



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2009

ADMINISTRATION

October Storms

The remnants of the Japanese typhoon Melor caught the jet stream across the Pacific and slammed into Marin County on October 13th to kick off the wet weather season. With winds gusting to 70 mph and rainfall up to 5" in Marin, there were big impacts on the plant. Influent flow rose all morning cresting at 84 MGD at 4 PM. Operations staff brought all empty process tanks online to handle the flow.

The new influent barscreens and screenings compactors were not able to keep up with the high flows, allowing debris to bypass the screens into the process. The contractor and CMSA worked to fix the screens and compactors. O&M continued working into the next day to replace pumps and remove excessive debris from the process stream. PG&E power was affected by the wind, rain and failure of a transmission line at Moss Landing. In the forty minutes following 2:40 PM the power failed or browned out three times, knocking out all plant equipment and the cogeneration system. In order to maintain compliant plant operation CMSA switched to our emergency generator to keep process equipment running.

Mercury Reduction Ordinance

The Mercury Reduction Ordinance was developed and reviewed with legal counsel, and the first reading is scheduled for the November Board meeting. When the Ordinance is passed staff will begin the process to regulate dentists within the CMSA service areas.

Our outreach to the dental community continues. The Marin

County Dental Society mailed out the draft copy of the Mercury Reduction Ordinance with their newsletter to all of the dentists on their mailing list. We had one call as a result of the mailing. No other comments, feedback, or questions have been received.

First Quarter Budget Status Report

As of September 30th the Agency received 24% of budgeted operating revenue and incurred 24% of total budgeted operating expenses. Asset Management activities under the Capital Improvement Program was at 20% of budget. The Revenue Bond Program was at 82% of budget (\$68.3 million) and included \$6.3 million in contractual obligations associated with executed contracts and \$600,000 in contractual obligations for other projects.

Financial Audit

The Agency received the Independent Auditor's Report from Vavrinek, Trine & Day (VTD) for the draft FY 08-09 Financial Statements accompanied by the Independent Auditors' Report from Agency's. Staff reviewed the financial statements and prepared a Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) that provides an overview of the financial statements. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the financial statements and accompanying notes.

The Agency goal is to have the independent auditor issue an unqualified opinion for the Agency's FY 2008-2009 financial statements – that the financial statements are free of material misstatements and the audit did not identify any deficiencies and

material weaknesses regarding the Agency's financial operations. VTD will present its findings to the Board in November.

Finance staff has received preliminary indications that the auditor did not identify areas for improvements that would warrant VTD to issue a Management Letter. This is an indication that Agency employees understand and adhere to the policies and procedures pertaining to the management and expenditure of Agency funds.

Other Financial Reporting

The Finance staff used the draft FY 09 financial statements to prepare and submit the Special Districts Financial Transactions Report for FY 2008-09 to the State Controller's Office. The Agency will submit the financial statement for FY 2008-09 once it has been adopted by the Board.

Personnel and Training

CMSA's Accountant Technician, Ahn Ta, has received training on the use of NEXGEN Asset Management, a comprehensive asset management software tool used by the Agency to manage work orders and fixed assets. The use of NEXGEN has streamlined the purchasing process because it has eliminated duplicative data entry and reduced the flow of paperwork. Ahn updates the purchase order module in NEXGEN once orders have been approved. This allows staff initiating the order to monitor the approval and ordering status in NEXGEN instead of relying on the flow of paper documents and order logs.

Financial Analyst Heidi Lang and Administrative Assistant Mary Brown completed their one year probation this month and have been appointed to regular employment. Congratulations Mary and Heidi!

WEF Conference

The annual Water Environment Federation conference was held in Orlando, Florida this month. This conference brings together over 18,000 "wastewater" people from around the world. There are pre-conference seminars, two and a half days of technical sessions, local technical tours, and a huge equipment show. Assistant Treatment Plant Manager Chris Finton attended the conference including a seminar on "Manage Wastewater as a Renewable Resource." This interactive workshop focused on how to apply a life cycle assessment tool to planning and designing a sustainable water management system. Tracy Mehan, formerly of the US EPA, discussed new options for funding infrastructure projects in another Utility Management seminar and Peter Silva the new EPA Assistant Administrator for Water discussed his priorities and answered question in a Q&A in the "Meet the New Administrator" session. Chris also toured the equipment show to get vendors information for future CMSA equipment replacements or upgrades.

Operations Shift Change

The Wet Weather Shift Bid has been completed and the transition is scheduled for the weekend of November 14-15. As was initiated for the Wet Weather season three years ago, Operations will have a third person assigned on the graveyard shift to ensure adequate staffing for wet weather events. A second Lead has been held over on the day shift to coordinate and complete operations issues during

the WWIP contract close out.

Safety

The Northern Regional Safety Training Day, Safetyfest 09, is an annual safety training event for wastewater professionals with presentations on industry safety issues. Featured topics include laboratory safety, source control safety, contractor safety, and emergency action plan development.

David Patzer, Risk Management Specialist from CSRMA, made a presentation to CMSA staff about Functional Capacity Testing. This is a program that CSRMA is considering for all new employees to assess their physical abilities. To determine the programs applicability, CSRMA is looking for volunteers from 10% of their member agencies to be tested over the next two months. The volunteers from CMSA will have their physical abilities assessed on November 24th and the data will be compared to their job requirements. CSRMA will then analyze the cost versus the expected benefit of avoiding employee injuries and lowering workers compensation expenses.

After Du-All's comprehensive safety survey of the CMSA plant and the SD#2 pump stations, we received reports noting deficiencies. Maintenance created several work orders to correct all these items and they will be completed by next month.

PROJECTS

Wet Weather Improvement Project

The project's construction work is nearing completion with all the WWIP concrete structures built and site paving underway. Mechanical equipment for the new primary clarifiers, such as pumps, piping, and their appurtenances, is

being installed. Vendor training for operations and maintenance staff at the new effluent pump station is nearly completed.

The next major milestone is control strategy testing for the contact tanks, pump station, and the automated Aeration Basin gates, which are all well underway. Once the strategy testing and vendor training are completed, Carollo Engineers will be providing integrated system training for each system in the WWIP.

The partnering team of Carollo Engineers, Harris & Associates, CMSA, and Western Water recently had their final facilitated partnering session. The team revised the few remaining project goals, scored the project's partnering results, and voted on who should receive the project's Partnering Excellence Award. The partnering score was 8.6 out of 10, worthy of consideration for the national Marvin Black Partnering Award. Congratulations to CMSA's senior engineer Ken Katen for receiving the partnering award!

Outfall Crack Investigation

The Agency has filed permit applications with the lead regulatory agencies for this project, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board, and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. At their June meeting, the CMSA Board approved delivering this project as an extra work order to Western Water Constructors, the main WWIP contractor. We hope to have favorable reviews of the applications in the next few weeks, with work tentatively starting in early January. The investigation and determination if repairs are needed should be completed within a few weeks of starting work.

Bar Screen Replacement

During an unusually strong first winter storm event on October 13, influent flows contained a large amount of solids (rags, plastics, etc.). This caused some blinding off of the screens, and the washer compactors had difficulty processing and transporting the screenings. Western Water immediately provided a crew to assist keeping the screens and washer compactors cleared during the storm event.

Agency staff, Western Water, Carollo Engineers, and Waste Tech are working closely together to identify the right solutions to these issues. In the meantime, some immediate actions have been taken or are being implemented, such as the Agency already raising the 3-water system pressure to improve washer compactor performance, and Western Water working to upsize the 3-water supply manifold as soon as the new parts arrive.

Biotower Arm Replacement

Four bids were received and were opened on October 1, 2009. Western Water Contractors of Santa Rosa was the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, with a lump-sum bid of \$91,000.

The Board awarded Western Water the contract at their October meeting. The notice to proceed letter was issued on October 27 and the preconstruction meeting and schedule review will be scheduled soon. Due to long equipment lead time, the contract term is 5 months, which will allow the reconditioning to take place during wet weather, when the biotowers are not used. Agency staff designed this project and will provide engineering support, construction inspection, and management for this project.

Digester/FOG Predesign

The engineering predesign work in nearing completion and Kennedy/Jenks plans to submit the predesign report to the Agency in late October. The focus of the predesign is to evaluate alternate digester covers, digester mixing systems, and sulfide gas removal technologies, and options for FOG facility sizing and equipment layout. Staff plans to review the predesign report in November, provide comments to K/J, and select the preferred systems and equipment.

Preventative Maintenance

This month Maintenance initiated a sparkplug reliability test with SEC, one of our cogeneration service companies. SEC supplied a set of Denso 16 sparkplugs for the Waukesha engine. Current replacement is every 1500 hours. SEC will test, clean and re-gap the plugs every 750 hours until they do not meet specifications. Denso claims their plugs will triple the service life. If this proves true there will be savings from fewer spark plugs changes per year as well as a 30% savings in the cost of the plugs.

The storm of October 13th wreaked havoc on the plant band process equipment. Maintenance replaced two grit pumps with spares, and rebuilt one spare and ordered parts for the second. The primary scum pump was removed, rebuilt and reinstalled. One submersible pump in the site sump burned up its motor. It has been removed and replaced with a spare. The failed unit was sent to the manufacturer's shop to be rebuilt.

The E/I shop replaced the VFD motor control for centrifuge #1 this month. The E/I shop found that the TESCO VFD works well as a replacement for the Allen Bradley unit and only costs one third. This

is the second TESCO installed. The Headworks sulfide gas monitor also failed this month. Since the unit was obsolete, E/I upgraded the wiring and installed a new sensing unit.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

NPDES Testing

The CMSA lab testing was in compliance with permit requirements, with 100% survival in our October bioassay. There were no permit exceedances in October.

Public Outreach Activities

On October 8, we had a classroom presentation at Ross School for the fourth grade science classes. We discussed where the underground pipes in houses go, what you can and cannot dump down the drains, and how you should properly dispose of what you cannot dump down the drain. We brought our microscope, watershed model, laptop computer with environmental games, and chemistry model of a wastewater treatment plant into the classroom for demonstrations with participation by the students. It was a very interactive classroom presentation, after which the students took their laptop computers and blogged about the presentation.

We staffed a very busy booth at the well-attended Marin County Senior Information Fair on October 21, and 156 environmental quizzes were taken by the seniors. One of the most popular discussion topics was proper disposal of unused pharmaceutical products. We handed out a list of the 26 collection sites in Marin County and how to properly package the pharmaceutical products to take

up less space and keep the cost of the program under control. Everyone was very supportive of the successful pharmaceutical collection program that the Wastewater Treatment Agencies of Marin County financially support. In 2008 the program collected 2,400 pounds of pharmaceutical products preventing their release to the wastewater treatment system and into the bay.

There were public education booths at the Hamilton School Harvest Festival on October 3 and at the Hamilton Hometown Festival on October 18. A total of 126 environmental quizzes were taken by people at the two Festivals, adding to the environmental awareness of students and the general public attending the events.

Laboratory

The last of our summer sampling program will be completed this month. The collection system odor and corrosion control testing for our member agencies ends in October. Staff completed the Corte Madera lagoon water testing in to ensure the waters are safe for recreation.

Biosolids

Our land application ended on October 30 and will resume next year in May when the land application site is dry. We worked out the terms and provisions of a 5 year contract with Synagro to continue land application at the Lakeville site between Hwy 116 and Hwy 39. Our biosolids are used at that site for soil amendment and fertilizer.

For the rest of this year and until the land application site is ready, we will be sending our biosolids to Redwood Landfill where they will be reused as alternate daily cover. The biosolids are spread over the material that is being placed in the landfill, instead of having to import soil for the same purpose.

Environmental Compliance

Dry cleaner inspections in our service area are wrapping up. Many cleaners have removed their perchloroethylene machines because recent regulations require the machines be phased out. New machines are available with petroleum-based solvents, and several dry cleaners are using a new process called "Wet Cleaning" where they use detergents and a small amount of water. In the coming years, we will be inspecting the new machines installations to determine their potential to release toxic solvents to the sanitary sewers.

CONTRACT/OUTSIDE SERVICES

SRSD

Inspections are complete for restaurants that have self-clean permits which require grease trap cleaning at a minimum of every 15 days. Only one Notice of Violation (NOV) was issued, to Restaurant Taqueria El Salvador, for not cleaning their trap. A re-inspection will occur with a re-inspection fee to ensure it is being cleaned as required. Overall compliance was excellent with all of the restaurants familiar with the FOG program requirements. Little Mandarin has complied with a recently issued installation letter requiring installation of a larger trap.

LGVSD

Inspections are complete for restaurants that have self clean permits. All were in compliance and no enforcement actions were required. An Administrative Order was issued to La Toscana for not complying with their trap installation letter; we were notified by the county that they have approved plans and have until the end of January for installation. We continue to follow up on the restaurants currently in the process of installing traps.

RVSD

Staff is performing FOG inspections for restaurants that have self clean permits. Work continues with the restaurants that received Administrative Orders (AOs) to install traps. Each restaurant has been contacted and they continue to inform staff of their intention to comply with trap installation. We will continue to monitor progress and work with the restaurants to assist them in any way possible to complete their installation.

SD#2

The Board approved preparing a FOG service agreement with SD2 at their October meeting. Since then, staff has prepared and delivered a draft agreement and a draft resolution adopting the CMSA FOG ordinance in the SD2 service area. After these documents are finalized and approved by the SD2 Board, staff will bring the agreement to the CMSA Board for approval. Once SD2's program is developed, all Central Marin County will have the same FOG control program administered in the same manner.

Maintenance completed regular checks and routine preventive maintenance (including generator checks and wet well cleaning) for all 19 pump stations for October.

Electrical preventive maintenance was completed for all the stations, as well as ordering some relays and contact sets for a couple stations to ensure reliable wet weather operation.

Maintenance completed 51 USA (underground services dig requests) mark-ups of pump station piping in October.