



**WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT**  
17140 S. Avalon Blvd., Suite 210  
Carson, CA 90746

**AGENDA NO. 13**

**OCTOBER, 6, 2010 – Communications**  
Gray (Chair), Kwan  
**OCTOBER, 25 2010 – Board Meeting**  
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Submitted by: Ron Wildermuth  
Approved by: Rich Nagel

## CONSENT CALENDAR

### TARGETED OUTREACH EFFORT IMPROVEMENTS

#### SUMMARY:

West Basin Municipal Water District's (West Basin) Strategic Business Plan calls for staff to enhance West Basin's brand and implement the Water Reliability (WR) 2020 Communications Plan. This information item lays out ways to improve our current outreach efforts to make them more focused, efficient and effective, and to greatly increase positive awareness of West Basin's efforts with key audiences.

Raising awareness of West Basin's accomplishments remains a challenge because West Basin is a wholesale water agency and does not deliver water bills at the retail level. Raising the awareness of each of the nearly one million water users served by West Basin would be cost prohibitive. Therefore, communications planning has always been focused on reaching the most influential audiences that affect West Basin's job of providing reliable water. These key target audiences include: City, County, State and Federal elected officials and their staffs; our eight retail customer agencies; business leaders (primarily through the Chambers of Commerce); the media and other community group leaders. The intent is to have these leaders understand the value West Basin provides the community and to show progress in implementing the District's Water Reliability 2020 program. If these key audiences understand and are appreciative of the West Basin's efforts, they will also become communicators to other audiences about West Basin's accomplishments.

To maximize West Basin's exposure to these key audiences in an efficient manner, staff is proposing a more targeted outreach program. This entails a more strategic execution of our existing information programs to raise awareness of West Basin's accomplishments with our important audiences noted above. These audiences can have the most impact, positive or negative, on our mission, and therefore should be our primary area of focus.

Our existing programs each have their own primary audiences. For example, the education programs are primarily focused on teachers, educators, students, etc. Construction programs focus on city staff and residents impacted by recycling construction. West Basin's conservation programs are focused on organizations that can implement conservation programs; e.g. city staff, schools, colleges, businesses, etc. West Basin's water recycling programs are similarly focused on clients and potential clients.

We must consciously refocus some of highly visible activities of these programs, in order to better reach our key target audiences. This will produce many benefits.

Here are some examples of how high profile activities can be redirected to reach target audiences more efficiently:

- Scholarship awards would be presented at the appropriate City Council meeting or School Board meeting where the winning candidates reside. This would create visibility before a key audience and television coverage and/or coverage in the newspaper by journalists covering the council or school board meeting. This is media coverage monitored by the most active citizens in the community. Additional coverage could be obtained by awarding scholarships by County Supervisors and/or the appropriate State/Federal legislator, which will result in coverage in their newsletters. These newsletters also go to the most influential leaders in the community. The event would also be an opportunity for direct key value messaging, i.e. to point out that West Basin provides water recycling, water conservation and environmental education free, including buses, to about 7,500 area students each year.
- Similar presentations to School Boards or City Councils could be made for Solar Cup teams and Art Contests winners. Photos of the event would be taken and provided to appropriate local newspapers and Chamber newsletters as well as being covered in newsletters or web sites. This would also provide an opportunity to reinforce the fact that West Basin is implementing various aspects of WR 2020.
- Major construction outreach project starts up completion and would be announced at the appropriate City Council meeting along with value and benefits of water recycling. This information could also be provided to the appropriate Chambers so that their businesses are aware of construction activities in their area. This provides the opportunity to demonstrate that West Basin is currently and actively working to double its water recycling program by 2020, by laying new recycled water pipes and other related construction activities. West Basin could also report that finished projects were completed on time and on budget demonstrating efficiency.
- New recycling customers could be announced at appropriate City Council meetings, and if possible, a representative of the new customer organization would be present to accept a WR 2020 award, West Basin certificate of appreciation or some other recognition from a Board member or staff. Alternately, a presentation could be made to the new customer by the local county supervisor or state or federal elected official with accompanied publicity, as described above.
- For businesses that implement or participate in our conservation improvement programs, this same activity and award presentation would also provide another opportunity for recognition of both the conserving organization and West Basin via one of our key audiences. It would also provide the opportunity to get the message that West Basin is doubling its conservation program by 2020.

Over time, this program, well managed and scheduled, would have many benefits:

- Demonstrate directly to our key audiences that WR 2020 is in fact being executed;
- Show that West Basin is improving water reliability with sound financial investment and efficient execution of projects;
- Have a positive effect on West Basin's reputation in the community;
- Build awareness/recognition of staff and Board members;
- Obtain more media coverage with key audiences;
- Build a pool of positive experiences in the minds of our key audiences;
- More effective use of time and staff; and
- Eventually, we will have our key audiences carrying out messages to their contacts.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

Goal 3: Customer Service – West Basin is committed to providing value by understanding and meeting the needs of our customers and the communities we serve.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

Not applicable.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed by the Communications Committee on October 6, 2010 and agendaized to the October 25, 2010 Board meeting Consent Calendar.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This item is for information only.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit "A"- Possible Current and Future Activities to Highlight to Key Audiences