

Agenda Report

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FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

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

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of December 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 December 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: 14 posts reaching 2.9k people
- Twitter: 9 posts reaching 638 people
- Instagram: 23 posts reaching 4.6k people
- LinkedIn: 2 posts and reaching 2k people

Presentations and Industry Coverage

In December, employees participated in four tours which included schools from Edison High School and Bassett Adult School, a new employee tour, and a resident tour. Staff also gave a presentation to a class of fifth graders on wastewater treatment in total reaching approximately 80 people for the month. Staff also attended the City of Huntington Beach Water/Wastewater Workshop in early December. Details can be found in the Outreach Report.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa, 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 December, construction notifications were distributed to the Newport Beach community informing them about upcoming construction in January for the MacArthur Sewer Project.

Internal Communication

In December, there were 133 posts on the employee intranet - *The San Box*, four weekly emails distributed on relevant topics for the week, and the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline* which is published bi-monthly (distributed in the month of December).

OC San Holiday Luncheons

During the holiday season, OC San hosted 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 from both plants gathered. The EMT also served night shift employees dinners which were held during the first week of December.

Spark of Love Toy Drive

OC San employees continued to donate toys to help children in need. In partnership with the Fountain Valley Fire Department, OC San staff donated over 100 toys and nearly \$500.

Website Redesign Begins

The OC San website redesign project began earlier this month. Public Affairs and IT staff are leading the effort with Neumeric Technologies to redesign and improve the website, allowing for greater transparency and accessibility for our public. The project is scheduled for completion in late summer 2024.

Upcoming Activities for January:

OC San Celebrates 70 Years of Environmental Excellence

2024 marks OC San's 70th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, OC San will celebrate throughout the year by sharing historical information and achievements through online posts, videos, and social media. We will also host a Community Open House in June to celebrate this milestone. New anniversary branding was launched on January 2 and will be carried out through the year.

Headquarters Completion and Move In

The Headquarters Building is nearing completion which will soon allow staff to make the transition from Plant No. 1 to the new site. Staff is preparing for the move by coordinating with the move management consultant to ensure a smooth transfer. Move-in is planned for later in the first quarter of 2024.

Neighborhood Connection Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter is intended to keep our customers in the service area informed of the service and various initiatives led by OC San. The winter issue will include messaging on OC San's 70th anniversary, the grand opening of the Headquarters Building, and a review of our CIP projects. The newsletter is distributed electronically.

Member Agency Outreach Toolkits

On a quarterly basis, toolkits are distributed to our 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. A winter toolkit will be distributed in late January.

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 - December 2023