



STEERING COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

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File #: 2023-3282

Agenda Date: 10/25/2023

Agenda Item No: 12.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2023

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of September 2023.

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of September 2023.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Maintain influential legislative advocacy and a public outreach program
- Maintain collaborative and cooperative relationships with regulators, stakeholders, and neighboring communities
- Listen to and seriously consider community input on environmental concerns

PROBLEM

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) is well-recognized within the water/wastewater industry; however, within our service area, as we do not have direct communications through a billing method, there may be limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve may not realize that when they improperly dispose of waste into the sanitation system, it can negatively affect our sewer lines, our treatment plants, and the quality of water we supply for the GWRS.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

By providing tours, community outreach, education, and general communication via OC San's website, social media, and direct mailings, we can share information with the community, local agencies, and businesses on our messaging such as the What2Flush program, energy production, water recycling, biosolids, and OC San's source control program. This, in turn, helps improve the quality of wastewater that is recycled or released to the ocean and the knowledge and understanding of wastewater treatment.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

If OC San does not inform the community, local agencies, and area businesses about OC San, we may not have the support necessary to deliver our mission.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

July 2022 - Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 approved.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities for the month of September 2023:

Outreach Report

An outreach report that includes tours, website, social media posts, construction notifications, speaking engagements, and more is attached to this Agenda Report.

Social Media

OC San messaging, announcements, and program updates were posted across OC San's social media platforms. OC San's social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 16 posts reaching 2k people
- Twitter: 10 posts reaching 900 people
- Instagram: 19 posts reaching 5.5k people
- LinkedIn: 4 posts and reaching 4k people

Media Coverage

During the month of September, OC San was highlighted and/or mentioned in an article from Black & Veatch on the GWRS Final Expansion, an article from Water World on the Utility of the Future honorees, Public CEO had an article on four special districts being recognized for statewide leadership on climate action, and Business Wire had an article on the GWRS Final Expansion winning the WEF Project Excellence Award. All the articles can be found in the Outreach Report.

Presentations and Industry Coverage

Employees participated in five tours and two speaking engagements reaching approximately 150 people. OC San's General Manager presented virtually to the American Society of Civil Engineers Metropolitan section and staff presented to the Southeast Area Huntington Beach Committee on projects happening at the Plant No. 2 facility. Details can be found in the Outreach Report.

Member Agency Outreach Toolkits

On a quarterly basis, toolkits are distributed to OC San's member agencies with messages of importance for the local community. The toolkits include articles and graphics to be used in newsletters, websites, and social media. As part of the General Manager's Work Plan, in support of Member Agency Outreach, this quarters' toolkit focused on OC San's FOG and What2Flush programs.

Volunteer Incentive Program Luncheon

On September 28, 2023, OC San celebrated and recognized its VIPs, the Volunteer Incentive Program participants. This program is designed to give employees and retirees an opportunity to meet visitors from the communities we serve while sharing information on our mission and explaining what we do. Our VIPs were recognized by our Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman at an appreciation lunch celebrating their dedication to volunteering at 49 tours, 13 community booths, and 34 speaking engagements to support OC San's Educational Outreach Program. Through these efforts, it is estimated that OC San reached over 4,700 people in fiscal year 2022-2023.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, Rossmoor, Buena Park, Anaheim, and within both of our treatment plants. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. In September, printed notifications were provided to the Anaheim and Rossmoor communities.

Internal Communication

In September, there were 77 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and four weekly emails distributed on relevant topics for the week.

Awards

OC San was awarded the Excellence in Information Technology Practices Award from the Municipal Information Systems Association of California. This award recognizes agencies for implementing information technology practices that excel in creative and efficient uses of local government resources.

Upcoming Activities for October:

State of OC San

The State of OC San will be held in person on Friday, October 27, 2023 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Mile Square Golf Course in Fountain Valley. The event will host Local, State, and Federal dignitaries and provide an update on OC San, the agency's accomplishments, and the future direction of the agency. At the time of publication of this Agenda Report, 115 guests have registered for the event.

Neighborhood Connection Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter is intended to keep OC San's service area informed of the service and various initiatives led by OC San. The fall issue includes messaging on the FOG program, an update on upcoming construction projects, and an invitation to join our tours. The newsletter is distributed electronically and reaches approximately 4,500 people.

CEQA

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2022-2024 Budget.

ATTACHMENT

The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OC San website (www.ocsan.gov) with the complete agenda package:

- Outreach & Media Report - September 2023