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Agenda Date: 3/22/2023

Agenda Item No: 17.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND

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

RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Maintain influential legislative advocacy and a public outreach program
- Build brand, trust, and support with policy makers and community leaders
- 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 OC San's service area, as OC San does not have direct communications through a billing method, there may be limited knowledge by customers of the important work OC San does to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers OC Sans serves may not realize that when they improperly dispose of waste into the sanitation system, it can negatively affect OC San's sewer lines, treatment plants, and the quality of water supplied for the Groundwater Replenishment System.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

By providing tours, community outreach, education, and general communication via OC San's website, social media, and direct mailings, OC San shares information with the community, local agencies, and businesses on 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 Year 2022-2024 approved.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities for the month of February 2023:

Outreach Report

An outreach report that includes tours, website, social media posts, construction notifications, speaker engagements, and more is included as an attachment to this Agenda Report.

Social Media

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

- Facebook: 19 posts reaching 6.7k people
- Twitter: 15 posts reaching 2.5k people
- Instagram: 38 posts reaching 6.3k people
- LinkedIn: 5 posts and reaching 3.2k people

Media Coverage

OC San had media coverage recently with articles published in the LA Times and Waste360. Both articles highlighted the Supercritical Water Oxidation Demonstration project that OC San is currently preparing for. The articles can be found in the attached Outreach Report.

Presentations

In February, employees participated in three tours and two speaking engagements with the Tustin Santa Ana Rotary Club and a joint webinar with the Orange County Water District.

Construction Outreach

OC San continues to keep the communities informed of construction activities throughout the service area while working with our member agencies. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Seal Beach, Westminster, Buena Park, Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, and within both of our plant facilities. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. In February, over 9,000 pieces were distributed in Seal Beach, Los Alamitos, and Rossmoor.

Internal Communication

Internal communication is a key component of the Public Affairs Office. In February, there were 86 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, four weekly emails were distributed on hot topics for the week, and the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, published bimonthly, was published in February.

Awards

The American Society of Public Administration awarded our former General Manager, Jim Herberg, with the John W. Gaston, Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service Management. This award is presented to a public manager for excellence in public service management, particularly in the areas of natural resources management or environmental protection.

Upcoming Activities for March:**Ice Cream Social Event**

On March 23, OC San will host an Ice Cream Social event to give employees the opportunity to spend time with one another and say goodbye to our upcoming retirees. Retirees from the last three years will also be invited to attend as our employee activities were restricted due to COVID-19 protocols.

Honor Walk

OC San's Honor Walk program to honor and recognize former employees and Board Members is back following a brief hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions. Any retired/former employees and former Board Members who have been gone for at least one year, and made a significant contribution to OC San, are eligible to be nominated. The nomination period for the employees is now closed, and for Board Members, nominations close on April 26. The staff nominations are reviewed by a staff committee and presented to the Steering Committee in May. The selected honorees are recognized with an engraved brick in front of the main entrance to the Administration Building at Plant No.1. The Honor Walk celebration will be held on Wednesday, June 28 prior to the Steering Committee meeting.

Children's Water Festival

OC San will be participating in the Orange County Water District's Children's Water Festival on March 28 and 29. OC San will have a station with a relay race game where kids will learn about What 2 Flush. Over the two-day period, OC San will engage with 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders from throughout Orange County.

Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy

The third session of OC San's Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy held its first workshop on Thursday, March 9 with 61 participants registered, the highest number of registrants since the program's inception. Approximately half of the registrants attended the first workshop. The next workshop will take place on Thursday, March 23. The next two workshops will take place in April, ending with a tour of the plant and a graduation at the April Board Meeting.

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 Report - February 2023