

# COUNTY NEWS



PUBLISHED FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

October 2008

## A Year Later, County Better Prepared for Fire

On a recent sunny afternoon, two yellow planes with red trim floated in Mission Bay, on the west side of Fiesta Island. A small crowd of reporters and public officials watched from the beach as the planes, one after the other, began motor-ing through the water, passing once and then twice and on the third time with enough speed to send them airborne.



A Bombardier CL-415 Superscooper aircraft empties its load of water over Mission Bay last month.

They made wide loops overhead before returning to the water, low enough to scoop hundreds of gallons of water into their bellies before taking off again.

The planes were Bombardier CL-415 Superscoopers, the newest additions to the County's arsenal of firefighting weapons. Each able to drop 1,600 gallons on a fire, the aircraft are on lease along with a command plane for \$3 million.

"This is a good day for all of us in San Diego County," said Supervisor Ron Roberts.

Much has changed in the last year. This year, CalFire will allow San Diego Fire Department helicopters to fly at night, which was not allowed during the 2007 fires. Also, the Board of Supervisors approved a plan to consolidate fire services around the county and approved the placement of Proposition A on the November ballot.

If approved by voters, the measure would raise property taxes by \$52 a year, generating about \$50 million annually to increase fire protection countywide.

A year ago this month, a fire started burning at state Route 94 at Harris Ranch Road near Potrero. Firefighters named it the Harris fire, and as it charged toward Chula Vista, another blaze was sparked in North County. Propelled by 100-mph winds, the Witch Creek fire raced from near Santa Ysabel in the mountains down to the inland valleys

and into Rancho Santa Fe.

The next day, the Rice Canyon fire began in Fallbrook and the Poomacha fire started on the La Jolla Indian Reserva-tion. There were other fires, too, and all told, the 2007 firestorms killed 10 people, injured 23 civilians and 89 firefighters and destroyed 1,700 homes.

Some 500,000 people were evacuated from their homes, the largest fire evacuation in the nation's history. And, just like it had in 2003, the sky from the desert to the ocean turned gray with smoke and ash.

The fires were on everyone's minds that afternoon on Fiesta Island. Roberts recalled a day six years ago, when officials launched the region's first firefighting helicopter.

Now, there are four such helicopters at the ready – two belonging to the City of San Diego, and two to the County.

"What we launched that day was an idea," Roberts said. "That idea was we have to do things differently."

The Superscoopers are on lease from the Quebec government and will be stationed at the Ramona Airport – at the ready to respond to backcountry fires before they can grow out of control. Each of the planes is able to drop 1,600 gallons of water, an amount that would require four helicopter trips.

Though the mood was celebratory, Board Vice Chairwoman Dianne Jacob offered a word of caution.

"These planes are not a magic bullet; nothing is," Jacob said. "We can't be lulled into a false sense of security. We have more work to do."



Video: Watch the planes in action.

## Building Inspectors Hone Their Damage Assessing Skills

When you have to handle more than 34,000 inspections a year, you don't take much time off.

But that's exactly what the Department of Planning and Land Use's building inspectors recently did, all in the name of disaster preparedness.

Inspectors, structural engineers and geographic information workers shut down operations and held a first-ever, day-long disaster training drill at Mission Trails Regional Park.

Building Chief Darren Gretler said the purpose of the event was to give the division a chance to go over newly-revised disaster operating procedures and make sure inspectors "see the same thing" when they assess damage during catastrophes.

With little fanfare, building inspectors perform a potentially dangerous but important role in disaster response such as the 2007 firestorms. They're among the first to enter endangered areas, following fire crews and law enforcement to evaluate damage, and then tell evacuees, officials and the public what has been destroyed and what has been spared.

(Continued on Page 3)



A young camper at Camp Connect West shows off her memory pillow that she made during the weekend outing in Julian. The camp, a partnership between the Health and Human Services Agency's

Child Welfare Services, the United Way of San Diego County and the Childhood Abuse Prevention Foundation, allowed about 60 siblings, who are unfortunately placed apart in foster care, an opportunity to reconnect and strengthen family bonds.

News Briefs News Briefs

**County's Retirement Association Has Winning Intranet Site**

SDCERA's new intranet site, the SKINNY, has won two best practice awards from organizations that recognize innovative, creative solutions to communication challenges.

The SKINNY, which can be accessed only by SDCERA employees, is customizable, and that makes it cutting-edge. Users have access to various areas they can choose to place on their individual home pages (or not), much like the MyYahoo or iGoogle approach to Internet use. The access to information is controlled by the user, which helps prevent information overload in our modern world.

The SKINNY received the 2008 i-COMM award for best design and usability of an intranet site from Benefits Management Forum and Expo. It also won a 2008 Silver Quill Award with Excellence from the International Association of Business Communicators. The award recognizes development of an innovative, creative site that aligns directly with the organization's business goal of utilizing modern technology to improve productivity and help employees feel more connected to the organization.



**P & C Holds Its First Open House**

To celebrate its first year of operation at its new Scripps Ranch location, the Department of Purchasing and Contracting is hosting an open house on Oct. 29, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Staff from all departments within the County, as well as citizens and businesses, are welcome to attend. Two sessions on how to do business with the County will be offered; one is at 10:30 a.m., the other at 1:30 p.m.

P & C's office is located at 10089 Willow Creek Road, Suite 150 in San Diego.

(News Briefs continued on Page 3)



*In Walt's Words*

**Election Day Is Just Around the Corner**

I don't know about you, but I can't open the newspaper or flip on my television or computer without seeing the faces of Barack Obama or John McCain, nevermind Sarah Palin or Joe Biden. The presidential election is everywhere: the gains or losses in the polls; the speeches and the postmortems; the interviews; and of course the controversy over fashion choices and lipstick – on a hockey mom or a pig. But you know what? It's all pretty fun!

No matter on which side of the aisle you sit, whether you consider your heart red or blue – or think that red state, blue state talk is a bunch of nonsense – politics, finally, is fun again. Here we have two men who are both inspiring characters, who stir the hearts and minds of millions of people, a match up we haven't seen the likes of in many years. And boy, that vice presidential debate is going to be one to watch.

Whoever wins on Nov. 4 will make history. Either we will have the first black president or the first female vice president. This historic election is likely to draw a huge voter turnout – our Registrar of Voters Deborah Seiler is expecting up to 80 percent of registered voters! And people across America will be glued to their TVs, watching the results.

Here in the County, the action will be at Golden Hall, of course. That's where the candidates mingle with the media and all the region's movers and shakers. But to me, the real action is in Kearny Mesa, about two hours after the polls close. That's when the trucks, filled with ballots, start rolling up to the big warehouse at the Registrar of Voters.

Anyone who's been there on Election Night knows the pressure. People are moving fast, there's a constant hum of machines, ringing phones and people talking and walking this way and that. It's electric, even as the night wears on into the early morning.

County ROV staff take this night seriously. Just as seriously as they took the last election, the one before that and all the days in between. They know the importance of their jobs, their piece in the bigger picture, how essential their hard work is to our County and to the very ideals of this nation.

Yes, it's easy to get carried away. But this is important stuff, and this year, with three elections – three! – the ROV, lead by Deborah Seiler, has been working some very long hours, for very long stretches. And they are doing an incredible job. They even manage to keep a smile on their faces.

Just to give you an idea of the scope the ROV's task, consider this:

- The ROV will tally ballots from a record number 1,697 precincts;
- Some 7,952 poll workers are needed for the election;
- 70 to 80 percent of registered voters are expected to turn out.

The ROV makes it easy for voters. The office provides opportunities for voting on the weekend, and even sets up a drive-through for ballot drop-offs. The staff moves voters through the process efficiently and professionally.

So many County employees volunteer their time on Election Day. Still, the ROV could use some help. Our Registrar says there's a need for poll workers and Election Night workers to serve as ballot scanners, ballot runners, and support personnel to marry paper ballots to the memory card for that precinct.

This is a great way for County employees to be part of a historic election. And don't forget to vote! We all need to participate, and this time around, it's sure a lot of fun.

To find out more, visit [sdvote.com](http://sdvote.com)

*Walt*

Walt Ekard  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Building Inspectors Hone Their Damage Assessing Skills**  
(continued from page 1)

"I feel like they're unsung heroes," Gretler said. "They're right there on the front lines. It's risky out there. The fires are still burning."

At the Aug. 26 training, inspectors and staff not only reviewed the new procedures, they practiced with GPS equipment and received safety training from County fire officials. They also drilled, individually huddling around poster-sized photos of damaged properties and filling out practice assessments, then going over the assessments together as a group.

Tim Fitzgerald, a County building inspector for five years, called the training "extremely valuable."

"When you can get everyone in the same room and go over policies and procedures for something like damage assessment, that's huge," Fitzgerald said. "There were some new things, some improvements."

Gretler said conducting disaster damage assessment was more difficult for County inspectors because homes are spread out much farther geographically than they are in cities.

"You can walk down a city street and do several hundred homes," he said. "We're driving down unmarked dirt roads in rural areas, covering hundreds, if not thousands, of miles. So it's a challenge."



DPLU Building Inspectors sharpen their damage assessment skills during a day of training at Mission Trails Regional Park.

During the 2007 firestorms, inspectors and GIS specialists worked around the clock. In less than a week they filed reports on more than 1,000 destroyed homes and 1,200 other structures. Even so, building division managers felt procedures could be improved, and spent 10 months re-writing them.

"We thought overall that our effort went well," Gretler said, "but that there were things we could do to ensure consistency and provide the most accurate information as quickly as possible."

He said the training — which he hopes to make an annual event — was a big deal.

"It (training drill) is the first of its kind," he said. "Just updating the Standard Operating Procedures alone was a huge commitment of time and resources."

**News Briefs News Briefs**

**HHSA and County Library Team Up To Provide Knowledge and Health**

The Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), North Regions, and the San Diego County Library are joining forces to provide a one-stop shop for knowledge and health. When community members visit the County Library's North Bookmobile, they can now get more than a great book or DVD. They can also get important health information on a variety of topics, as well as learn about valuable services offered in their neighborhoods.

The new County partnership to improve access to healthcare, cross thread departments, and bring added value to existing services in the community was initiated by HHSA Director Nick Macchione, and County Library Director José Aponte. Caroline Smith, Senior Policy Advisor representing Supervisor Bill Horn, was on hand to lend the Boards' support.

HHSA North Regions Deputy Director Donna Hand sees this partnership creating new ways to bring important services to community members in North County.

North Regions' Public Health Nurses now offer free blood pressure checks, immunization record assessments, healthcare referrals, and distribute information on health coverage options at targeted North Bookmobile sites.

Additional activities include promoting nutrition services and the Food Stamps Program by incorporating educational materials with the County Library's Books by Mail Program. In addition, HHSA customers will now have books to read while they wait for appointments in targeted North Regions' office lobbies.



**It's Time to Think Green!**

This month is the beginning of the second quarter of the 2008-2009 fiscal year. And that means it's time for County employees to consider the second quarter question: **Is your department green?**

During the quarter, managers will be talking with their staffs for their thoughts and ideas, and reporting back to a committee focused on the topic.

That committee will make recommendations to County management on what the County can do to reduce

its impact on our natural resources. It's part of the GMS 2.0 initiative to prepare the County for the future.

For more information on GMS 2.0, or to find materials to aid in your discussions of the second quarter question, visit the [County's intranet page](#), and click on the GMS tab at the top of your screen.

Inside this edition of *County News*, on Pages 4 and 5, you'll find two stories that examine the County's effort to be more green.



North Coastal and North Inland Public Health Nurses (PHNs) recently joined the North Bookmobile to improve access to healthcare efforts in our communities. From left, Donna Hand, HHSA Deputy Director; the Olive Elementary School fourth grade class; José Aponte, County Library Director; Caroline Smith, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Supervisor Bill Horn; and Nick Macchione, Health and Human Services Agency Director.

(News Briefs continued on Page 6)

## Do Your Part for the Earth: Refrain From Clicking "Print"

Just a quick question first. Are you reading this on your screen? Yes? Excellent. How about the paper folks? (We're assuming you had good reason to print.) Would the paper you're reading this on happen to be recycled paper? And, how did you print it? Double-sided? If it's yes to one or both, you're in step with a County goal to reduce its consumption of paper.

Reducing the County's use of paper is a key part of its overall effort to find more ways to protect the environment. That's because it's a change that's easily made - and made on departmental and individual levels - and because paper is the item that the County orders most often.

"It's just about raising awareness globally in the County," said Lisa Rethwish, an analyst in the Purchasing and Contracting Department who has studied the County's paper use.

According to the County futurist team focused on the environment, some amazing things could happen if all departments switched to 30 percent or 100 percent recycled paper.

We could:

- Save 10,218 or 34,032 trees, respectively;
- Power 78 or 260 homes;
- Save six or 19 Olympic-sized swimming pools' worth of water;
- And, divert 17 or 57 truckloads of trash from landfills.

Board of Supervisors Policy B-67, adopted in 1992, states that: "All County departments and agencies shall utilize, to the maximum extent practical, products made with recycled materials, reusable products, and products designed to be recycled and shall encourage public and private agencies to do so."

Further along, it says, "All County departments and agencies shall utilize double-sided and quadriplex copying when feasible to reduce the amount of materials used in the workplace."

The use of recycled paper among County departments is creeping upward. Two departments are using only recycled paper for printing and copying: the Air Pollution and Control District and Purchasing and Contracting.

The Treasurer/Tax Collector uses recycled paper to print 1 million property tax bills each year.

"We had two things working against us," Rethwish said of departments' not buying recycled paper in previous years. "Recycled paper was not popular and it was expensive."

Now, the price of recycled paper has dropped from about \$13 a ream to around \$3. So-called "virgin" paper is below \$3.

Purchasing and Contracting addressed the drop in its newsletter.

"We tried to get the word out as much as we could, but we think a lot of people still don't know."



### Want to help save paper? Here's what you can do:

- Set printer and copier defaults to print double-sided.
- Save one-sided, used paper for use in the fax machine, for drafts, or scratch paper.
- Print only the pages you need by selecting "Current Page" or "Page Range" from the print menu.
- Proofread documents - and use the spell and grammar checks - before printing.

**Board of Supervisors**  
 Greg Cox, District 1  
 Dianne Jacob, District 2  
 Pam Slater-Price, District 3  
 Ron Roberts, District 4  
 Bill Horn, District 5  
  
 Chief Administrative Officer  
 Walter F. Ekard

*County News* is published for the 17,000 employees of the County of San Diego. The newsletter is available online at [www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dmpr](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dmpr) (click on "Employee Newsletter") or via the County's Intranet at CWW. This information is available upon request in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.

To contact *County News*:  
 Elizabeth Fitzsimons, Editor  
 Phone: (619) 595-4513  
 Fax: (619) 557-4027  
 Mail: 1600 Pacific Highway, Rm 208  
 San Diego, CA 92101 (MS A-359)  
 E-mail: [CountyNews@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:CountyNews@sdcounty.ca.gov)  
 Volume 30, No. 10 -October 2008

## Saving Energy: The County's Doing It. You Can, Too.

You know that smell when you walk into a new building? The aroma of paint and new flooring and everything else that makes it seem fresh and clean? It's actually not so fresh. The smell is the result of offgassing, the evaporation of chemicals used in paint, varnish, carpet, insulation and other materials.

"That's one of the things you notice the absence of when you walk into a green building – because they focus on green materials," said Peter Livingston, energy and sustainability manager with the County's Department of General Services.

The County's new Medical Examiner and Forensic Center will be designed to green building standards, as will the County Operations Center, the Fallbrook and Ramona libraries and the HHS Family Resource Center in Kearny Mesa.

Many of the green features are behind the scenes, such as solar panels on the roof, and the use of more efficient air conditioning systems. Others are visible: the landscaping that requires little to no watering; the high efficiency plumbing fixtures and the windows built higher on the wall to allow more sunlight to permeate the building. Even the building's shape can influence its ability to save energy.

"If a building is longer and narrower, it's easier to bring the daylight in," Livingston said.

The County's drive to reduce its energy consumption was propelled forward by the energy crisis of 2000, Livingston said. Since then, the County has reduced its electricity and natural gas use on a square footage basis by 14 percent and 9 percent respectively.

Due to the crisis, Livingston said, "the prices went way up,

which blew your budget and then we were dealing with rolling blackout conditions, which made people ask what can you do to reduce your chances of blackouts. And then they do it and say 'Hey this isn't so bad; maybe we could do this all the time.'"

Some of those practices stuck.

"Gradual change tends to make the most lasting impact and the County has certainly been a model of that," said Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, who drives a Prius and has another Prius as her office's staff vehicle.

"So-called 'Green Building' has been a personal issue of mine, among other energy issues. Through various incentives and a streamlined permitting process, we've worked with the planning department to make alternative energy sources possible for homeowners in the form of wind turbines and solar panels.

"As a government, we need to continue working on ways to stretch traditional energy sources by combining with energy-efficient sources."

Newer County buildings aren't the only ones to see changes. Older facilities have been updated with more efficient lighting and plumbing – and "delamping," a removal of lighting fixtures in favor of more reliance on "task lighting," or localized lighting instead of illuminating an entire area.

The County is also trying to change employees' habits. They are simple things, but sometimes can be hard to remember: turn off lights that aren't in use; keep the temperature at 68 degrees in the winter and 78 in the summer.



### Here are some other tips, courtesy of General Services:

- Turn off your computer when you leave for the night, and check to make sure your coworker's computer is off, too.
- Shut the door when you leave the building; no sense in using County air conditioning to cool the outdoors.
- During energy alerts, share copiers and printers and shut the others off.
- Unplug printers, cell phone chargers, radios and microwaves that aren't in use. Just because they're off doesn't mean they're not consuming energy.

News Briefs News Briefs

**HHSA Helping Employees Succeed**

The Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) has successfully concluded its first Job Shadow Program, with 40 mentees, along with their partnered mentors, having completed and evaluated the program. HHSA began the pilot program in 2007, providing employees a unique opportunity to preview 50 jobs within HHSA Support Divisions for a period of 16-20 hours.

Over 100 applicants throughout HHSA applied to the program and 40 mentees were selected. Each of the 80 mentors and mentees were provided the opportunity to evaluate the program. Overall, the results showed a positive outcome for both mentors and mentees. Based on these results, HHSA Job Shadow Program will continue in 2008-2009 to better serve the employees and HHSA's succession planning efforts.

**Eric Gibson Named DPLU Director**

Eric Gibson, who has led the County's Department of Planning and Land Use as its interim director for the last 14 months, has been chosen to be the department's director.

Gibson, a 17-year veteran of the department, was selected from a field of nationally-recruited applicants. He became the department's interim director in June 2007 when former director Gary Pryor retired.

Under Gibson's leadership, the planning department has improved customer and client service - cutting counter wait times, the hours of late tasks, backlogs of discretionary projects with EIRs and the average times to review building plans - even while suffering budget cuts caused by the stagnant building economy.

As director, Gibson plans to put increased emphasis on customer service. Among its more important projects, Planning and Land Use is working to complete the first overhaul of its General Plan since the 1970s, and will create Multiple Species Conservation Plans for the entire County.

**Deferred Compensation Statements Are Coming; Don't Panic!**

Anyone who's been following the news from Wall Street is probably braced for the moment they open their statements from Deferred Compensation this month. They know the balance will be lower than last time. Yet seeing that number in black and white can be rough.

"We are in tough economic times, economic times that try our patience on a daily basis. We often find ourselves wondering what's happening to our holdings," Treasurer/Tax Collector Dan McAllister said.

"But the key thing to remember: this is long term. Don't follow this on an hourly or day-to-day basis," he said.

Due to federal regulations, McAllister and Deferred Compensation staff cannot provide financial advice. Neither can the County's providers of its 401(a) and 457 plans, Hartford and T. Rowe Price.

McAllister was able to say this: try not to panic. He also suggested that County employees seeking more information about their options should call the providers or visit their Web sites, which offer current market commentary.

- **Hartford:** (800) 528-9009; [www.retire.hartfordlife.com](http://www.retire.hartfordlife.com)
- **T. Rowe Price:** (800) 922-9945; [www.rps.troweprice.com](http://www.rps.troweprice.com)

No matter whether you have a 401(a), a 457, or both, the accounts are SIPC (that's Securities Investor Protection Corporation) insured up to \$500,000 per account.

Next spring, the County will transition to its new service provider, Nationwide. Nationwide will provide County employees with access to certified financial planners who are licensed to give advice and full financial plans for plan participants at no charge.

**Back From the Brink**

A mare found nearly starved to death in Campo and nursed back to health over the summer by the County's Department of Animal Services has found a new home.

The horse, named Simone by Animal Services staff, was matched with a new owner from a list of applicants last month after the mare's story was publicized.

"The 'before and after' pictures of the horse are extremely dramatic. All she needed was someone to care enough to feed her," said John Carlson, Deputy Director for County Animal Services. "She is just a sweetheart, and there is no excuse for the treatment she received."

Animal Control Officers went to a corral in Campo in June after receiving a report from the U.S. Border Patrol about a severely neglected horse and

dead foal. The mare's foal appeared to have been dead for some time. Simone had no water available and the hay in the corral was just out of the reach.

Criminal charges have been filed by the District Attorney's Office against the owner, Derek Boyd, for animal neglect. He has been arraigned and a preliminary hearing is scheduled for October 21. The horse was forfeited under the law.

Once in County custody, Simone made improvements each day. She mostly needed food and water, and Animal Services staff kept close watch to make sure she didn't develop colic due to starvation. Within two months, this sweet horse looked like a different animal - she had gained weight, her coat was shiny and she was seeking attention from the people who cared for her.



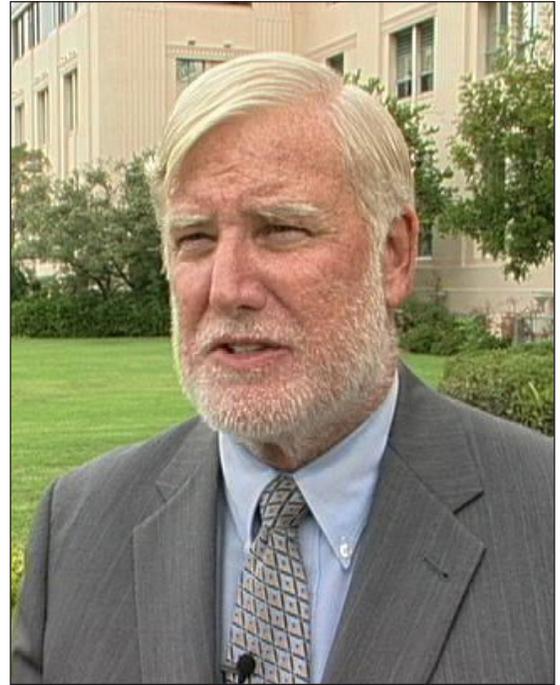
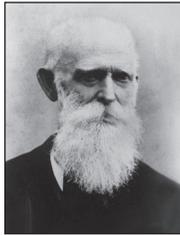
*This mare was barely clinging to life when she was rescued from her Campo corral by Animal Control officers in June.*



*After being in the care of Animal Services, the mare, named Simone, put on weight, became healthy and was adopted in September.*



Board Chairman Greg Cox turned heads and made headlines while sporting his new beard, which he grew on vacation in August and shaved off, as promised, when the state budget was signed last month. It had been quite a while since the County had a fully bearded Chair - not one with a goatee, Van Dyke or beard with bare lip - but a full, sideburn to sideburn, across the cheeks, chin and lip beard. The last man with such facial hair stylings - or at least the last one photographed with a full beard - was David W. Briant, who served as Chair in 1875-77, 1883-84 and 1887-88.



## Qualifying for a Home Loan

Recent volatility in the financial industry has made it harder to qualify for a home loan. Here are four simple steps to increase your credit score so that you can qualify for a loan and purchase - or refinance - a home.

1. Pay down the balance on your credit cards. The closer you are to your limit on a credit card, the more impact it has on your score. If you have a Visa card with a \$1000 limit, and owe \$992, you have used up 99.2% of your available credit. Pay that down to increase your available credit and your scores will move up.
2. Don't close the cards once you pay them down or off. The credit bureaus score better when you have available credit. Closing a \$5,000 Visa without a balance takes away a huge chunk of available credit. Leaving that account open without a balance shows you have a resource for funds if needed.
3. Don't let your accounts be 30 days late. A payment that is 15 days late may cost you a hefty late fee, but being 30 days late on an account will cost you a ton of points on your credit report. Put a budget together and get your accounts paid before 30 days.
4. If you have no choice but to be late, pay the biggest balances first, and work down to the smallest. The bigger the payment, the bigger the impact a late payment of 30 days will cause.

If you have questions about real estate loans, you can talk to a Financial Service Representative or Real Estate Specialist at any of the San Diego County Credit Union branch locations, or call (877) 732-2848.



Cassie Shively (podium) fights back tears as her mother Kim Shively (left) listens to her share her story of drug addiction and recovery during the unveiling of the "I am sorry ... Thank you" exhibit last month. Both mother and daughter were addicted to meth. The exhibit showcased the artwork of treatment patients from throughout the county. Through their art, the former users apologized to their friends and families for the pain their addiction has caused. They also thanked those that provided support and helped them kick their addictions. The exhibit was created to commemorate Recovery Month and was on display at the County Administration Center during September.

News Makers

**DGS Staff Recognized by CGSA**

Deborah Bailey, Real Estate Project Manager, and Mike Urquhart, Chief of Facilities Operations, were recently recognized for this year's County General Services Association (CGSA) awards for innovation and service excellence. CGSA membership consists of municipalities throughout California and Nevada.

Bailey was nominated for advancing the Multiple Species Conservation Program to protect endangered species and habitat over 98,000 acres of natural lands. She was recently recognized by the Board of Supervisors for her work on the Ramona grasslands project. This nomination recognizes outstanding program contributions to customer service and innovation in business practices, programs or service delivery provided by CGSA member agencies.

Urquhart was nominated and selected for establishing a Service Contract Compliance Audit Program, which received recognition as the Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

This innovative and comprehensive program includes measurable performance standards, enforceable contract provisions, inspection and documentation processes, and effective use of contract payment deductions for non-compliant contract management systems. Additionally, the program has demonstrated over \$2 million in cost savings for non-compliant and substandard performance over a three-year period.

Both will be presented with their awards at the CGSA Academy in this month.

**CSAC Cites Four County Programs for Excellence**

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) presented San Diego County with a prestigious Challenge Award and three Merit Awards at the September 16 Board of Supervisors meeting.

The Challenge Award was given to the County for its Rapid Response to Local Emergencies, referring to the four Local Assistance Centers (LACs) the County established and opened to help fire victims within 72 hours of last October's devastating wildfires. CSAC praised the efficiency and speed with which County staff was able

(News Makers continued on Page 9)

**Lon Larson (ARCC/Assessment Services)** received "heart-felt thanks for his very professional service" and for his "patient and thorough" way of handling a document search.

*"How wonderful to have had an opportunity to interact with a public servant such as Mr. Larson. I am glad to inform you that Mr. Larson affirms your number one priority of Customer Service."*

**Kesone Luangvannasy (Housing & Community Development)** "must love her job because she does it so well."

*"She has always been there whenever I need anything. She makes me feel blessed that I have people like her to help me. With me being a single mom, it's very nice to have someone understand and know that she is doing her part. Thank you for having her on your team. She is the best."*

Another one of **Kesone's** clients wrote "Thank you a million times for all of your help."

*"I just wanted to tell you what a great job you did with us. Now it's time to leave and let someone else have the chance that we had."*

**The County Library Branches** are "busier than ever" as county residents turn to their local libraries to take advantage of all the new programs and services.

Comment from a teen user of the **Lake-side Branch**:

*"The library has a vast collection of cool books and it's just a cool place to hang out and talk with friends."*

A customer at the **Rancho San Diego Branch** wrote:

*"I want to commend you all on the wonderful summer reading program! The charts, goodies, coupons, the weekly shows, the raffle—all were done with a spirit of excellence. The children were engaged and inspired. Four of my five grandchildren needed to be encouraged to read and are now reading voluntarily!"*

**Officers Virginia Moreno and Jennifer Jordan (Animal Services)** assisted a San Diego Police Detective who praised them saying "Thank you for helping me save a dog's life."

*"There is no doubt this dog would have been killed if left running in the streets; it was almost hit by the trolley. When the officers arrived, they were very patient and incredibly gentle. It's obvious these officers are very caring individuals and conscientious in what they do. It is awesome to see that your staff is consistently gentle with the animals they deal with. Keep up the good work!"*

**Vicky Thomas (Child Support Services)** received a great review from a custodial parent who wrote, "You are blessed to have her as an employee."

*"She answered all my questions effectively and made sure I had a clear understanding of the answers. I appreciate the service she gave me."*

**Aline Dang (Environmental Health)** received thanks for "making an initially stressful community meeting end on a positive and interesting note."

*"Not only did the poor gal have to wait for a City Councilman for over 40 minutes before starting, but when she made her presentation it was so informative, well-presented and with much humor. She managed the group very well."*

**Gail Straub (Housing & Community Development)** receives many compliments for her consistent "Excellent Service."

*"Absolutely pleasant and informative—don't change anything."*

*"She couldn't have been nicer!" "I was very impressed and comfortable with Gail. Thank you!" "Gail was very polite and offered me information on the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. She was kind and respectful."*

**Alexandra Fialho (Clerk of the Board)** did "outstanding work" on a public records request regarding the California Environmental Quality Act. "It is reassuring to know the assistance available from the Clerk of the Board, especially Alexandra Fialho, is there when needed."

*"I was surprised to receive, not only the requested CEQA finding, but also the related Ordinance and three Board actions. Her performance is truly consistent with the County's motto; The Noblest Motive is the Public Good."*

**Regina Stewart (ARCC/Assessment Services)** so impressed a client that she wrote, "It's really rare to come across such exceptional service these days."

*"It was so refreshing to receive such helpful service delivered in such a kind, patient and skillful way."*

**Leslie Henderson (Child Support Services)** made the day for a parent who hadn't received any support for her child in a long time.

*"Thank you so much for collecting the child support. I don't know how you did it. It's very helpful for my daughter."*

Your questions answered

Q: I'm currently researching the history of the CAC's favorite sculpture/fountain, Donald Hord's "Guardian of the Waters, on the West Plaza. She celebrates her 70th anniversary in June 2009. How is she maintained today? Does the fountain still run via the original 1939 equipment?

-- Sincerely, CAC History Wonk

A: For the answer to Wonk's question about this well-known piece of bay front history – and a favorite spot for wedding photos - *County News* turned to David Hall, Assistant Clerk of the Board. He tells us that the statue and fountain was shaped by Hord from a 22-ton granite block from a Lakeside quarry. The fountain worked all right until the 1990s when it was plagued by mechanical difficulties and the water was finally shut off for five years.

In 1996, the fountain was restored, and the internal pipes and pump replaced. Since then, the tile in the basin of the fountain was replaced to address leakage issues. The fountain is now maintained by the Clerk of the Board Facility Maintenance Program.

And she does need maintenance. Hall says the poor lady's hair turns white from time to time, thanks to the seagulls, and so the facility crew gives her a shower - with a high-pressure hose from an aerial lift! The basin also needs to be regularly scrubbed clean and you'll see a member of the facility crew like Ray Mahler, pictured in the accompanying photo, in there with waders keeping it clean.



Have a question about County operations? Need some advice on an issue at work or home? There are County experts for every topic, and *County News* will find them!

Write to us at [CountyNews@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:CountyNews@sdcounty.ca.gov)

to respond and also cited the large number of people who were served at the LACs. This award was one of only 10 given this year, for which 58 California counties compete.

CSAC also recognized three County programs for innovation and excellence with Merit Awards. Those programs include the Serial Inebriate Program, operated by HHS; Food for Thought, a partnership between County Library and Aging and Independence Services; and the Workforce Academy for Youth, an innovative program for older foster youth which Human Resources staff administer, with support from numerous County departments.

**Probation Officer Wins State Award**

Senior Probation Officer Craig Underdown was honored as the "Juvenile Institutions Member of the Year" last month by the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association.

Underdown, who has worked for the Probation Department for more than 20 years, was selected because of his efforts at Work Projects and his response to last year's devastating wildfires.

The Work Project Program is an alternative sentencing program available to juvenile and adult sentencing courts and consists of manual labor work crews.

In order to provide safe and efficient work crews to local and state municipalities, Underdown has developed and maintained vital collaborative partnerships with agencies that are dependent on County services to maintain the cleanliness of their jurisdictions.

In October 2007, the wildfires erupted while Underdown was on duty. He immediately activated staff to support evacuation efforts of the rural juvenile camps and notified his supervisors of his decision. During the next few days as the fires ravaged the county, destroying homes and closing freeways, the interstate which Underdown travels to work was closed. Still, he maintained telephone contact with his supervisor and offered suggestions of how the unit could help fire victims. When he was able to report for work, he quickly organized officers and work crews to serve the evacuation centers in any way possible.

## Retirements

Martha F. Anneler-Wasydyke (Health & Human Services)	Alicia L. Leyco (Child Support)
Carlos O. Armour (District Attorney)	William F. Miller (Probation)
Angela Arrequeive-Price (Health & Human Services)	Gilda B. Montillano (Child Support)
Jovito A. Baquir (Sheriff)	Luis B. Napalan (Health & Human Services)
Deborah A. Boyd (Sheriff)	Macario G. Perez (Sheriff)
Virginia M. Corpus (Sheriff)	Norma M. Revita (Child Support)
Madelyn L. Cullinan (Health & Human Services)	Daniel L. Ruehle (Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk)
Elizabeth A. Delgado (Sheriff)	Esther C. Sanchez (Public Defender)
Ramon A. Filomeno (Superior Court)	Teresa L. Sheehey (Library)
Randall B. Fischer (Health & Human Services)	Barbara Silvia (Health & Human Services)
Jesus R. Hernandez (Facilities Management)	Theresa E. Wilson (Planning and Land Use)
David A. Horschler (Sheriff)	

## Service Awards

### 35 Years

Jeanne M. Papania (Health & Human Services)  
 Sylvester Washington, Jr. (Sheriff)  
 Rosalva Weston (District Attorney)

### 30 Years

John J. Carlson (Animal Services)  
 Rajendra V. Dabholkar (Wastewater Management)  
 Jeanette L. Day (Public Defender)  
 Robert E. Giesick (Environmental Health)  
 Mary A. Hoefert (Animal Services)  
 Michael D. Leathers (Sheriff)  
 Patricia J. Maldonado (Probation)  
 Peter W. Morton (Sheriff)  
 James V. Piscitelli (Sheriff)  
 John A. Reiderer (Fleet Maintenance & Support)  
 Katherine J. Reyna (Animal Services)  
 Janet E. Ryzdynski (Sheriff)  
 James L. Wright (Animal Services)

### 25 Years

Miguel A. Baca (Sheriff)  
 Julio Barrios (District Attorney)  
 Sherry L. Ceccanese (Health & Human Services)  
 Diane Culverson (Health & Human Services)  
 Daniel M. Early (Probation)  
 Maria E. Escalante (District Attorney)  
 Julius T. Faulkner (Sheriff)  
 Jeffrey J. Hamm (Sheriff)  
 Brenda J. Howard (Health & Human Services)  
 Daniel R. Laibach (Sheriff)  
 Susan D. Marientes (Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk)  
 Denise M. McGehee (Sheriff)  
 Cathy V. Neville (Agriculture, Weights & Measures)  
 Merle Rupp (Health & Human Services)  
 Stanley D. Salazar (Sheriff)  
 Kirk I. Thomson (Sheriff)  
 Kimberly A. Van Abel (Sheriff)  
 Joel W. Wigand (Sheriff)

### 20 Years

Mary Jo Barr (Public Defender)  
 Debbie J. Bayliss (Health & Human Services)  
 Michael C. Bentz (Health & Human Services)  
 Patricia W. Bevelyn (Health & Human Services)  
 Marilyn Ann Brennan (Health & Human Services)  
 Rebecca M. Broadwell (Environmental Health)  
 Cathy A. Cardoza (Health & Human Services)  
 Susan P. Clemens (Public Defender)  
 Kathleen A. Conwell (Animal Services)  
 Vielka E. Daniel (Health & Human Services)  
 Lucia C. Delino (Health & Human Services)  
 Robert W. Eisele (Planning & Land Use)  
 Victoria L. Fletcher (County Counsel)  
 Barry R. Fox (Health & Human Services)  
 Curtis J. Gosney (Public Defender)  
 Victoria G. Infante (Health & Human Services)  
 Richard A. Jensen (Health & Human Services)  
 Janice I. Lau (County Counsel)  
 Joann R. Legaspi (Health & Human Services)  
 Deirdre L. Lemire (County Counsel)  
 Ed A. Lomibao (Health & Human Services)  
 Chita A. Matanza (Child Support)  
 Teri J. Meeks (Health & Human Services)  
 William R. Mize (Public Defender)  
 Irma C. Ortega (District Attorney)  
 Anson H. Pang (Sheriff)  
 Charlie L. Peterson, Jr. (Sheriff)  
 Alina Seibert (Health & Human Services)  
 Helen G. Serneo (Child Support)  
 Patricia V. Smith (Health & Human Services)  
 Sharon N. Tracy (Health & Human Services)  
 Judy Vickrey (Health & Human Services)  
 Margaret N. Waznis (County Library)  
 Richard C. Westmoreland (Probation)

## In Memoriam

---

Harold G. Beck (General Services, 1978)	7/08
Robert D. Brown (District Attorney, 1984)	8/08
Loretta Butler (Health and Human Services, 1996)	8/08
Frances E. Estes (Health and Human Services, 1978)	7/08
Wilson H. Fansher (Agriculture, Weights and Measures, 1999)	8/08
Mary M. Ford (Health and Human Services, 1992)	8/08
Lynne Gillespie (Health and Human Services, 1997)	7/08
Bernadine F. Halbert (Assessor, 1987)	7/08
Alice G. Hill (Municipal Court, 1978)	8/08
Bette Jacobsen (General Services, 1998)	7/08
Gail Lamb (Library, 1995)	7/08
Mary H. Miller (Probation, 1997)	8/08
Soren D. Norgaard (Probation, 1985)	7/08
Clyde N. Oden (Public Works, 1973)	7/08
Margaret V. Siems (Health and Human Services, 1980)	7/08
Harry Simon III (Probation, 2008)	8/08
Norma J. Stringer (Health and Human Services, 1992)	8/08
Barbara Turner (District Attorney, 2002)	7/08
Lora J. Wilson (District Attorney, 2002)	8/08

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of active County employees Anisa B. Astilla, Health and Human Services Agency, (7/08), Colleen R. Langworthy Spelts, Probation, (8/08) and Serena Layoun, Public Defender, (6/08).”