

DESALINATION PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTION PLAN

With the dedication of the ocean-water desalination project, the public relations campaign has moved into high gear. The plan distributed at the recent Board workshop provides an overview of projects, a calendar of tasks with completion dates, a tentative community calendar and a proposal for a live action/animation video on desalination. The following provides additional details and deliverables.

Media Training

Director participation is a key element of the plan. Directors will be asked to participate in a variety of events and programs, most notably the media outlet visits, community outreach events, and the government outreach projects. To prepare Directors for their key role as desalination spokespersons, a full-day media training session is planned October 25 at the District's Carson headquarters from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Mary McCormick will conduct the training, which will feature instruction in talking with a variety of media outlets and on-camera practice sessions and information will be presented on media protocol so that the District's message is consistent and clear. Training will involve Directors only and the consultant's staff so that maximum attention can be given to preparing Directors for presentations. Directors will be given a session focusing on the desalination message points and shown the current version of the Desalination Power Point Presentation that will be used in community presentations.

Mary McCormick will be in contact with each Director to provide additional information about the sessions. Directors having questions can call Art Aguilar at (310) 660-6205.

Press Releases

The Media Relations section of the Public Affairs Department has set a goal of producing and distributing at least one press release per week throughout the year. Included will be many releases spotlighting desalination and, later, the Barrier Project. Staff and consultants are developing a time line for quicker turnaround of releases, with the goal of taking no more than 24 hours to get a release from first draft to final to actual release.

The focus of the releases will center on pre-emptive, preventative measures for drought-proofing the areas that are appropriate during dry or rainy seasons. In this way, the message of having desalination as a beneficial new water source is not lost. The campaign will stay away from hyperbole and "scare tactics" (A drought is coming!) that can backfire with one rainstorm. Quotes from Directors will be used as often as possible, with any quotes being submitted to the appropriate Director for approval.

Topics of some of the releases include:

- Desalination poll results (released Oct. 4)
- Preparation for drought (release date: Oct. 11)
- Water Harvest (Oct. 7)
- Proposition 50 support (10/18)
- Desalination Washington D.C. trip (10/10 press advisory, 10/25 results)
- District position on Cadiz proposal (11/1)

- Metropolitan IRP/effects on District
- Desalination water testing update
- Feature on desalination partnership
- WB Water Recycling Facility visits (continuous)
- Proposition 13 proposals (December, ongoing)
- Barrier project planning (January)
- Water Replenishment District agreements (10/21)
- Board meeting recaps (monthly)
- Feature on growth of recycled water industry (January)
- Conservation topics, including residential audit program (CWAC); gardening tips, how to save water in the winter, reminder about water saving devices (ongoing)
- Residential rebate programs (November, ongoing)
- Commercial, industrial rebate programs (December, ongoing)
- Legislative updates (monthly)
- Directors' community presentations on desalination, etc. (ongoing)
- Staff conference presentations (ongoing)

(Note: This list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Other releases covering pertinent, timely items and events and District comments on industry-related events will be developed and released as necessary.)

Editorial Board Meetings

Meetings will be arranged with local print media editorial boards/executives to discuss desalination and seek the newspapers' support and/or commitment to produce articles and use press releases. Directors (no more than 2 at any outlet) will head the delegation that will also include at least one PA staff member and a technical staff member when available. Delegations going to daily newspapers and large weekly groups will also include the General Manager or a senior manager.

Not all newspapers will want a formal editorial board meeting, particularly for the smaller newspapers. Personal visits by Directors and/or staff will be planned for those newspapers, even if it's just of the "drop-in" variety. The type of request and visit will be tailored for each newspaper. The mechanics and nuances of dealing with editorial boards and journalists will be covered in the media training.

The Daily Breeze has agreed to such a meeting and will be the first outlet visited following the completion of training. Other outlets to be visited include:

<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	<i>Los Angeles Sentinel</i>	<i>La Opinion</i>	<i>Chinese Daily News Wave</i>
<i>Newspapers</i>	<i>Gardena Valley News</i>		<i>The Beach Reporter</i>
<i>Easy Reader</i>	<i>Inglewood News</i>		<i>Inglewood Today</i>
<i>El Segundo Herald</i>	<i>LA Business Journal</i>		<i>LA Web Inc.</i>
<i>Worldwide Liberty Times</i>	<i>International Daily News</i>		<i>Sing Tao Newspapers</i>
<i>The China Press</i>	<i>CHI-AM Daily News</i>		<i>Rafu Shimpo</i>

Other opportunities exist for editorial outreach. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* does not hold topic-specific editorial board meetings. However, the Times editors have asked staff to produce an op-ed piece on desalination that they will consider using. Staff will ghost-write a

piece that will appear under a Director's byline. Meanwhile, the Times' Sacramento bureau office will be approached on the issue and their may be more willing to develop a piece, since that edition often focuses on water resources issues. The key is that the District's approach will be tailored to an individual newspaper's needs.

Radio Promotion

Presentations will be made to local radio stations that staff determines are likely to do a feature or interview on desalination, recycled water, drought prevention, and the district organization. News departments have been and will continue to receive all press releases and event announcements and will be contacted regularly to promote interest. Talk show opportunities will be carefully considered.

First step is defining each station's audience, such as:

- Talk
- News
- Easy listening
- NPR

The program manager's name, phone numbers, and e-mail address will be secured along with program information (producer, show type, information required). Enough information will be obtained so that staff/consultants can develop a relationship and begin to pitch personalized information to each producer. Two shows currently being researched in hopes of obtaining air time are "Science Friday" on NPR and "Which Way LA?" with Warren Olney, with whom Mary McCormick is familiar.

Current radio outlets regularly contacted include:

KFWB KNX KFI E.D.I. City Magazine

Television Promotion

Over-the air stations: Broadcast television needs to have nurtured relationships. Information will be submitted constantly with West Basin's status as the lead agency being strongly identified with that information being sent not only by mail, but also personally delivered on occasion. This will help to build a "niche" market in desalination with which West Basin will be identified and used as a lead agency for information. Thus, when a desalination, new water source or drought news opportunity surfaces, news staffs will think about contacting West Basin and/or using tapes or information supplied by the District for the stories. Presentations will be made to local over-the-air television station news departments by Directors and staff to promote desalination and water industry interest. News departments have been and will continue to receive all press releases and announcements and will be contacted regularly to promote interests. Current television stations regularly contacted include:

*KCBS/Channel 2 KNBC/Channel 4 KTLA/Channel 5
KABC/Channel 7 KCAL/Channel 9 KTTV/Channel 11
KCOP/Channel 13 KSCI/Channel 18 Chinese TV Network*

Cable Television: Staff is currently researching the cable television situation throughout the District, identifying companies serving each area and procedures for providing material. It is important that relationships be developed with station managers and other key individuals. Show length requirements and formats will be determined for each station. Some of the possibilities include on-camera interviews of Directors, feature stories, regular news updates, remote broadcasts from District facilities, public service announcements, regular presentation of Districts videos (including "Liquid Assets" and desalination videos). Staff will arrange formal visits with cable television executives to discuss the District and its programs and to seek opportunities. Staff will offer our services as contacts on all water issues and will send out immediate notices to the outlets offering our services during news event situations.

Among the possibilities being investigated are the opportunity to do a "live" show that will be taped and to ask the possibility of doing 3-5 minute segments that can be used regularly at various times and updated on a regular basis.

Staff is also drafting a letter to the Metropolitan Water District's External Affairs Department to request that they do a feature on desalination and also air regular updates on the topic in the regular "Straight from the Tap" cable show that they distribute throughout Southern California. Staff has had conversations with Met staff on this subject and they are open to the possibility.

A list of local cable outlets and contacts will be provided when completed.

Government Outreach

Beginning in November, staff will begin contacting city managers and public works directors to discuss desalination plans/progress and determine their interest in joining a West Basin Water Caucus. Directors will be asked to accompany staff on any city visit and will be the main contact person when meetings with city council members are arranged.

Purpose of the West Basin Water Caucus is to have an identifiable, influential group in place that can meet regularly to be updated on the projects, used as a "sounding board," provide word-of-mouth public relations in their respective communities and provide input on the projects. A kickoff breakfast is planned in January or February for the caucus with the preliminary visits beginning following the November election.

Following the November election, staff will work with the consultant's government affairs coordinator and the District's Sacramento representatives to arrange meetings with the new members of the Assembly and Senate water committees, as well as with members of the local delegations, to inform legislators about desalination and open communication lines for future use. The Sacramento visits will begin following the January swearing-in of new members with the exception of the local delegation members, who can be visited in their offices during the winter break. Directors will be informed and invited to meetings with their delegation members. Tours of the plant for formal presentations will be offered to all.

Community Outreach

Events: Desalination is being promoted at all events in which West Basin is involved, with the project being featured on exhibits and a fact sheet handout. A color informational brochure is in development under the following timeline:

<i>Copy development</i>	<i>Oct. 4</i>
<i>Design dummy</i>	<i>Oct. 7</i>
<i>First draft complete</i>	<i>Oct. 11</i>
<i>Final draft complete</i>	<i>Oct. 16</i>
<i>To printer</i>	<i>Oct. 18</i>

A calendar of community events through December was distributed September 6 for review. Staff is currently researching community events through June 2003 to develop a list of outreach opportunities. Recent and immediate outreach opportunities include:

<i>League of California Cities</i>	<i>Oct. 3-4</i>
<i>Gardena Heritage Festival</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>
<i>Manhattan Beach Old Hometown Fair</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>
<i>Water Harvest</i>	<i>Oct. 26</i>

Community Groups: Contact is being made with community-based organizations, environmental groups, homeowners associations and similar groups to develop an invitation list for a desalination introductory breakfast planned in November. Representatives from these groups will receive information on District plans and be offered an opportunity to sign up to receive continuing information on District projects. Staff will also offer their services and the services of interested Directors to make presentations at community functions, such as service club meetings, annual dinners, chamber of commerce events, etc. This will form the basis of a Speakers Bureau that will be in place throughout the desalination/barrier project time frames to deliver the project message points.

Industry Outreach

Staff already has made presentations to several water-related groups and at conferences and more invitations are expected in the future. Following the training session, Directors also will be able to make such presentations and will be offered that opportunity. Staff will offer the District's services as a program participant whenever they attend committee meetings at any level. Media staff will pitch ideas for articles to water industry publications, such as the ACWA newsletter. Public Affairs staff will work closely with other departments to identify possible speaking engagements and to develop a list of industry publications that would be interested in covering desalination.

Video

LPC has proposed a state of the art video including both live-action and animation that will explain the need for and benefits of desalination in general while focusing on the West Basin Demonstration Project and future plans.

The live-action portions will feature footage of District events and interviews with Directors and staff explaining various portions of the desalination project and the District’s commitment to new sources of water and its customers. The animation portion will feature an “engaging and interesting” character that will walk and talk the audience through the desalination process.

The video has many uses, including as a video news release, for public access programming, community outreach, and can be edited into a variety of lengths for use at meetings with public officials when downloaded into a laptop. It also can be featured in various forms on the District web site.

Potential audiences include:

- School-aged children – K-12
- Community outreach groups
- Elected officials (local, state, federal)
- Broadcast, cable television outlets (video news release, clips)
- Half-hour special for public access

The material produced would be “evergreen”, i.e. appropriate for use for years to come and include professional animation. Once completed, clips can be compressed and used on the website and digitized onto a CD-Rom or DVD.

The video also will be used as the basis for producing the “West Basin Quarterly Journal” which will be aired every three months on all cable outlets throughout the area and sent to broadcast stations as source of information and clips.

The District will not produce a separate video for each of the audiences listed above, but will develop an overall piece that can then be edited and/or expanded to serve each particular audience. This will be less expensive, yet allow for distribution of an audience-appropriate video for each demographic.

Budget for the video is:

• Pre-production (2-3 weeks, script development, animation planning):	\$ 6,000
• Production (4-5 days of shooting):	\$11,000
• Post-production (narration, editing, graphics):	\$16,000
• Production of animation:	<u>\$ 8,000</u>
Total cost:	\$41,000
• Repackaging for specific audience use:	
-- Schools	\$ 6,000
-- Community outreach	\$ 6,000
-- Government	\$ 6,000
-- Video news release	\$ 6,000
-- Half-hour cable show	<u>\$10,000</u>
Total	\$34,000
Total for video production	\$75,000

Website

It is felt that the District can gain more out of the on-line use of desalination information if a website separate from the District's current site is developed. This will allow for more search hits, can be easily promoted in support material and easily maintained. Cost of the website development, including one year of maintenance and hosting would be:

Focus Groups

Focus groups have been used in the past to help shape District policy and direction and may be useful in the current project and expanded to include other topics for maximum value. Information will be sought on desalination, bottled water (attitudes, packaging preferences, and uses), recycled water, knowledge of the District and its programs, and other questions and concerns brought forward by staff and Directors.

Estimated costs are:

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