



Public Works Officers Department Newsletter SPRING 2008



Message from the President



*By Uche Udemezue, Engineering and Transportation Director, City of San Leandro
2007-08 Public Works Officers Department President*

Winter has finally pulled away from California and spring seems to be emerging from all corners of the state. The attendees of the 2008 Public Works Officers Institute in La Jolla, held March 5 – 7, had an early taste of what the next season has to bring – both for better weather and emerging trends in our fields of work.

The League of California Cities and the County Engineers Association of California broke the record for attendance, with more than 450 directors, engineers, and managers. Attendees enjoyed a variety of sessions from the collective goals for leaders to specific legal parameters impacting public works.

The opening speaker, Robert Stevenson, set the tone for the conference by sharing the formula for leadership, emphasizing the importance of embracing change, cooperation, and challenges. It was a content filled, and fun, way to kick-off the three days of sessions. The afternoon featured informative sessions on legal updates, traffic signal coordination, and maximizing the benefits of green power, traffic calming, and much more.

The evening wrapped up with a great reception and mini-expo featuring dozens of vendors and consultants with products to help with everything from succession planning to water quality projects.

Thursday was full of impressive general session speakers, informative break-out sessions, as well as good laughs brought to us by none other than Ralph Qualls and the second episode of "The Lame Show".

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Caltrans Director Will Kempton joined us for the breakfast session to discuss statewide transportation issues and the impact of the state fiscal crisis. In addition, the Chief Consultant for Senate Transportation and Housing Committee, Art Bauer, explained pending legislation that could dramatically change the way public agencies contract in California.

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At the Thursday luncheon, I had the honor of presenting the 2008 James L. Martin Award to Dale Pfeiffer, Director of Public Works for the City of Vacaville. Dale has dedicated himself to over 25 years in public service during which he generously has given his time and expertise to the League's Public Works Officers Department and the Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee, in addition to representing the League on numerous local and state committees.

The Public Works Officers welcomed League President Jim Madaffer (San Diego Council Member) who shared how the League's Strategic Goals align with many of the challenges our field is facing with funding and infrastructure *(continued on page 3)*

Director's Report: Synthetic Grass Seven Years Later



By Ken Montgomery, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, City of Laguna Niguel

In this column, I normally write about the activities of the League Board of Directors, on which I will finish my two year term representing the Public Works Officers Department of the League in September. The Department Officers have nominated Lisa Rapp from the City of Lakewood as the 2008-2010 Director. You will find the actions of the Board are well covered in the weekly "Priority Focus," which hopefully you all see in print, online, or through e-mails. Our next board meeting is July 25 and 26.

Synthetic Grass Seven Years Later: Some of you will remember that I spoke about synthetic grass soccer fields at the 2001 Public Works Officers Institute. I would like to summarize the experiences that the City of Laguna Niguel has had with our five synthetic grass soccer fields

and four synthetic grass baseball fields. Our first fields, two baseball fields with a large soccer field overlay, opened in April 2001.

The grass and the permanent lines still look and play great. The community loves the fields and the City Council Members are praised for building them and they in turn are forever grateful to staff for bringing the project to them. The fields drain vertically and the fields can be used during and after rain storms, when all the natural grass fields are closed. The fields have a slight cushioned feel to them and many soccer groups will only play on the synthetic fields now (they are spoiled!). Here are some quick facts on synthetic grass sports fields:

"The community loves the fields and the City Council Members are praised for building them and they in turn are forever grateful to staff for bringing the project to them."

- The cost for removing the existing turf; installation of: the subdrain system, the 6" layer of permeable aggregate, the concrete borders and the plastic carpet and lines and the crumb rubber backfill costs about 7.00 to \$8.00 per square foot.
- The ideal field is flat. If possible, the crown of the existing field should be graded out, play is far superior when the players don't have to run uphill and downhill. Since synthetic grass drains vertically, there is no need for the typical cross fall.
- The carpet should last between eight and ten years depending on use. However, certain spots like the penalty kick line will wear out sooner because everyone practices from there (like there are a lot of penalty kicks in games – not!).
- When the entire carpet needs to be replaced, the cost is about \$2.00 to \$3.00 per square foot. The drainage system and the aggregate will last forever about 75% of the crumb rubber can be re-used.
- You will need to sweep the fields twice per month to keep the blades from bending over excessively. The sweeper is pulled by an ATV and takes three to four hours of manpower.
- Establish a budget of \$5,000 (and accumulate it) per field for repairs and additional rubber. Every few years you should have some experts inspect and repair seams as necessary, replace bad sections and add rubber.
- Build in a perimeter system around the field, like fences, trees, bollards, bleachers, etc. to prevent vehicles from driving on the field. The carpet will be damaged when idiots do wheelies in their pickup trucks on the synthetic grass. The barrier is an extra cost.
- The fields have an ambient temperature higher than the air temperature. Players sometimes wear two pairs of socks on really hot days, but they still play. We provide shade structures along the sidelines for the players to cool down. Some cities actually hose down the fields when it is really hot, which works for a while.



When constructing a synthetic field, it really helps to have an expert help during construction management, as your typical PW inspectors don't have the necessary experience to approve the contractor's work. We fly down a consultant from Seattle three times during installation and have them inspect the work before the contractor can go to the next phase of work.

Feel free to call me if there are questions about Laguna Niguel's experience with synthetic grass sports fields. There are new products coming to the market that use a different profile and don't heat up, so check into that before you design your project if heat is an issue. ◀

FOR FURTHER READING ON SYNTHETIC GRASS, PLEASE SEE THE ARTICLE TITLED 'GREEN' IS GOLD FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS ON PAGE 5 OF THIS NEWSLETTER

Congratulations to Dale Pfeiffer: 2008 James L. Martin Award recipient

By Dorothy Johnson, Legislative Analyst, League of California Cities

The Public Works Officers Department honored Dale Pfeiffer, Public Works Director for the City of Vacaville, with the 2008 James L. Martin award for his continued dedication and significant contributions towards advancing the public works profession.

Dale has served his city and the League of California Cities with a sincere passion for his work. He is a former League Department President and longtime member of the Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee. He also represents the League on numerous regional and statewide committees, including the City-County-State-Federal Cooperative Committee.

This award is named in honor of James L. Martin, who dedicated his career to the advancement of the public works profession. To be considered for this prestigious award, must: be a full-time employee of a California city, or retired within the past year; demonstrate a commitment to the public works profession and the League of California cities on a statewide basis; and have made continuous and valuable contributions to the public works profession, deserving of the James L. Martin Award.

The Department officers, League staff members, and City of Vacaville colleagues congratulate Dale for this well-deserved honor!



Dale Pfeiffer accepting the 2008 James L. Martin award

President's Report continued

(from page 1) investment. Attendees were then treated to Master of Ceremony Ralph Qualls, Public Works Director for the City of Cupertino, and his presentation of "The Lame Show," a play on the Tonight Show with a Public Works twist. Features included "Stump the Public Works Director" and interviews with real "characters" from local and state elected offices.

The Public Works Officers Institute concluded on Friday morning with a lively "dance lesson" lead by keynote speaker Robert Denhart, who showed how leadership is a dance of understanding and goal-driven action.

I want to sincerely thank Conference Planning Committee members, event speakers and League staff Dorothy Johnson, Liisa Stark, Tracy Petrillo, Brian Sanders and Helen Marshall for their time and effort to make the 2008 Public Works Institute a success. I can only imagine what will be in store for us next year when we return to Monterey on March 25 for the 2009 Public Works Officers Institute.

LOCAL STREETS AND ROADS NEEDS ASSEMENT PROJECT

Your Public Works Department and City Manager will soon be receiving a letter with information on the California Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment Project, the upcoming survey of your city's streets, and a request for your financial contribution. This is an undertaking of partners from the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, the County Engineers Association of California, and other local government partners. The results of this project will be used to assist local government agencies to secure funding for infrastructure needs and will establish a standard for future surveys, making it less costly and more efficient. Your participation in the survey will ensure complete and accurate information. You can find more information at www.saveCaliforniastreet.org.



League of California Cities President Jim Madaffer addresses the PWOI 2008 attendees

California Street Light Association works to maintain electricity rates for local jurisdictions

By Mehdi Sadjadi, PE, Executive Director, California Street Light Association

The California City-County Street Light Association (Cal-SLA) was organized in 1981 to represent cities and counties before the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) on street light rates and to provide information to cities and counties on lighting issues. Currently we address both street lights and traffic signals.

Since 1984, Cal-SLA has intervened and actively worked on every major rate case concerning the three utilities: Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE) and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). Cal-SLA has saved California cities and counties more than \$100 million in lower electric rates for street lighting.

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Street lighting is a unique public service. The CPUC treats street lighting as a separate customer class. Cal-SLA is the only organization that speaks solely for street light customers—cities and counties in California.

In 2007, Cal-SLA was involved in rate cases for all three major electric utilities: PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E. The major general rate case for 2008 will involve Southern California Edison. Cal-SLA submitted expert witness testimony on street light rates and how much of the utility’s revenue requirement should be assigned to the street light class. A summary of Cal-SLA’s recent activity and achievements are presented below:

REPRESENTATION BEFORE CPUC

Pacific Gas & Electric

Cal-SLA, with other parties, negotiated a settlement of the rate case, and the CPUC adopted the settlement. The general rate case decision shows that street light rates will be reduced by 9%. This results in a \$6.0 million savings to the cities and counties in PG&E service territory.

Southern California Edison

In November 2007, SCE filed a general rate case requesting approval from the CPUC to increase electric rates by \$726 million in 2009, \$216 million in 2010, and \$287 million in 2011. The sum of the three year increases totals \$1.229 billion. Cal-SLA has intervened in this rate case.



In March 2008, SCE filed its second application proposing an overall rate increase of 12.1%, but for street lighting SCE is requesting a 20.5% increase over current rates. Cal-SLA estimates that this could be a \$50.0 million increase to street light customers—cities and counties in SCE’s service territory. Cal-SLA intends to actively participate in this phase of the general rate case to make sure that street light rates are more reasonable and fair to local governments.

In 2006 Cal-SLA was successful in getting the rate increase proposed by SCE reduced from 20% to 3.7%.

San Diego Gas & Electric

In January 2007, SDG&E filed its rate case proposing a \$2.3 million, or 13.8%, increase in street light rates. Cal-SLA intervened and after submitting expert witness testimony there was a negotiated settlement that there would be a zero increase in the overall street light rate. Cal-SLA’s effort at the CPUC will more than likely result in a savings of \$2.3 million to cities and counties in SDG&E’s service territory.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

Cal-SLA keeps its members informed on developments in street lighting and related issues. Cal-SLA encourages energy efficiency and suitable lighting of public streets and neighborhoods. Through the efficient use of street lighting Cal-SLA seeks to promote sustainable energy. Cal-SLA is a strong proponent of LED traffic signals, which can reduce electric consumption by 80-90%. Cal-SLA provides information on street lighting and traffic signals through workshops and energy conferences.

In our latest conference on April 4, 2008 in Monterey, the topics covered included economic *(continued on page 5)*

"Green" is Gold for Athletic Fields: Synthetic Turf through U.S. Communities Greener, More Cost Effective

By Dan Harrison, Director of Administrative Services , League of California Cities

In this day and age when everyone wants to use more natural green products, minimize their impact on the environment and reduce their costs, a bit of an irony is developing for people building athletic fields.

The greenest and most cost effective product is actually synthetic turf instead of natural sod.

Synthetic turf requires no water, mowing or fertilizer, which helps with water conservation efforts and reduces carbon emissions and phosphorus run off. Although upfront costs for installation are higher for artificial turf, maintenance expenses over the life of the field are significantly lower. There is no need for expensive sprinkler systems or mowing equipment and labor and maintenance costs are drastically lower than with natural sod.



To help cities, school districts, higher education, states, nonprofits and counties replace or install new fields or parks and playgrounds, U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance ("U.S. Communities") has awarded a new contract to GSV/AstroTurf USA for synthetic turf, athletic surfaces and related products.

U.S. Communities is a nonprofit instrumentality of government comprised of more than 30,000 public agencies across the country. Participating agencies, whose numbers increase by about 400 each month, spend more than \$1 billion a year on products and services via contracts and suppliers of U.S. Communities. It costs nothing to join, nor must an agency spend a minimum or maximum number of dollars each year.

This contract for turf, like the many other contracts offered by U.S. Communities, ensures cities will a) identify quality, environmentally responsible products, b) secure the best pricing, guaranteed, c) satisfy competitive bid requirements, and d) save lots of staff time and taxpayer dollars.

Green components are used by GSV/AstroTurf in manufacturing products whenever possible while maintaining the highest quality and durability standards. Traditionally, polyurethane backing systems –the foundation of any synthetic turf system– were made with petroleum-based products. However, these products use a soybean-based replacement for petroleum-based components. The result is very low levels of VOC emissions and healthier fields, especially indoor fields.

Additionally, materials used to cushion the backing are made from 100 percent post-consumer recycled plastic bottles. To put the impact of this into perspective: a 10,000 square yard field uses 40,000 discarded plastic bottles.

Finally, a product made from coal flyash, the material produced by coal combustion in electrical utility power plants, is the ingredient that provides strength and resilience to the turf. There are more than 420 power plants (*continued on page 6*)

Cal-SLA continued

(from page 4) uncertainty now facing the state and how it affects local budgets; financing energy efficiency projects for cities, counties, and special districts; energy saving measures in municipal facilities; LED street lighting studies in San José and Oakland; community choice aggregation and related by-products; review of energy legislation; and street light acquisition.

We are currently planning a fall conference in Southern California. This may be a good opportunity for you to share with your colleagues a successful program within your city or county. Please contact Cal-SLA (contact information provided below) if you would like to make a presentation or if there is a particular topic you would like to see addressed at the next conference. Mehdi Sadjadi, PE, Executive Director; (415)250-3551; calsla@yahoo.com; www.CAL-SLA.org

SAVE THE DATE!
Public Works Officers Institute
March 25 - March 27, 2009
Downtown Monterey
Convention Center
Registration Opens Winter 2008

Incumbent Worker Training Grant Project: Succession Planning for Public Works Careers

By David Torres, Field Operations Manager, City of South Gate and Dorothy Johnson, Legislative Analyst, League of California Cities

Those of us who were born in the 1940's and 1950's want to retire! We want to travel, to fish, to play with our grandchildren, and to take a cooking class. Why aren't we doing that? Because there are not people lined up outside our door to take our place. We need to help our more youthful colleagues with education and training. We need to mentor them and help them climb the Public Works career ladder.

The City of South Gate, along with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the Pasadena Public Works Department, and Pasadena Water and Power, are working with Citrus College, a local California Community College, as employer partners to create an opportunity to upgrade the skills of workers in the community.

In addition to the regularly scheduled Public Works classes at the Citrus College campus and the on-line Public Works classes they offer, the College has obtained a grant to provide college credit Public Works classes at employer sites. It is called the Incumbent Worker Training Grant, and it is designed to provide education to workers already in the field.

“Employers will have a better trained workforce, with a broader knowledge base and skill level, so that they can proceed with succession planning and their veteran administrators can retire.”

Employers chose Public Works classes that their workers needed the most. These classes are applicable to the Citrus College Public Works Certificate and the Associate of Science Degree in Applied Arts for Public Works. Citrus College provided technical assistance to get employees enrolled in the College on-line from their worksite.

Employees receive partial release time to attend classes and tuition reimbursement upon successful completion of the class. A free workshop on Test Taking was also arranged so that students can reduce their anxiety and perform better on exams. In addition to these classes for Public Works employees, Citrus College is working with its local secondary schools to offer a career exploration class, including a three-week emphasis on Public Works. The curriculum will include projects and worksite learning and was designed to recruit the entry level workers needed as the current workers move up into supervisory positions.

Citrus College has also been approved by the International Society of Arborists to award 30 continuing education units to students who successfully complete the Municipal and Urban Tree Care class, scheduled to be offered at the Pasadena Public Works Department in the spring. Of the 8 scheduled classes for this grant, one has already completed. Pre- and Post-assessment of students in this class showed an average improvement of 32 percentage points after taking the class!

Employees benefit by getting college credits under their belt and working toward their Public Works Certificate or Associate's Degree, preparing them to be a better candidate for that next promotion. Employers will have a better trained workforce, with a broader knowledge base and skill level, so that they can proceed with succession planning and their veteran administrators can retire.

“Green” is Gold for Athletic Fields continued

(from page 5) burning coal in America. The average power plant uses 100 rail cars of coal every day and produces approximately fifteen to 20 rail cars of flyash. The biggest concern regarding synthetic turf is the product's structural integrity and durability. These “green” components meet or exceed the quality of comparable traditional materials.

By competitively soliciting synthetic turf, athletic surfaces and related products, U.S. Communities has eliminated the need for public agencies to go through the bidding process. U.S. Communities has a lower price per square foot of turf than a single entity would be able to generate through a competitive process, plus the research for a quality company has been done. All of this saves agencies time, money and manpower.

This new contract is offered through the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance. For more information, go to www.astroturfusa.com/uscommunities or e-mail uscommunities@gsvenue.com.

2007-2008 Public Works Department Officers

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PAST PRESIDENT	Anthony Nisich Public Works Director (<i>retired</i>) City of Santa Barbara	

2008 Department Policy Committee Appointees

Administrative Services	Community Services	Employee Relations
Tony Antich City Engineer City of Santa Monica	Tim Serlet Public Works Director City of Tustin	Robert Newman Public Works Director City of Santa Clarita
Environmental Quality	Housing, Community & Economic Development	Public Safety
Lisa Ann Rapp Public Works Director City of Lakewood	Uche Udemezue Engineering & Transportation Director City of San Leandro	Keith Cooke Principal Engineer City of San Leandro
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