastewater Treatment Plant among nation's leading USERS of on-site green power

By Lew Nelson, Public Works Director, City of Tulare

The City of Tulare, California, announced that for the first time its Wastewater Treatment Plant appears on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Top 20 On-site Green Power Users List. The City of Tulare's Wastewater Treatment Plant is generating 8 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power annually, which is enough green power to meet 32 percent of the plant's electricity use.



The EPA updated each of its National Top Partner lists, highlighting some of America's largest green power users. The City of Tulare / Wastewater Treatment Plant currently ranks No. 17 on EPA's Top 20 On-site Green Power Users List. Each list highlights EPA Green Power Partners that have completed the largest annual voluntary purchases through October 6, 2009. EPA's updates its Top Partner Lists quarterly at <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/toplists/>.

"This is a huge honor and we are proud to be recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency," said Lew Nelson, Tulare Public Works Director. "Generating green power helps our organization become more sustainable, while also sending a message to others across the U.S. that supporting clean sources of electricity is a sound business decision and an important choice in reducing climate risk."

"In February EPA recognized this project with a Clean Air Excellence Award", Nelson said.

Green power is electricity that is generated from environmentally preferable renewable resources, such as wind, solar, geothermal, biogas, biomass and low-impact hydro. These resources generate electricity with a net zero increase in carbon dioxide emissions, while offering a superior environmental profile compared to traditional power generation sources. Green power purchases also support the development of new renewable energy generation sources nationwide. Tulare generates electricity with three 300 kW fuel cells using the biogas generated in the wastewater treatment process.

"EPA commends our leading Partners for their continued commitment to protecting the environment by using green power," said Ann Bailey, Acting Director of the Climate Protection Partnerships Division at EPA. "By supporting green power, the City of Tulare is reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, supporting clean energy (continued on page 4)

Driving is a Little Friendlier in Palm Desert

By Mark Greenwood, P.E., Director of Public Works, City of Palm Desert

In October 2009, Palm Desert became the first city in the Coachella Valley to issue traffic alerts via Twitter.

This new service provides residents, commuters, and visitors with the option to receive mobile traffic updates, augmenting the city's longstanding practice of issuing media releases regarding traffic impacts caused by major construction and road improvement projects.

The Twitter alerts will soon be linked to the city's Public Works Web pages, further adding to our ability to provide timely and accurate information to drivers affected by traffic flows. Twitter alerts carry as much information as possible in a 140-character "tweet" and follow an established format of "where, what, when, and why."

If you plan to visit or travel through Palm Desert soon, follow us on Twitter @DrivePalmDesert (www.twitter.com/drivepalmdesert). Happy motoring! ◀



Twitter.com/DrivePalmDesert provides instantaneous updates on traffic conditions in Palm Desert.

What's at Stake for Your City in the 2010 Census

By Chris McKenzie, Executive Director, League of California Cities

The 2010 U.S. Census is right around the corner, and it will have an enormous impact on our cities and communities in the coming decade. Ensuring an accurate census count of residents must be an urgent priority for local officials from now through April 1 — Census Day. If California's population is undercounted, its cities and counties stand to lose between \$3 billion and \$5 billion in federal funding. Just as alarming, if there is an undercount California is at risk for losing congressional representation for the first time in its history.



The state loses an estimated \$1,300 every year for 10 years for each person who is not counted. And *who* is counted is just as important as *how many* are counted. It's more difficult to count lower-income people than wealthy people, and a disproportionate count of those with higher incomes will generate misleading, inaccurate data about average income. Because funding for important education and health programs is based on average income, (continued on page 5)

Tulare Wastewater Treatment Plant recognition continued

(from page 3) technologies, and contributing to a clean energy future.”

According to the U.S. EPA, the City of Tulare / Wastewater Treatment Plant's green power use of 8 million kWh is equivalent to avoiding the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of more than 1,100 passenger vehicles per year, or is the equivalent amount of electricity needed to power nearly 800 average American homes annually.

Tulare will have 230 kW of photovoltaic generation in operation by the middle of 2010 at City Hall and the treatment plant. In addition to generating clean power, the city of Tulare has powered its refuse, transit and much of the light fleet of vehicles with natural gas for the past 10 years. The city facilitated the opening of third public-access E85 ethanol station in California in February 2008.

About the City of Tulare / Wastewater Treatment Plant

The city of Tulare is the “Agri-Center of the World” located in the San Joaquin Valley about mid-way between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The city of 58,000 produces biogas from a 6.0 million gallon per day (mgd) activated sludge wastewater plant for domestic users, and a separate 12.0 mgd Sequential Batch Reactor plant serving seven large milk processing plants. The city plans to increase fuel cell generation capacity as biogas production increases. For more information on Tulare please visit <http://www.ci.tulare.ca.us/>.

About EPA's Green Power Partnership

The Green Power Partnership is a voluntary program that encourages organizations to buy green power as a way to reduce the environmental impacts associated with purchased electricity use. The Partnership currently has more than 1,100 Partner organizations voluntarily purchasing billions of kilowatt-hours of green power annually. Partners include a wide variety of leading organizations such as Fortune 500 companies, small and medium sized businesses, local, state, and federal governments, and colleges and universities. For additional information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower>.



City of Laguna Hills El Toro Road and Streetscape Improvements

By Humza Javed, P.E., City of Laguna Hills

The City of Laguna Hills began its El Toro Road Streetscape Improvement Project in January 2009. This project was part of the Urban Village Specific Plan consistent with the City's General Plan. Improvements along El Toro Road between Avenida De La Carlota and Paseo De Valencia (approximately 2,900 linear feet) consisted of median island landscape improvements, monument improvements, gateway monuments, architectural lighting, and a bus shelter. As the location of this project was located at the gateway entrance to the City, which is one of the busiest stretches in Laguna Hills, significant monument structures were constructed at the corners of Regional Center Drive and within the median islands. This landscaping and scenic beautification project also included low water use plants and low flow irrigation heads to conserve water.

The plans and specifications for this project were completed by Forma, the landscape architecture firm, along with several sub-consultants. ValleyCrest Landscape Development, Inc. was the construction contractor for this project. The total cost of this project was \$1,426,489.00, out of which the City was approved a grant of \$500,000 through the Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) program. The balance was covered by the City's General fund.

One of the main goals of this project was to beautify El Toro Road within the City limits, to spur business development, and to also mitigate heavy commuter traffic along El Toro Road. As this is one of the busiest roadways with the heaviest ridership bus stop in the City, lane widening and the addition of a bus shelter with benches was a vital component to this project.

This project was the final phase of a multi-year and multiple Capital Improvement Program project effort to implement the Urban Village Streetscape theme along El Toro Road from Avenida de la Carlota to Paseo de Valencia. The two previous projects that were part of The Urban Village Streetscape theme included intersection improvements, new traffic signals, bus turn out, curb and gutter, storm drain, and park-way improvements. These projects were completed in 2007 and 2008. ◀



2010 Census continued

(from page 4) it's critically important to count the less affluent, hard-to-count (HTC) populations.

Outreach is Essential. Working with community groups, local organizations and the faith community is a vitally important component of the effort to get a complete count. for many HTC groups, being encouraged to participate by trusted members of the community — who speak their language and come from their culture — makes the process much easier and gives credibility to the information being presented. In the 2010 census, there are only 10 questions, and the form should take just a few minutes to complete.

Confidentiality is a major issue, and many people are distrustful of government and reluctant to fill out forms that ask for personal information. It's important to reassure residents that the information collected by the census is confidential and cannot be used to harm them. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's answers with anyone, including welfare and immigration agencies, and census workers take an oath to protect the confidentiality of census responses.

Mobilize Your Community Now. It's critically important for local officials to reach out to their community and engage local organizations in getting the message out to HTC groups. Grassroots organizing efforts are being driven by the California Complete Count Committee and funded by private foundations. Local officials can access census-related resources and tools tailored for cities online at www.ca-ilg.org/census and www.californiacompletecount.org. Additional information is available at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/> and <http://twitter.com/cacensus2010>.

Take advantage of these helpful online tools as you work with your community to ensure a complete census count. California's cities have a great deal at stake, and your efforts today will make a significant difference for our communities in the coming decade. ◀

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Commentary: Every Public Works Department Wants to be Green – Guess What? We already Are!

By Jay Spurgin, Deputy Public Works Director, City of Thousand Oaks

We in the Public Works field typically excel at engineering, maintenance and operations. And typically, we aren't great at marketing, networking and promoting the work we do when it comes to environmental programs. Is it because we aren't doing "green" things? I submit the answer is a resounding NO.

Consider any typical election season. The local issues invariably include public safety, slow growth, open space, and the environment. Now think back to the last State of the City address when your Mayor talked about how many streets were paved, trees planted, fleet vehicles converted to alternative fuels, and storm water quality. These are all public works projects. The good news is that environmental programs are a Department's ticket to popularity and we are already doing them!

So much of what we do in public works is a direct result of past environmental legislation. Environmental legislation into the future will cover green buildings, carbon foot-printing, alternative fuel vehicles, electrical self-generation, and who knows what else. We all are involved in regional environmental programs - water management plans, storm water quality, water conservation, recycling, biosolids reuse, and transportation just to name a few. Cities have local environmental programs too, such as streets rehabilitation, use of rubberized asphalt overlays, storm water quality, bike and equestrian trails, open space, cogeneration, landscaping, water conservation, wastewater treatment and reuse, and LED traffic signals. The list could go on and on. The point here is to stimulate your own thinking about what you do already that is green.

So how do we get the word out to our elected officials, City Managers and constituents that we are true environmentalists (arguably the first environmentalists in our protection of public health and the environment)? Following are several strategies that have worked for us here in Thousand Oaks.

Awards. Seek them out and you will receive them. Then arrange for recognition by receiving the award at a City Council meeting. Thousand Oaks has received over a dozen in the past five years.

Press releases. Get to know your local beat reporter. Prepare "template" press releases that staff can fill the blanks for project awards, construction projects, new employees, grant funding, and ensure quick turn around.

Articles. Write articles for Public Works magazine, League of CA Cities Department newsletters, Western City Magazine, your local newspaper ("Ask the Director" column), and APWA.

Events. Invite your City Manager and Mayor to ribbon cuttings for completed projects. Sponsor Arbor Earth Day, Bike to Work Day, Community Clean-Up Day, Coastal Clean-Up Day, Public Works Week.

Networking. Volunteer your time, join local service clubs. Make presentations at conferences, seminars and meetings such as APWA, League of CA Cities, Water Environment Federation, Service Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, HOA's, neighborhood councils, and school career days.

And don't forget to have some fun along the way with golf tournaments, City softball games, department BBQs, fun runs, and holiday celebrations. How do you know if you are successful? Our credibility and standing in the public realm will impact public works budgets, help to recruit and retain quality employees, allow us to compete with other departments, affect our stress level at work, and result in City Manager and City Council support and confidence. All this requires some effort in promoting our work and profession.

People will tell you the good job you are doing. Remember the difference between success and fame: success is Mother Theresa, fame is Madonna. ◀



Public Works Officers Department

2009—2010 Executive Leadership Team

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Have a Question? Need a sample RFP?

Want to learn about solutions implemented in other cities?

Join the TCPW Listserv!

Join the Transportation, Communications, Public Works (TCPW) List Serve and communicate with public works directors, city engineers, traffic managers, and city departments from throughout the state!

Sign up today at: <http://www.cacities.org/listServ>