

Agenda Report

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FROM: James D. Herberg, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2021

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of April 2021.

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 there is limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve do 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 to 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 educate 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.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2021

Virtual Tours

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person Plant tours are temporarily suspended. To continue engaging with the community and stakeholders, staff conducts virtual tours of the Plant which allows participants an opportunity to remotely visit OC San and learn how we protect public health and the environment. For this reporting period, three virtual tours were held.

“A Resource Not a Waste” Video Contest

OC San launched a video contest for 6th-12th grade students in the OC San service area. The contest provides students with an opportunity to put their video making skills to work by creating a video that highlights wastewater as a valuable resource. The contest was shared with schools in the service area, past tour attendees, and our member agencies so they can help us promote the contest. The contest closed on April 30; winners will be announced in June.

Youth Environmental Summit (YES)

As environmental stewards, OC San participated in the YES Summit hosted by the Orange County Water District. The virtual event featured a mix of live, on-demand, and grab-and-go activities. OC San submitted a 20-minute prerecorded video created by staff, highlighting what to flush and the no wipes in the pipes campaign. The event attracted more than 7,000 third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers and students from Orange County.

OC San Programs Draw Attention

OC San was recently featured in two water publications for two programs that are setting us apart in the world of resiliency. “Water World Magazine” published a write up on the seismic evaluation assessment highlighting the importance of being proactive with protecting a service that is essential to the public. OC San’s Asset Management Program was also recognized in the Orange County Water Association (OCWA) newsletter (article in Attachments) for its level of detail and foresight in planning and safeguarding critical assets.

Presentations

This month, staff presented to the Anaheim Kiwanis Club providing an overview of OC San and an update on the Newhope-Placentia Sewer Project.

ATTACHMENTS

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

- Outreach and Media Summary Report April 2021
- OCWA Newsletter Article
- Presentation LaPA Committee 05/10/2021