

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2022-2633

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**FROM:** James D. Herberg, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2022**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and File the Public Affairs Update for the months of September and October 2022.

### BACKGROUND

Staff will provide an update on recent public affairs activities.

### 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 our service area, as we do not have a 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 Groundwater Replenishment System.

### PROPOSED SOLUTION

By providing tours, community outreach, education, and general communication via OC San's website, social media outlets, 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 our 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 we do 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**

N/A

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Current activities for the months of September-October 2022:**

#### **Outreach Report**

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

#### **Social Media**

Announcements, program updates, and OC San messaging continues to be posted across OC San's social media platforms.

- Facebook: 31 posts reaching 6.7k people
- Twitter: 31 posts reaching 6.2k people
- Instagram: 24 posts reaching 6.k people
- LinkedIn: 15 posts and reaching 11.7k people

#### **Presentations**

Over the last two months, employees participated in seven tours and 17 speaking engagements. Lan Wiborg, Director of Environmental Services, spoke at the WateReuse conference and Kathy Millea, Director of Engineering, spoke at a Net Zero conference. Details about the additional speaking engagements can be found in the Outreach Report. Overall, OC San was able to reach over 1,100 people with these events.

#### **Community Newsletter**

The attached fall issue of the electronic community newsletter, *The OC San Connection*, was distributed to approximately 4,500 recipients. Distribution took place via social media, email lists, and to our member agencies. The issue features stories on various construction projects; OC San initiatives such as Fats, Oil, and Grease (FOG); and much more.

#### **Vendor Outreach**

In September, OC San hosted a Vendor Workshop focusing on upcoming construction contract opportunities. In November, the last of the five workshops scheduled for the year will take place focusing on maintenance contracts. These virtual workshops give local companies the chance to learn how OC San does business and hear about upcoming bidding opportunities.

**OC San Celebrates Its VIP's**

In September, the Board Chairman and General Manager thanked our volunteers, or VIP's, for their effort in spreading the OC San messaging and helping the community learn about the service OC San provides. Over the last year, our VIP's volunteered for 30 tours and 26 speaking engagements. Through these efforts, it is estimated that OC San reached over 1,300 people during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

**Headquarters Building Topping Off Celebration**

In October, employees were given the opportunity to sign the final large structural steel beam before it was installed in the Headquarters building. The beam was placed outside the construction area to allow access to staff to leave their mark on a part of the building. A recording of the celebratory moment is posted on the project website and via social media.

**Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy**

The second session of the Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy wrapped up in October. The academy consisted of four informational classes presented by OC San staff and a virtual plant tour. The academy concluded with a graduation ceremony during the October Board Meeting where each participant that successfully completed the four classes was presented with a certificate of completion.

**Construction Outreach**

OC San continues to keep the communities informed of construction activities throughout our service area. There are currently active projects in Fountain Valley, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, Westminster, Buena Park, Anaheim, and within both of our plant facilities. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress.

**Employee Communications Survey**

Employees were surveyed about OC San's internal communication tools and content offered to gather feedback and identify any potential improvements that can be made. The results indicated that staff is satisfied with the level of information provided and the methods provided. Some suggestions were made which will be incorporated into the Public Affairs toolbox. As an example, videos from staff will be posted on The San Box to share topics of interest with the rest of the organization, the monthly *Digester* publication will be eliminated at the end of the year, and the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, will be moved to an electronic format only. As these changes are made, the information will be included in the Outreach Reports.

**Internal Communication**

To keep employees informed of OC San happenings, a variety of communication methods are used. There are daily posts on the intranet, *The San Box*; weekly emails are distributed on hot topics for the week; the *Digester*, a monthly bathroom publication with general updates; and the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, which is distributed every two months. Of special interest, a yearbook was created this month to capture staff highlights over the last couple of years.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The items comply with the authority levels of OC San's Purchasing Ordinance and have been budgeted in FY 2022-2024 budget.

**ATTACHMENT**

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

- Outreach and Media Summary Report - September & October 2022
- The OC San Connection - Fall 2022 Issue
- Presentation