



STEERING COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

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File #: 2023-3340

Agenda Date: 12/14/2023

Agenda Item No: 3.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2023

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

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

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of November 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 November 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. Our social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 16 posts reaching 2.3k people
- Twitter: 13 posts reaching 1.3k people
- Instagram: 22 posts reaching 3.8k people
- LinkedIn: 7 posts and reaching 5.2k people

Media Coverage

During the month of November, OC San was mentioned in six articles: Water Online regarding the Evolving Water Issues and how OC San and the new Supercritical Water Oxidation project will be a first in the US, Water World announcing the winners of the US Water Prize award, an editorial piece from the LA Times on what we flush down the toilet matters - only the 3 P's please, and an article co-authored by Board Chair Chad Wanke and OCWD President Cathy Green in the CSDA Magazine on the GWRS. All the articles can be found in the Outreach Report.

Presentations and Industry Coverage

In November, employees participated in five tours and five speaking engagements reaching approximately 700 people. General Manager Rob Thompson spoke at the Water Authority Coalition of Orange County on the Supercritical Water Oxidation Project; Lan Wiborg, Director of Environmental Services, participated on a panel on PFAS at the WaterReuse Conference; and OC San staff participated in a Construction Networking event in Long Beach and presented during a webinar on Board Member Orientation for the California Special Districts Association. Mr. Thompson also attended and presented on the Supercritical Water Oxidation project at the CWEA/CASA Seminar in Oakland and at Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant in Los Angeles. During his visit to Northern California, Mr. Thompson, along with Ms. Wiborg and staff, toured Central Contra Costa Sanitary District and East Bay Municipal Utility District. Details can be found in the outreach report.

OC San Celebrates Our Veterans

In November, OC San recognized and celebrated those employees who have proudly served in the Armed Forces. Street light banners were displayed throughout the two plants highlighting each of the veterans. Social media posts were made and poster boards were placed in the public lobbies at both Plant Nos. 1 and 2.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Buena Park, Anaheim, Costa Mesa, and within both treatment plants. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. In November, notifications were distributed to 2,600 residents and businesses in Costa Mesa.

Internal Communication

In November, there were 134 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and four weekly emails distributed on relevant topics for the week.

Awards

- OC San and OCWD were awarded the US Water Prize Award in the Public Sector Category for the GWRS Final Expansion. Mr. Thompson attended the One Water Summit in Tucson, Arizona on November 14 to receive the award.
- OC San and OCWD are winners of the 2024 *National Environmental Achievement Award (NEAA)* in the Community Leadership category for the “Final Expansion of the GWRS” project.

Spark of Love Toy Drive

OC San is once again participating in the Spark of Love toy drive with the Fountain Valley Fire Department. OC San is collecting toys for children in need during the holiday season. The Fountain Valley Fire Department is scheduled to pick up the toys the night of the December Board Meeting.

Upcoming Activities for December:

OC San Holiday Luncheons

During the holiday season, OC San hosts a luncheon for employees to celebrate the end of a successful year. This year one main luncheon was held at Plant No. 2 where over 450 employees gathered. The EMT also helped serve night shift employees dinners which were held during the first week of December.

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 - November 2023