2022 annual conference

AWARDS

of

EXCELLENCE

NOMINEES
EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION & RESILIENCY
This award recognizes efforts in the innovative application of technology or the development of new technology to the wastewater field (collection, treatment, wastewater and biosolids recycling, and renewable energy production). Technologies that are highly innovative and increase resilience, and/or which have broad application to the industry will be favorably considered.

EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC OUTREACH/EDUCATION
This award recognizes the development and implementation of programs that impact or educate a segment of the local community on issues important to the industry. Recognition includes on-going programs, including education in schools, general public awareness or select target audiences. Measurable results will be favorably considered. Unique programs, and/or ones which can be readily replicated by other agencies, will also be favorably considered.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE
This award recognizes excellence in managing the agency’s division, unit, or process. Submittals may focus on leadership/management practices, change management, strategies that promote organizational sustainability, organizational development, effective financial management, productivity, cost reductions, asset management, staffing resource utilization, labor relations, employee mentoring and development programs, or related subjects. Submittals that demonstrate measurable results and potential application to the industry will be favorably considered.

OUTSTANDING CAPITAL PROJECT
This award recognizes exemplary wastewater capital projects. Submittals should highlight and will be judged on their unique or innovative design and construction applications, engineering applications, technical advancements, and/or difficult challenges of the project.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Outstanding Capital Project
Castro Valley Sanitary District
Roland Williams
Inland Empire Utilities Agency
Shivaji Deshmukh
Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin
Mark Grushayev

Innovation and Resiliency
City of San José
Mariana Chavez-Vazquez
Inland Empire Utilities Agency
Jeff Ziegenbein
Vallecitos Water District
Alicia Yerman

Public Outreach/Education
Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Bryan Langpap
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
Riki Clark
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
Ann Vallée

Organizational Excellence
Ross Valley Sanitary District
Steve Moore
West Yost
Kathryn Gies
Orange County Sanitation District
Kelly Newell
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EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT
Sinkhole at the Oakland Coliseum: Emergency Interceptor Rehabilitation Project

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), like most California wastewater agencies, is dealing with aging infrastructure and competing priorities. We do our best to prioritize rehabilitation of the most critical assets, but sometimes aging infrastructure fails unexpectedly. On January 3, 2022, a sinkhole was discovered on EBMUD’s 63-inch South Interceptor, under the Oakland Coliseum parking lot, adjacent to a creek that drains to the San Francisco Bay. The 75-year-old pipe wall had corroded to the point where it could no longer support the earth loads above it. EBMUD declared an emergency, convened a response team with a contractor, and quickly worked to stabilize and repair the pipe, within a few weeks, all while maintaining flows. The work was completed swiftly and without incident, using an innovative design based on materials that could be procured quickly.

IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT and BLACK & VEATCH
Michelson Water Recycling Plant Biosolids and Energy Recovery Facility

The Irvine Ranch Water District added biosolids handling and energy recovery technology to the Michelson Water Recycling Plant (MWRP) following a project to expand plant capacity to 28 million gallons per day. Conveyed previously to a neighboring agency, all biosolids are now processed at the MWRP. The new facilities include two-stage anaerobic digestion with thickening of the waste activated and primary sludges to minimize digester requirements plus sludge dewatering/drying. The system’s final biosolids product meets the Class A requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and may be used as a commercial fertilizer or fuel. Meanwhile, ancillary processes use resources produced during the treatment process. Biogas is collected, treated, and burned in microturbines. Up to 1 megawatt of electrical power is produced, offsetting the plant’s energy consumption. Additionally, exhaust gasses from the microturbines are captured and used to provide heat for the sludge digestion process.
RANCHO CALIFORNIA WATER DISTRICT
Santa Rosa Water Reclamation Facility Rehabilitation Project

The Santa Rosa Regional Resources Authority (SRRRA) is a joint powers authority (JPA) between Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD), Rancho California Water District (Rancho Water), and Western Municipal Water District (Western). The facility is operated by Rancho Water. Recently, Rancho Water completed a $37 million, three-year construction project that has enhanced energy and operating efficiencies of the Santa Rosa Water Reclamation Facility (SRWRF). During construction, the SRWRF underwent a major overhaul with almost every aspect of the facility rehabilitated or rebuilt in some way. An entirely new solids-handling facility was built with more accurate truck scales and an efficient pumping system. Upgrades were made to the sequential batch reactor (SBR), which cleans the wastewater during a multi-cycle treatment process. In addition, a new sodium hypochlorite storage facility was constructed, which results in a safer, more efficient process for treating the wastewater with liquid bleach.

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT, BROWN AND CALDWELL AND HDR ENGINEERING

EchoWater Project

In 2010, the Regional Board adopted new NPDES Permit requirements for Regional San. To comply with the new requirements, Regional San established the EchoWater Project Program Management Office (PMO) in 2012 to deliver a $2 billion program by 2022. To manage this massive program, Regional San selected their plant engineering manager to be the Program Manager. A program management consultant team was hired to augment our existing staff and create a co-located, cohesive team.

Ten years later, and under a new District Management Team, the EchoWater Project is over 90% complete and on track to save ratepayers nearly $400 million while delivering the overall program on schedule. When the tertiary treatment facilities are completed in December 2022, Regional San will have the largest treatment facility of its kind in the United States.
SACRAMENTO AREA SEWER DISTRICT
Mission Trunk Sewer Project

With a cost of $22 million, the Mission Trunk Sewer Project (Project) is the largest capital project in the Sacramento Area Sewer District’s (SASD) history. The trunk is an important backbone of SASD’s collection system, collecting wastewater from SASD’s northeast service area, which includes Citrus Heights, Carmichael, Fair Oaks, and Orangevale, CA. In total, 14 segments of reinforced concrete pipe—measuring nearly three miles and ranging from 36 to 75 inches in diameter—were lined with Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP), a trenchless construction method. To ensure uninterrupted sewer service during the work, three large bypass systems were installed, allowing 24 million gallons per day of wastewater to continue flowing to the treatment plant.

ROSS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT
Lower Shady Lane Large Diameter Gravity Sewer Improvement Project and Ross Creek Sewer Removal Project (Phase 1 and 2)

From June 2019 to October 2021, the Lower Shady Lane Large Diameter Gravity Sewer Improvement Project and Ross Creek Sewer Removal Project replaced and then removed a 1920s 21-inch-diameter concrete encased sewer pipe from the streambed of Ross Creek, CA, a tributary that flows to Corte Madera Creek and the San Francisco Bay. The Ross Valley Sanitary District divided the work into two phases. Phase one of the project replaced the sewer with a steel-encased double-barrel siphon underneath the creek bed. Phase two, implemented voluntarily by the District, involved removing the abandoned sewer pipe to support fish passage of migratory steelhead, a California threatened species. The completion of this “one water” project reduces public health risks of a public sewer creek crossing, enhances fish passage in Ross Creek, and benefits storm water/flood control of the streambank.
CITY OF OCEANSIDE
Enhanced Tour Program at the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility
SMALL AGENCY AWARD

In 2009, the Oceanside City Council set a goal of a 50 percent local water supply by 2030. To achieve this goal, the City developed the first fully operational indirect potable reuse (IPR) project in San Diego County, Pure Water Oceanside (PWO). This $71 million IPR project is located at the City’s San Luis Rey Water Reclamation facility and entails advanced treatment of tertiary treated water via ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis and advanced oxidation. The advanced treated water is then injected into the local groundwater basin, pumped out and treated at the City’s existing Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility and then distributed to Oceanside customers. PWO became operational in December 2021 and is able to produce 3-4.5 million gallons of water per day. Through the implementation of PWO the City is able to receive over 30% of its water supply from the local groundwater basin.

SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY WASTEWATER AUTHORITY, BLACK & VEATCH AND DUDEK
San Juan Creek Ocean Outfall Junction Structure Rehabilitation

The South Orange County Wastewater Authority’s ocean outfall is located along the southern side of the San Juan Creek, constructed in the late 1970’s along with the San Juan Creek Ocean Outfall (SJCOO), the SJCOO Junction Structure (Junction Structure) formed the interface between the land and marine sections of the outfall and allowed access into the outfall for internal inspections through an access hatch. An evaluation of the hydraulic capacity of the SJCOO in 2006, which included an analysis of the pressure rating of the system, determined the Junction Structure had structural deficiencies that could possibly result in the spill or unregulated discharge of treated effluent within the San Juan Creek land and ocean outfall. Black & Veatch (B&V) developed and evaluated rehabilitation alternatives and recommended internal rehabilitation to maximize construction safety and minimize excavation within the tidal zone of Doheny State Beach. In January of 2021, work started on the Junction Structure on Doheny Beach and was completed on March 31, 2021. The top of the structure was cut down by about 4.5 feet reducing or eliminating its presence on the beach under certain circumstances.
LEUCADIA WASTEWATER DISTRICT
Leucadia Pump Station Rehabilitation Project

The Leucadia Pump Station (LPS) Rehabilitation Project (Project) replaced four (4) 200 horsepower (HP) - 4,880 gallons per minute (gpm) centrifugal pumps with five (5) dry pit submersible pumps. Three of the pumps are 150 HP - 4,000 gpm and the remaining two are 25 HP- 875 gpm pumps. The two smaller “Jockey Pumps” were installed to more efficiently handle reduced night time flows to reduce wastewater septicity in the force mains and the resulting odors. All piping, check valves, plug valves and the discharge header were replaced in the dry well. An ECO2 super-oxygenation system (ECO2), liquid oxygen (LOX) storage tank and LOX evaporator were installed. A 150 HP 3,200 gpm submersible pump was installed in the station’s Emergency Overflow Basin to improve pump station resiliency. Additionally, a conditioning chopper pump was installed in the wet well.

CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
Ammonia Recovery using Vacuum Stripping & Absorption

The Public Utilities Wastewater of the City of San Luis Obispo submitted a letter of support for National Science Foundation grant funding, which has been awarded to SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. This Partnerships for Innovation project in collaboration with Cal Poly is assembling a pilot-scale vacuum stripping and absorption (VaSA) system at the SLO Water Resource Recovery Facility and operating it with pressate, sludge digestate, and dairy manure to demonstrate its benefits and scalability. VaSA fills the gap of a scalable technology for efficient and economical recovery of ammonia from wastewater. It transforms the sustainability of ammonia removal by reducing costs, recovering ammonia as a sellable fertilizer (ammonium sulfate granules), enhancing solids solubilization, and improving digestate utility. A matching fund from New York State Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions supports undergraduate research experience with operation and monitoring of the pilot tests.
CASTRO VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT
Private Sewer Lateral Program

Most homes in the unincorporated community of Castro Valley are more than 65 years old and many have never had their private sewer laterals (laterals) replaced. These laterals, which are typically made of vitrified clay pipe, can become disjointed, displaced, or crack over time; and allow stormwater and groundwater into the wastewater system. This can overwhelm the capacity of the system and cause sanitary sewer overflows.

Effective July 1, 2019, Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan) launched a Private Sewer Lateral (PSL) Program which requires any commercial, industrial, or residential property being sold in CVSan’s boundaries to qualify for a sewer lateral compliance certificate. The sewer lateral compliance certificate ensures that the property’s lateral has been inspected, meets qualifications, and verifies the property was leak-free at the time of inspection. CVSan also established an online permit portal so the public can look up whether a property has a compliance certificate.

LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT
Integrated Fixed Film Activated Sludge Biological Nutrient Removal (IFAS BNR) System

The Integrated Fixed Film Activated Sludge Biological Nutrient Removal System represents Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District’s innovative approach to satisfy NPDES permit requirements and reduce nutrient discharges into the Bay. After a year in operation, data indicates improved sludge settling characteristics producing excellent effluent, while simultaneously providing nitrification and denitrification for consistent ammonia nitrogen and phosphorous removal. The system is resistant to shock loads and kept the overall treatment process intact during the October 2021 major storm events while other secondary treatment components were under construction. It also increased efficiency of tertiary treatment and recycled water production. The system consists of 16 Bio-Wheels manufactured by H2O Innovations. Arranged in a 4-train configuration with anoxic tanks, the VFD-controlled Bio-Wheels transform the aeration basin into a biological selector with aerobic, anaerobic, and anoxic zones without separate structures, media, mixers, or baffles, and with low HP motors. Aqua Engineering is the design engineer. According to H2OI, it is the largest installation in the world.
TRUCKEE SANITARY DISTRICT
Development of a Novel Product to Reduce I&I and Sewer Collection System Worker Injuries

Infiltration & inflow (I&I) is a significant problem for all sanitation agencies because it leads to spills, backups, costly oversizing of infrastructure, fines, higher operating costs, and poor public perception. TSD staff discovered and developed a novel product that reduces I&I and helps prevent injuries to collection system workers. The product is a lubricant/sealant that is applied to manhole cover frames so that when the cover is installed it is completely sealed from surface water inflow, odor emissions, and due to the lubricating quality of the product, reduces the likelihood of a stuck manhole cover which can result in worker injuries. The discovery of the product was a group effort involving the TSD Engineering and Operations Departments. TSD filed a patent on the product and entered into a royalty agreement with a manufacturer, Oatey Co. The product, Hercules Shutout, is now commercially available.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

CITY OF SAN JOSE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DIVISION
San José–Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility Capital Improvement Program

LARGE AGENCY AWARD

The San José–Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (RWF) is the largest advanced wastewater treatment facility in the western United States. It cleans an average of 110 million gallons of wastewater per day to high national standards, protecting public health and the environment and supporting the local economy. The RWF serves 1.4 million residents and more than 17,000 businesses in eight cities and four sanitation districts in Silicon Valley. The Capital Improvement Program is a $2.1 billion, 30-year effort to rebuild the RWF based on the 2013 Plant Master Plan (PMP). The first phase is a 10-year CIP with $1.4 billion of improvements that started in July 2014. In the last eight years, more than 20 projects have been initiated and $800 million in capital expenditures have been committed. The program delivers an average of $100 million of capital projects per year. It includes 60 City staff managing 27 co-located consultants and more than 11 design contracts and 12 construction contracts.
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AND FORWARD LATERAL
Santa Barbara’s Sewer Lateral Inspection Program Moves to the Cloud

The City of Santa Barbara’s Sewer Lateral Inspection Program (SLIP) was developed to decrease private sewer spills caused by poor maintenance of private laterals. Program participants hire a City-certified plumbing inspector to video inspect their lateral and submit the inspection. Staff reviews the inspection and property owners are provided a report identifying necessary repairs. Previously, inspections were submitted in-person via USB drive and paper form. SLIP inspections are now submitted on a secured cloud-based application, Forward Lateral. Forward Lateral is a complete solution for the sewer lateral inspection process and the change has streamlined the entire SLIP process. Plumbers submit an inspection via Forward Lateral and City staff review the video and report online. The property owner gets auto-emailed a link to their inspection including the video, maps, photos, and observations or defects and anytime their inspection status changes (submitted/reviewed/completed). Inspections are stored online allowing property owners to view their lateral defects and easily share their inspections with contractors to obtain quotes for repair work.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS
Modernizing Accounting and Rate Setting

The Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts’ (LACSD) sewer system supporting 17 sanitation districts within the Los Angeles Basin is called the Joint Outfall System (JOS) and serves 5 million people using over 1,200 miles of sewer and 7 wastewater treatment plants. The system has evolved for nearly 100 years and LACSD realized that there was need to modernize their financial and rate-setting processes. A Director ad hoc committee, with support from staff, reviewed LACSD practices and developed recommendations with the goals of minimizing costs, maximizing fairness and increasing transparency. Ultimately, the LACSD Boards of Directors agreed with the ad hoc committee’s recommendations. The improvements will make charges to homes and businesses more stable over time, including avoiding the sticker shock a district might have faced if one of their sewers needed replacement. The changes will also result in more consistent total costs paid by ratepayers across the JOS and will optimize the financial reserves of each district.
Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) completed an all-encompassing Strategic Plan that focuses on cultivating and sustaining a resilient future that will meet the needs of our diverse ratepayers and stakeholders. This plan promotes organizational excellence by developing responsible goals that protect community health, wellness, and the environment. A key priority of the District was the inclusion of local stakeholders in developing the strategic plan. Individual interviews were held with 15 stakeholders/partners, and they were invited to attend a series of strategic planning workshops with the Ironhouse Board of Directors. Of those invited, nine of the stakeholder/partners participated in the workshops, including city and county officials, two water districts, and the local fire protection district.

Silicon Valley Clean Water
Silicon Valley Clean Water Capital Improvement Program: Project Financing
This award nomination recognizes effective organizational strategies used by SVCW to deliver its critical infrastructure replacement program specifically as it relates to financing a multi-year, $574 million capital improvement project. In 2008 SVCW launched a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to rehabilitate its aging infrastructure. Total capital expenditures, once complete, will exceed $950 million. SVCW implemented its CIP in several unique ways: 1) program management is performed by SVCW staff, 2) a progressive design-build delivery method is used for the largest program (RESCU, see below), and 3) designing the financing mechanisms to fund the CIP was led by SVCW’s CFO. RESCU is the Regional Environmental Sewer Conveyance Upgrade which replaces conveyance pipelines, rehabilitates pump stations, and constructs a new pretreatment facility. The cost of RESCU is $574 million and is the largest infrastructure project in SVCW history. Finding the monetary resources required to deliver RESCU was accomplished via cross-departmental planning and a myriad of financing solutions.
ORANGE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT
OC San and Heritage Museum Education Partnership
The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) partnered with the Heritage Museum of Orange County for the 2021–22 school year to provide virtual educational content that focuses on OC San messaging. Topics include Who is OC San, What 2 Flush, the wastewater treatment process, and a wastewater flow interactive activity. The program was designed to be a combination of virtual content for the initial phase and in-person content for the subsequent phase. Schools and the community alike can access the OC San content through the Heritage Museum educational portal which typically reaches approximately 6,000 individuals per year.

RANCHO CALIFORNIA WATER DISTRICT
Journey of Water Video Series
Rancho California Water District provides water to customers through a mix of local groundwater and imported water from the State Water Project and the Colorado River. The imported water travels more than 500 miles through pipelines, pumping stations, and reservoirs before being delivered to the public – a fact that many customers of the District either did not know or did not understand. Recyclable water then passes through the Santa Rosa Water Reclamation Facility (SRWRF) for a multi-step cleaning process so it can be used again to irrigate golf courses, greenbelts, and parks.

The videos in the Journey of Water series follow four water droplets as they make their way to the Rancho Water service area from different origins – the Sierra Nevada, the Rockies, the sky, and the wastewater treatment plant. The video series has provided an educational opportunity for schools, community groups, and Rancho Water’s 45,000 customers.
**EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT**

Patrick the Poo / Healthy Sewers Campaign

Patrick the Poo, a singing, dancing, viral video sensation is the creation of Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), which developed the animated wastewater mascot to be part of its longstanding Healthy Sewers campaign. Patrick has helped inform nearly 1 million customers within EMWD’s service area about their wastewater system and how what goes down the drain eventually becomes recycled water. Along the way, Patrick has become a staple of EMWD’s longstanding efforts to promote responsible care of its wastewater system, which is the largest of its three service divisions. Patrick, complete with eyes as corny as his jokes, has encouraged customers to only flush the three P’s – Pee, Poop and Toilet Paper – and to keep prescription drugs, so-called flushable wipes, fats, oils, and grease out of the wastewater collection system that he calls home.

**IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT**

IRWD 360-degree Virtual Recycled Water Adventure

Students in Irvine Ranch Water District’s service area are immersing themselves in the sewage treatment process – literally – thanks to the wonders of CGI. The District’s gamified Virtual Recycled Water Adventure (a joint project with Discovery Cube Orange County) allows students to explore and learn about recycled water in ways never before possible. 360-degree video pairs an Operations staff member with a computer-generated robot named “Cleanbot,” who takes students on an interactive adventure of IRWD’s Michelson Water Recycling Plant through a series of activities that include: (1) identifying non-flushable items in the sewer water at the headworks; (2) watching a video of Cleanbot singing about FOG – and how clogs drive her crazy; (3) “swimming” in activated sludge, identifying key microorganisms in the process, and chomping away at flock like they do; (4) zapping pathogens with UV light; and (5) learning all the important benefits of recycled water in the community.
EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT
EBMUD Storymap: From Your Tap to the San Francisco Bay

In 2016, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) created an in-person tour program to educate the public on wastewater treatment and spread pollution prevention messaging. In 2020, EBMUD pivoted to a live-guided virtual tour conducted over Zoom to continue these efforts during the pandemic and reach an even broader audience. The live-guided virtual tour has been highly successful, tripling annual outreach and winning a national award for public education and outreach. In 2022, EBMUD significantly augmented this program through the creation of a self-guided virtual tour on the EBMUD website using the GIS-based Storymap software. This Storymap interweaves a variety of videos, maps, graphics, and text to create an accessible, immersive, and multidimensional experience of wastewater treatment that goes beyond what can be experienced either in person or through the live-guided virtual tours.

SACRAMENTO AREA SEWER DISTRICT
2021 FOG Newsletter

Sacramento Area Sewer District (SASD) plays a critical role in protecting public health and the environment. How well we play that role depends, in part, on educating customers about what they can do to become responsible sewer stewards. SASD’s educational outreach focuses on keeping harmful materials out of the sewer system, including fats, oils, and grease (FOG). During 2021’s holiday season, SASD capitalized on a perfect opportunity to increase awareness about proper FOG disposal techniques. SASD used a direct-mail, FOG-themed newsletter timed to hit all customer mailboxes just before the Christmas holiday, one of the two biggest food-centric holidays of the year, along with Thanksgiving, and the time of year when they see an increase of FOG-related backups and overflows.
UNION SANITARY DISTRICT
Enhanced Treatment and Site Upgrade Phase 1 Program Illustrative Video

Union Sanitary District (USD) developed a dynamic and engaging public outreach video to educate customers about its Enhanced Treatment and Site Upgrade (ETSU) Phase 1 Program, an extensive infrastructure construction program that will take place at its 33-acre treatment plant over the next 7 to 10 years. Through a combination of live-action, voiceover, and illustrative animations, the video demonstrates how the program’s infrastructure and treatment process improvements will protect public health and the San Francisco Bay, making the value of USD’s extremely intricate and complex program – the largest capital improvement program in District history - easily understood by ratepayers and the public.

CASTRO VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT
Only Flush The 3 P’s Campaign

The “Only Flush the 3 P’s” is a general public awareness outreach effort. The message is meant to educate the public that the only items that should be flushed down the toilet are Pee, Poop, and Toilet Paper (3 P’s). The campaign consists of multiple outreach elements, including vehicle signage, an animated video, a display at a public library that included a contest element, and an ongoing pledge residents can take to only flush the 3 P’s!
CITY OF OCEANSIDE
Enhanced Tour Program at the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility

The City of Oceanside wanted to enhance the tour program at the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility (SLR) as production of recycled water and advanced water purification processes began. This included installation of 23 42” by 84” tour signs to detail the treatment process. As the pandemic hit and in person tours stopped, the City of Oceanside quickly pivoted and created another tour option in the form of a 360-degree virtual reality video tour. The immersive tour allows the audience to engage and look around the facility simply by using a computer mouse, phone or city-provided headset. In the video, city staff walk the audience through each step of the wastewater treatment process and bring them into buildings which were previously excluded during in person tours, including on top of a digester!

LEUCADIA WASTEWATER DISTRICT AND RISING TIDE PARTNERS
Leucadia Wastewater District Virtual Tour

Every school year, Leucadia Wastewater District (LWD) awards grants to schools (K-12) within the District’s service area to educate students about wastewater, recycled water, and water conservation. One of the 2021–2022 grant winners, kindergarten teacher Nancy Jois, requested a live virtual tour as part of her “No Wipes Down the Pipes” project. Rising Tide Partners (RTP) live streamed LWD’s Field Services Technicians (FSTs) at the District headquarters through Zoom, while the students watched from the classroom. The FSTs conducted four presentations to about 80 kindergartners in total, showing LWD’s combination truck and closed-circuit television van. The FSTs taught the students about sewer pipes, how the van inspects underground pipes for blockages or defects, and how the truck clears out blockages in sewer lines. After each tour, the students interacted with the FSTs, asking questions for about 10 minutes.
IRONHOUSE SANITARY DISTRICT
Transparency is Key to Public Outreach

As water quality professionals, Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) strives to protect our community’s precious water resources using the best available technologies and practices. We have also learned to employ effective techniques and proven approaches to inform the general public of our efforts and engage them in our water resource protection and conservation endeavors. ISD has built a robust public outreach program that has reaped multiple benefits for our organization, including community support for projects and utility rate increases; third-party credibility with the community and policymakers; increased awareness among community members about District campaigns; and lasting relationships with community leaders. ISD plans to build an even stronger community engagement profile in our community. To achieve this goal, the District is developing a five-year Public Outreach Plan to further increase visibility, increase transparency, and develop a more engaging campaign by combining innovation with public outreach.

CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
Sustainable Utilities Outreach and Education (SURE!)

The Sustainable Utilities Research and Education Program (SURE!) is a collaborative effort between the City of San Luis Obispo’s Water Resource Recovery Facility (SLO WRRF) and California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly). Each year, SURE! introduces 120-150 engineering and science students to the wastewater industry through hands-on research funded mainly by government agencies, but also various utilities, engineering firms, and equipment vendors. Students discover a passion for the field through this experience. SURE! operates three laboratories and two research stations, where the students are trained to practice safety, pilot plant operation, analytical testing of water quality samples, quality control, and data analysis. Having a research station at the SLO WRRF, 10 minutes from campus, allows students to interact with professional plant operators in a full-scale environment. SURE! also participates in a regional education program for elementary school students known as Science Discovery, where they participate in an interactive education program that includes education of the water cycle. This includes a tour of the SLO WRRF and the SURE! research site. SURE! promotes student interaction at higher levels. In 2021, students organized a public webinar on drought resiliency with City leaders and Cal Poly professors.
Interested in submitting your project? Mark your calendar! We will begin accepting applications for the 2023 Awards of Excellence in March.