



Wastewater | Environment | Public Health
January 2021

A Note of Thanks from SOCWA's General Manager

2020 is a year we won't soon forget.

But as I tell my staff, we must focus on the mission ahead of us, even in the face of extraordinary adversity. In 2020, the SOCWA team stepped up in a major way to carry out our mission of protecting public health and the environment.

- **Fiscal Strength & Transparency:** SOCWA was awarded the Certificate of Achievement in Excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). It is the non-profit's highest honor for financial reporting.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Work began on millions of dollars of vital projects to renew and modernize key treatment facilities that protect oceans, canyons and creeks.
- **Water Production:** SOCWA's facilities produced 4,222 acre-feet of recycled water for member agencies and their irrigation needs through the month of October 2020. That's enough to save 1.3 *billion* gallons of domestic drinking water supplies.
- **COVID Studies:** SOCWA participated in national studies that examined the connection between wastewater and COVID in local communities. These studies help determine virus prevalence in the absence of widespread testing.

Most of all, I am proud of our staff. Wastewater treatment does not rest. It is an essential, 24/7/365 operation. Our crews continue to do an extraordinary job while facing numerous, and often simultaneous, crises.

The coming year brings hope. In January 2021, SOCWA celebrates its 20th anniversary, and as we prepare to enter our third decade of service to South Orange County, we're eager to bring forward vital new infrastructure projects and continue to be of value to the region.

We wish you all the joy of renewal in this New Year. Please feel free to contact me at bburnett@socwa.com or (949) 234-5420.

Sincerely,

Betty Burnett
General Manager, SOCWA

LEADERSHIP @ SOCWA

Erdman, Collings Selected as SOCWA Board Leadership

At its October 2020 meeting, the SOCWA Board of Directors unanimously selected Dennis Erdman as its Chair and Matt Collings Vice Chair for the 2021 year.

Director Erdman previously served as Vice Chair and is an elected board member at the South Coast Water District.

Director Collings serves as the Assistant General Manager at Moulton Niguel Water District and has served on the SOCWA board for the past several years.

Congratulations to both directors Erdman and Collings.

FINANCIAL REPORTING AWARD

SOCWA Recognized for Financial Reporting, Transparency Excellence



The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to SOCWA for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019.

It is the non-profit's highest honor for financial transparency and full disclosure. [Continue reading here.](#)

OPERATIONS SPOTLIGHT

SOCWA Saves Energy to Help Local Homes, Businesses



As temps soared this past fall, SOCWA's forward-thinking energy plans helped save enough power to run about 3,000 local homes.

The wastewater agency's cogeneration engines helped maintain grid stability during the

extreme heat waves. These sustainable energy engines, installed in 2018, use a natural gas byproduct of the wastewater treatment process instead of traditional power. When in use, the cogeneration engines save between 1.0-1.5 megawatts of energy each day - enough to power up to 1,500 homes.

During extreme heat, SOCWA also collaborated with utilities and regulators to run standby generators to power its facilities, preserving energy to keep the lights on for an additional 1,500 homes.

The collective effort helped local utilities ensure homes and businesses had necessary power and avoid rolling blackouts.

"I cannot emphasize how much your efforts to curtail energy kept the grid operating throughout the day," said SDG&E Representative Christopher Nanson. "Because of the support from our region's industrial and large commercial customers, we would not have been as successful in curtailing the load and keeping the lights on and the air conditioners running."

COVID-19 UPDATE

SOCWA Participates in COVID-19 Research



As a leader in research and collaboration, SOCWA has engaged in multiple partnerships to provide science and data regarding SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) that is found in wastewater.

SOCWA's environmental team collaborated with UCLA to detect prevalence of the virus in the region during the summer of 2020. A second study is being conducted with South Coast Water District (SCWD) and the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) to study (and potentially catch) outbreaks at sewer gathering points before symptoms manifest in the community. Early in 2020, SOCWA also partnered with MIT as part of a nationwide study on how wastewater can be a useful source of monitoring the virus in local communities.

According to the CDC, wastewater can be an early indicator of community spread. SOCWA is doing its part to provide data, science and leadership around this important issue.

LOSS TO THE COMMUNITY

Director Ray Miller Passes in 2020

It is with great sadness that SOCWA acknowledges the loss of longtime SOCWA Director Ray Miller. Mr. Miller was an integral part of the water and wastewater community and dedicated his career to many organizations including SOCWA. Mr. Miller was a General Manager at South Coast Water District, Board Member of the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), Founder of the Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works (SCAP) and an active leader with both the American Waterworks Association and OC Water Association.

SOCWA is grateful for the years of service from Mr. Miller. Our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

PERSONNEL SPOTLIGHT

Employees Take Top Awards Locally and Statewide



SOCWA employees shine at the 2019 awards given by our local Santa Ana River Basin Section (SARBS) of the industry respected Clean Water Environment Association (CWEA).

JB Latham Plant Operator Bob Kallberg has outdone his previous awards, winning

Operator of the Year and continuing on to win third place for the statewide award. The chapter also recognized Gage Gesiriech as Mechanical Technician Person of the Year and Katie Greenwood as Runner Up P3S Person of the Year.

Congratulations to Bob, Gage and Katie for the well deserved recognition of their hard work and dedication.

These awards go on top of the JB Latham Plant being named "Plant of the Year" in 2018.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Santa Margarita Water District Dedicates Trampas Reservoir



After 15 years of planning, and two and a half years of construction, the Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) officially opened and dedicated the newest, largest, recycled water reservoir in the OC region. The 1.6 billion gallon reservoir, paired with two existing

reservoirs, will store nearly all of the recycled water produced by the district, greatly improving water supply during the hot California summer months.

"The Trampas Dam ensures our water supplies are resilient and guarantee we are excellent stewards of our imported water supply," said Board President Betty Olson at a socially distanced opening ceremony and dedication. With special accolades given by the California State Water Resources Control Board, this innovative project helps SMWD toward their goal of zero discharge to the ocean. You can watch the full Dedication Ceremony on [SMWD's Facebook](#) or learn more about the history of the dam in this [Youtube video](#). Congratulations to the Board, Staff and members of Santa Margarita Water District.

[Take a Virtual Tour of the Trampas Canyon Dam & Reservoir](#)

[Learn More about SOCWA](#)

South Orange County Wastewater Authority | 34156 Del Obispo Street , Dana Point, CA 92629

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Customer Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by outreach@socwa.com powered by



Try email marketing for free today!