2018 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE NOMINEES
We are thrilled to announce the nominees for the 2018 CASA Awards of Excellence. Since 1996, we have showcased our members and their remarkable efforts to help create a clean and sustainable environment for California.

Our member agencies are leading the way in clean water and renewable resource projects. We’re proud to share their exemplary work in the following four categories:

- **Outstanding Capital Project:** Recognizes an exemplary public wastewater capital project.

- **Excellence in Innovation and Sustainability:** Recognizes innovative application of existing technology or the development of new, cutting-edge technology applied to wastewater collection, treatment, wastewater and biosolids recycling and renewable energy production.

- **Organizational Excellence:** Recognizes exemplary achievement in managing the agency’s division, unit or process.

- **Excellence in Public Outreach and Education:** Recognizes efforts to impact or educate a segment of the local community on issues important to the agency.

Thank you to all the members who submitted applications for the 2018 Awards of Excellence. We applaud your tireless efforts to advance clean water and renewable resources and look forward to sharing your achievements at the awards ceremony.

Sincerely,

THE AWARDS COMMITTEE
Chris Berch, *Inland Empire Utilities Agency*
Trisha Hill, *Leucadia Wastewater District*
Heather Johnson, *Santa Rosa Water*
Tim Kalstrand, *East Bay Municipal Utility District*
Ryan Smith, *City of Richmond, Water Resources Recovery Dept.*
Jason Warner, *Oro Loma Sanitary District*
Ironhouse Sanitary District

Aluminum Sulfate Storage and Feed Station

In the winter of 2016/17, the District’s collection system and Water Recycling Facility (WRF) received a significant increase in storm flows and illegal surface water flows from surface drainage. These increased flows resulted in the need for aluminum sulfate (alum) addition to increase ultraviolet light (UV) transmittance and reduce suspended solids. From October 2016 to March 2017, the District spent $122,700 on alum. The current alum feed system has inadequate secondary containment and relies on chemical storage totes. The District was forced to purchase alum at a premium price due to inadequate on-site chemical storage facilities.

The District contracted with an engineering firm to design a permanent alum storage and feed facility for the WRF. The design was expected to be complete by December 2017. A temporary solution was implemented to take advantage of bulk chemical deliveries until the final design was constructed.
Ironhouse Sanitary District

*North Pond Storage Reservoir*

The District is governed by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) that regulate storage and land application of tertiary treated recycled water. The District uses the North Pond as a reservoir for storing recycled water that leaves the Water Recycling Facility (WRF). The effluent that enters the pond from the plant complies with regulatory permits for the plant. However, while the recycled water is stored in the storage pond, the pH changes due to vegetation in the unlined pond and algae growth. This led to pH limit exceedances and a Notice of Violation from the Regional Water Board.

Through a series of meetings and analysis, the District justified a modification of the pH limit for the recycled water stored in the North Pond. The Regional Board agreed to modify the testing requirements for recycled water in the WDR.

Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District and Lystek International

*Organics Material Recovery Center – A Public-Private Success*

Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (FSSD) and Lystek International Limited have entered into an agreement to provide a regional solution to biosolids management in the San Francisco Bay Area. This Public-Private-Partnership allows Lystek to own and operate an Organic Material Recovery Center, a patented process to transform biosolids, and other organic waste streams, into a multi-purpose product with commercial applications. The product liquid can be sold as a high-quality fertilizer and/or recycled to anaerobic digesters or BNR systems to deliver process enhancements.

Unique benefits of the technology include treatment of thickened or dewatered, raw or digested biosolids, reduction of odors, reduction of output volumes, managed storage and transportation costs, and production of a high-quality, pathogen-free, nutrient-rich fertilizer with predictable NPK values. The system is also modular with a small footprint, making it flexible to deploy and easy to retrofit into existing wastewater treatment plants.
Since the formation of the District in 1956, the five-member board of directors overseeing the Cupertino Sanitary District has successfully outsourced the management of the District to a consulting firm, Mark Thomas & Co., resulting in cost-effective and quality services to the District’s rate payers. As a smaller district encompassing 22,290 connections, the ability to staff and manage for daily operations, maintenance, capital improvements and emergencies, would normally require carrying a burdensome payroll of in-house managers and professionals, along with HR and Accounting departments. The District has found that a consultant can manage CIP projects, engage specialists, and expand/contract its workforce appropriately to fit the work needed. The District has been able to keep the cost to provide sewer service among the lowest in the SF Bay area.

Fiscal management is a top priority of the Ironhouse Sanitary District. Since 2015, the District has reduced operating expenses each year, developed a risk model for the sewer collection system to determine the highest priority investments, completed a Water Recycling Facility reliability study and developed a capital improvement program for the entire District. The District has not increased annual sewer service fees in three years and does not plan an increase for FY 18/19, resulting in the longest duration without the need for an increase since 1992. Beginning in 2017, the District developed a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that concisely communicates the overall fiscal strength of the District.
Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) hosts an open house during the City of Oakley's annual Science Week that invites children and their parents to explore the District's Water Recycling Facility, check out its collections equipment and see how ISD takes responsibility to care for the environment. Visitors see first-hand the work involved every day to create a safe and healthy environment. Included in the three-hour event are hayride tours of the Water Recycling Facility, a children's craft project, displays and informational material, and a live raptor show. During the hayride, the tour meanders through the various buildings of the Water Recycling Facility while a staff member explains the wastewater cleaning process. The Collections staff demonstrates the tools and machines used to keep the environment safe, as well as how pipes are flushed. It is a fun day for all ages and the general public is invited to attend.

Goleta Sanitary District's 2017 Jurassic Plant Tour Open House was a five-hour free public event that showcased the activities and processes of the district in relation to the concept of “one water.” The tag line, "They’re coming for you, because you’re using their water" highlighted the fact that all of the water on Earth has been here since long before the age of the dinosaurs. The event was designed to appeal to children and their parents providing a safe, fun, family-friendly educational event on a Saturday in September. Visitors learned how the District staff collects, treats, and recycles resources for the benefit of the community and the environment.

The Goleta Sanitary District's 35-member staff (one of whom was a volunteer at the time) worked for months to create the set design, staging, attractions, educational material, and outreach program materials for the Jurassic Plant Tour Open House event.
**Delta Diablo**

*Deer Valley H.S. Hazardous Waste Public Service Announcement*

As a component of our community engagement strategy promoting business-education alliances, in 2017 Delta Diablo created a unique public outreach project with a local high school. Over several months, an informative and engaging public service announcement (PSA) video was developed by a group of students interacting with staff while filming at our agency. The project was a part of their final senior year grades. In turn, our public agency will use this PSA video to engage with stakeholders to promote our wastewater services, introduce our professional staff and highlight the regional Delta Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, which we manage on behalf of five other public agencies in East Contra Costa County. This PSA video project helps showcase Delta Diablo as a “Utility of the Future” providing social, environmental and economic value to the communities we serve. No public funds were expended on this project.

**Central Contra Costa Sanitary District**

*Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility 20th Anniversary*

Central San is committed to hosting interactive community events that highlight our vital services and their role in environmental protection. One of our core services is our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility (HHW), which collects more than a million pounds of household hazardous waste each year. Central San has celebrated the anniversary of the HHW every 5-years, generally with a small reception for employees and stakeholders. However, in honor of the 20th Anniversary, Central San wanted to orchestrate an event that was customer focused and increased community awareness and usership of the facility. In response to this, a customer engagement drive was planned, as well as a mid-week flagship stakeholder event.

**Irvine Ranch Water District**

*See It From Your Lawn’s Perspective*

How do you reach an audience that has been suffering from years of “drought fatigue?”

When Gov. Brown in 2017 lifted California’s mandatory water restrictions, agencies throughout the state were challenged with finding the right messaging to encourage customers to keep saving water—even when they didn't have to.

Irvine Ranch Water District responded with humor. If you can make people laugh about their wasteful water ways, they are more likely to embrace the message to conserve. The District’s campaign, “See It From Your Lawn’s Perspective,” marked the first of a multi-year outreach plan to encourage voluntary conservation. It included extensive use of multi-media platforms including video, digital and print executions on cable TV, public buses and bus shelters, and advertising translated into Spanish, Korean and Chinese. Tracking and engagement metrics were established and are being used to quantify changes in attitude and behavior in future campaigns.
COMING IN 2019

Updated and new categories! Watch for the new release of the Awards of Excellence program in January 2019.

Interested in submitting your project? Mark your calendar! We will begin accepting applications for the 2019 Awards of Excellence in February.

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