

News Briefs

Chairman Campbell's 2005 Goals

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Bill Campbell announced his 2005 goals at the Jan. 25 Board meeting. Click the following link to read the entire text.

<http://bos.ocgov.com/third/newsletters/pdf/Chairmans%202005%20goals.pdf>

United Way Wrap-Up

Last year was special for County employees. For the first time, the County family topped a one million dollar United Way goal. Thanks to an eleventh hour donation of nearly \$20,000 from the Sheriff-Coroner Department, the grand total was \$1,001,535. The final donation came from Sheriff Mike Carona's Project 999 Fund that includes money from various special events held by the department.

"The 2004 campaign set several new records. The figures indicate that the County family raised the highest amount ever raised by the County," said Julie Poulson, Chair, 2004 United Way Campaign and Health Care Agency Director. "This amount includes a record

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Working In The Rain... And Other Stormy Weather



Operations & Maintenance/Storm Center Crew, Katella Yard

"Being in the field during a major storm is very exciting. It's a rush, although it can be scary at times," said Lon Hanson, Inspections Supervisor, Operations and Maintenance/Storm Center. "I've been doing this for 30 years and sometimes I still find myself looking over my shoulder. Imagine going out in the rain during a major storm in the middle of the night. You're all alone in the cold and darkness. All you can hear is the sound of trees blowing in the howling wind and different kinds of animals crying out from a distance. Then you hear the sound of rushing water as if it's running directly under your feet. At that moment even the smallest pebbles sound like boulders rolling in the creek."

Floods, mudslides, windstorms, firestorms, earthquakes and other natural disasters are just some of the incidents faced by Resources & Development Management's Storm Center staff. The Storm Center is a function of RDMD's Public Works department and is operated by on-

site Operations and Maintenance personnel. The Board of Supervisors recently recognized the department for outstanding service to the community.

This group is seldom visible, yet they are responsible for responding to the public and protecting public property when a natural disaster strikes. They are the silent heroes who also lend a helping hand to various other departments such as the California Highway Patrol, Fire Authority, Cities and other Counties during all kinds of weather conditions.

Tucked away at Katella Yard in Anaheim, across from Edison Field and near the Pond, the County's Storm Center was established in 1973 and only comes to life at the onset of bad weather. If a storm or other natural disaster is expected or hits

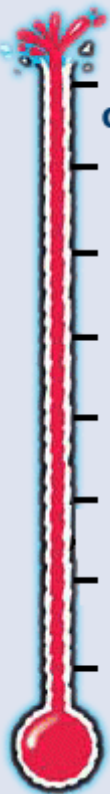
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\$174,261 raised through special events. Clearly, United we did find a Way. Great job, everyone!”

An awards ceremony was held Jan. 20 to honor individual departments, which were divided into five categories based on number of employees. Awards were given to the department in each category that raised the most funds through special events. The winners were Clerk of the Board, Clerk-Recorder, IWMD, Child Support Services and Sheriff-Coroner. Awards were also given in each category to the department that had the most increased participation. The winners were Clerk of the Board, Orange County Vector Control District, Public Defender, Child Support Services and Health Care Agency.

UNITED WAY
COUNTY OF ORANGE



**\$1 MILLION
GOAL REACHED!**

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without warning, the Storm Center is launched into action in the main conference room. At first glance, the room seems to be a traditional conference room, yet once the adrenalin, intensity and flow of information start pumping, the mood is anything but traditional.

In the event of a natural disaster, Operations and Maintenance on-call personnel kick into storm mode. Inspectors go out to check on “hot spots” where there has been a history of problems during storms. Once at the location, they call back to Storm Central and report on the status of the site.

These inspectors assess trouble spots and try to take care of any problems such as downed trees, minor mudslides and plugged up drains. Inspectors might call for backup unless they can resolve the problem on their own.

Meanwhile, the team that stays inside takes calls from the public and tries to answer their storm-related questions. Calls about specific concerns might warrant an on-site visit by an inspector.

“In a major storm or other natural disaster, we go into high-gear for hours at a time,” said Holly Felipe, Inspections Supervisor, RDMD/

Storm Center. “There have been times when I’ve been called into the Storm Center at 2 a.m. It’s my home-away-from-home. There are many people involved so the key is communication. The fast pace and high-stress atmosphere make time go very fast, and knowing that we are serving the community makes it all worth it.”

Another function of the department is to compile all the rainfall statistics for the County. They maintain records for more than 40 joint observer rainfall gauges located throughout the county. They often assist the Orange County Fire Authority by providing backup bulldozers, water trucks and chemical spray trucks.

“During the recent January storms, my staff worked tirelessly to protect public property and serve the community,” said Bill Tidwell, Manager, Operations and Maintenance/Storm Center. “This group of individuals is very hard-working and dedicated. They often make all the important decisions at 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. It is a pleasure to work with these devoted folks. They are always enthusiastic about what they do and get the job done without hesitation at any hour.”



Storm Center management from Operations & Maintenance/RDMD debrief about the recent January storms. They are (from left) Andy Seidl, Maintenance Inspections Specialist; Bill Tidwell, Manager; Lon Hanson, Inspections Supervisor; Karen Gaipo, Staff Specialist; and Holly Felipe, Inspections Supervisor.

From Fossils To Famous Architecture

There is a place in Orange County where women still wear bonnets and hoop skirts. It's called Heritage Hill Historic Park. Heritage Hill is one of seven historical parks that are operated by RDMD's Harbors, Beaches and Parks (HBP) division.



Heritage Hill Historical Park

The park is composed of 4.1 acres and four historic buildings. The fully restored and furnished historic buildings span the early history of the Saddleback Valley and El Toro area from 1863 to 1908. Heritage Hill is the only historic site in Orange County to offer a chronological interpretation of the county's past through a combination of historic buildings spanning several periods of historical development and set in a historic village setting.

The past still seems alive at yet another historic site operated by HBP, the Helena Modjeska Home and Garden. From 1888 to 1906 it was home to the world-renowned Shakespearean actress Helen Modjeska. Famed New York architect Stanford White designed Arden, the ram-

bling white cottage with several porches, a Palladian window and picturesque gables. In 1906, Arden was sold and the romance associated with Madam Modjeska's life there attracted developers who marketed parcels of the property to families seeking vacation homes. Their long-term care and sensitivity to the historic buildings and grounds resulted in the ultimate preservation of the site. In 1986, the family sold the property to the County of Orange to establish a historic park.

You'll have take a giant step back into history to visit HBP's Archaeo-Paleo (Archaeology and Paleontology) Warehouse. The vast warehouse, which is approximately 15,000 cubic feet and about the size of a football field, is filled with fossils. The fossils come from development projects that are on County-owned land. The majority of them are marine vertebrae fossils that come from the Myocene Age that date back as far as 25 million years ago. The warehouse also has fossils from the Ice Age. Some of the fossils date back 90 million years.

In 1999, Cal State Fullerton contracted with the County to develop a system for conducting inventory, a catalog system for organization and a

set of guidelines for use of the fossils. When the project was completed in 2004, Dr. John Cooper, Emeritus Professor of Geology at CSUF, became a volunteer manager for the warehouse.

"We like to think that we have the oldest and largest County or regional operated park system in the nation. Nobody has proven or denied that yet," said Rob Selway, Chief, Historical Parks and Programs. "Here in Orange County, we are lucky to have pieces of history that add to the quality of life for residents."

HBP Park Rangers don't just protect the parks, they protect Orange County history. The other historic sites operated by HBP are the Old County Courthouse, Irvine Ranch Headquarters, George Key Ranch, the Peralta Adobe and Yorba Cemetery. For more information on the historic sites, visit www.ocparks.com.



Modjeska Historical Home and Garden

County Employees Help One Student At A Time

Approximately 80 students at Pio Pico Elementary School get one-on-one assistance with reading comprehension, vocabulary and language development from County employee volunteers. Through the HOSTS (Helping One Student to Succeed) program, these select students get the extra attention they need now to succeed tomorrow.

HOSTS was established in 1996 and sponsored by former Governor Gray Davis. On Oct. 6, 1998, the Board of Supervisors approved the program, and in 2000, they voted to continue it indefinitely. They also designated Pio Pico Elementary School as a volunteer mentor site.

HOSTS is based on one-on-one mentoring that allows the student and mentor to form a special bond and friendship while learning from one another. The relationship helps the student feel comfortable and gain the confidence needed to succeed.

"County employees should seriously consider mentoring and taking part in this successful program," said Yvony Richards, Senior Defense Investigator, Alternate Defender. "You teach a child how to read while you can learn from them as well. I've been mentoring since the program started, and it continues to be a welcomed break in my day. There is nothing

better than making a difference in a child's life."

The program has a structured lesson plan that is broken down into components such as reading comprehension, language development, vocabulary, specific areas of improvement and games. The students are third, fourth and fifth graders. They go through reading comprehension and vocabulary assessments that are later reviewed by the teacher and

The sessions are usually 45 minutes during the employee's own time, usually during lunch. Agency and Department Heads have helped tremendously in promoting the program by allowing employees flexible lunch hours. Since its inception, more than 500 employees have volunteered their time to become mentors. Currently, 150 County employees participate in the program.



Angelica Vivar, third grader, reads aloud to her mentor, Yvony Richards of Alternate Defender, during their weekly meetings at Pio Pico Elementary School.

"We are very happy about the success of the program and are grateful to the County volunteers for their time and commitment," said Elvia Grijeda, HOSTS Coordinator. "An overwhelming 98 percent of students who take part in the program have increased their reading levels by at least one level this year; 85 percent have increased their

HOSTS program coordinator in an effort to select the students with the greatest need.

Mentors are required to commit to a minimum of one hour per work week for three months. Many have continued far beyond the required three-month commitment, and several have remained with the program since the very beginning.

reading levels by two or three levels. School attendance has improved by two percentage points and discipline referrals have been 50 percent lower. County volunteers are truly making a difference."

For information about mentoring, please call Jane Dawson, Manager of Volunteer/Intern Resources, at 714.834.7440.



35 Years

Bernard Behrens
Auditor-Controller

Ray Cole
Assessor

Antonio Dominguez
Resources & Development
Management Department

30 Years

Maggie Adams
Resources and Development
Management Department

Martha Bass
Health Care Agency

Linda Davis
Auditor-Controller

Ray Evans
Health Care Agency

Michael Gonzales
Health Care Agency

Noreen Grella
Social Services Agency

Joey Hernandez
Resources and Development
Management Department

Rockie Herrera
Social Services Agency

Jon Jessen
Resources and Development
Management Department

Monica Mazur
Health Care Agency

Donald McLaren
Social Services Agency

Jayne Medlock
Social Services Agency

Sandra Mounts
Human Resources

Steve Owens
Integrated Waste
Management Department

Arthur Romero
Resources and Development
Management Department

Patricia Schwenn
Social Services Agency

25 Years

Lawrence Bird
Resources and Development
Management Department

Rudy Borboa
Integrated Waste
Management Department

Gwendolyn Brown
Social Services Agency

Margie Cabrera
Social Services Agency

Leha Do
Social Services Agency

Margaret Ebargaray
Sheriff-Coroner

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County Connection is distributed monthly by the County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. The newsletter is published by CEO Media Relations. All suggestions and comments may be emailed to ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com or faxed to 714.796.8426.