

Olivehurst Public Utility District



Agenda Item Staff Report

Meeting Date: 11/04/2020

Item description/summary:

Discuss Community Outreach events per the District's Strategic Plan

As you may know, OPUD has been working with a consultant on Community Outreach events that are being funded in part by DWR Disadvantaged Community Involvement funding and in part by the YWA. Due to COVIDs closing of schools and other public events, the outreach program has slowed down considerably. With YWA picking up the bulk of the funding for school related outreach, the consultant has identified DWR funding that is available for a new project. A project description has been provided by the consultant and is attached.

Fiscal Analysis:

No match is required, but staff time would be required

Employee Feedback

Employee and community feedback on previous year's community outreach programs has been extremely positive.

Sample Motion:

Discussion Only

Prepared by:

Christopher Oliver, Public Works Engineer

Olivehurst DACI Preliminary Scope

The following are recommended strategies and activities to build on our previous program to enhance awareness about water issues and OPUD among disadvantaged communities in Olivehurst and to help enhance participation and representation of traditionally underrepresented communities in water issue discussions, policy and decision-making.

INTERNAL OPUD WORK

1. **OPUD Board Training and Education** – Develop and provide training to board members to enhance their awareness of water issues specific to minority communities; better understand the role culture and language play in the way those communities view water, its purveyance and use; learn how not being full aware of those differences may impact the organization; and seeing what can be done to more effectively engage and represent those communities throughout OPUD processes.
2. **Communications Audit** – Review existing OPUD communications materials, such as brochures, flyers, newsletters, website, posters, etc. to assess how effectively they are reaching non-English speakers. As needed, develop counterparts or new language-specific materials to better reach target communities. These should include **posters** for the main office, in Spanish, educating visitors about services, payment processes, who do contact with issues, etc. We should also look at sending out information to the Spanish-speaking community through the bill-inserts. These could be as simple as a small flyer or maybe even a **newsletter**. The newsletter could introduce the board members to the community; talk about water conservation; explain any processes (such as the payment process) the community is having issues with, as to manage expectations and remove roadblocks; explain what will be covered at the next board meeting and invite them to participate, etc.

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY WORK - TARGETED

3. **Latino Advisory Committee** – Develop a small group (6-8) of Spanish-speaking OPUD customers to serve as connection between the board and the Latino community. The group would meet regularly to go over any issues the board will be tackling and seek and provide the input of the Latino community on those issues. We will educate and train committee members with the goal of eventually having them present directly to the board, organize and participate in community events, manage community meetings, manage the Spanish-language social media efforts, etc. Essentially, we would be preparing them to take over the program as our funding goes away, so that the program is sustainable in the long term.

4. **Water Leadership Academy** – Develop a program for students who want to learn more about water issues. The program could include field trips, such as a tour of the water treatment plant, a visit to see and experience the various elements of the watershed (creeks, springs, groundwater [wells], wetlands, etc.), science projects (building on the experiment boxes being done at schools), a river clean-up day, etc. We could have them present to the OPUD Board, DWR and maybe even related committees in the State Legislature. Participants could even do presentations at school assemblies, instead of having our outreach team members doing them. Essentially, these kids would be learning, teaching and being exposed to leaders, thus creating future water leaders.
5. **Water Warriors** – A comic book series featuring a group of kids who solve local water issue problems through research, science and action. The comic book would reinforce some of the lessons learned in school and share through our other communication efforts. Water Leadership Academy members could help us identify story ideas and, eventually, even have individual members featured in the comics.

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY WORK – GENERAL PUBLIC

6. **Community Events** – Continue participating in community events. In the past we've attended the county fair, multiple ELAC meetings, events organized by community partners like AMPLA Health, cultural events and others. We want to continue and expand on those efforts.
7. **Advertising** – Develop an outdoor and radio advertising campaign reiterating and reinforcing our messaging. There are a series of inexpensive bus bench ads and small billboards in Olivehurst that can be procured for relatively very little money, which could create a visible presence for the organization and our messaging. We've also reached out to Spanish radio stations who would, in addition to paid advertisement, provide us with interview opportunities in their programs as well as create remotes, where they send a van and team to Olivehurst to play music, hand out giveaways, all while promoting it live on air and mentioning OPUD. We could be at these remotes with information and looking to engage the community.