



Agenda Report

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SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2021

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the months of September and October 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 MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2021

Virtual Tours

To continue engaging with the community and our stakeholders, staff conducts virtual tours of the Plant which has allowed participants an opportunity to remotely visit OC San and learn how we protect public health and the environment. For this reporting period, we held five virtual tours reaching 86 people.

Presentations

During this reporting period, OC San had six speaking engagements. Presentations were provided to Orange County Business Council, California Alliance for Sewer System Excellence (CASSE) on the Elements of a Successful Odor Control Program, Mentoring for Women in Water, UC Irvine on Monitoring for Contaminants of Emerging Concern, US Green Building Council-LA on Reusing and Rethinking Water, Rossmoor Community Services District on the Los Alamitos Trunk Sewer Project, and OC San's Board Chair provided remarks at OCWD's PFAS event for elected officials.

Member Agency Outreach Toolkit - FOG

On a quarterly basis, OC San prepares and distributes outreach toolkits to our member agencies with messaging to be shared with the community. Earlier this month, a toolkit featuring Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) was shared to help inform our public about the proper disposal methods. FOG can lead to serious plumbing and operational issues which makes it critical to inform the community on the risks and how they can help avoid costly situations. The toolkit includes messaging for websites, newsletters, and social media.

Construction Outreach Efforts

- Outreach efforts are underway for the Los Alamitos Trunk Sewer construction project taking place in Los Alamitos, a small section of Cypress, and surrounding areas of Rossmoor. The project is taking place on major arterials in the area and keeping the public informed is key to a smooth project start-up. Construction notifications, text alerts, email alerts, web updates, social media posts, city newsletters updates, and presentations, have all been done to alert the public about the project and the value of the work being performed. Further details on the project can be found at www.ocsan.gov/LosAlamitos <<http://www.ocsan.gov/LosAlamitos>>.
- The Westminster Blvd. Sewer project has been ongoing since spring 2020, replacing parallel sewer pipe in the cities of Seal Beach and Westminster. To keep the community informed of ongoing construction activities and schedule, a project specific neighborhood newsletter was distributed. The newsletter and additional project details can be found at www.ocsan.gov/Westminster <<http://www.ocsan.gov/Westminster>>.

Community Engagement

- OC San is working with the Heritage Museum of Orange County for the 2021-22 school year to provide virtual content that focuses on OC San messaging. The material is intended to be used by teachers to discuss with the students the importance of the work performed by OC San. Topics that will be highlighted are Who is OC San, What 2 Flush, the wastewater treatment process, and a wastewater flow interactive activity. This will be a mixture of virtual programming for the first year and an in-person program for the second year. Schools and the community will be able to access the OC San content through the Heritage Museum educational portal with an estimated reach of 6,000 students per year.
- The community newsletter that previously went to our neighboring cities of Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, and Fountain Valley will be expanded to OC San's entire service area. The first service area community newsletter will be published in early November. The electronic newsletter will be shared with our member agencies, influential public, and via our social media platforms. The newsletter features articles on our Capital Improvement Program (CIP), FOG, and our overall operations. The newsletter will be available at www.ocsan.gov <<http://www.ocsan.gov>>.

Vendor Outreach Program

OC San is relaunching the Vendor Outreach Program with a focus on Orange County businesses to enhance the competitive bidding opportunities for OC San. The intent is to increase the number of vendors and contractors soliciting OC San projects, thus expanding the pool and providing a greater variety of partners. To generate interest on OC San bidding opportunities, OC San presented at the Orange County Business Council (OCBC) Infrastructure Committee, the Board Chair and Lucy Dunn from OCBC have drafted a joint Op-Ed on OC San's CIP, and several website and social media posts have been made about OC San's CIP projects. Staff is currently preparing to host vendor workshops to take place in early 2022.

Awards

OC San's IT Department was selected by the Municipal Information Systems Association of California (MISAC) for the Excellence in Information Technology Practices award. This award recognizes outstanding practices in Information Technology that have met or surpassed local government standards. This is the 14th year in a row our IT Team has won this award.

ATTACHMENT

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 - September & October 2021
- Presentation