

# Environmental Management Department

## EMD NEWS & NOTES

Summer 2010 Edition

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### FROM THE DIRECTOR

This issue highlights the talents and compassion of the employees of EMD. From hosting a Chinese delegation on how we regulate hazardous waste and food facilities, to our own Robert Duncan helping to clean up the oil from the Deep Horizon Well spill in the Gulf as a member of the Coast Guard. This is the second time China has sent delegates to EMD (two different Provinces) to look for new ways to protect their citizens' public health and environment.



Val F. Siebal, Director

We also participated in the "Save Our Shelter: campaign to raise money to cover costs at the new County Animal Shelter. What a great fund raising event in which everyone was able to participate thanks to a handful of volunteers! And what a great cause.

We complete this issue with the introduction of new technology being tested in the Environmental Compliance Division. Everyone realizes technology changes how we do business, but this Division is actively evaluating new groundbreaking ways to get the job done. The technology could have national significance.

This is a great Summer issue and it reinforces why I am proud to be a member of the Environmental Management Department!

### EMD HOSTS CHINESE DELEGATION

In 2008, delegates from Chong Qing Province (China) paid EMD a visit. On June 4, EMD hosted another meeting with seventeen delegates from in and around the Hunan Province (China). The delegation included directors, chiefs, engineers, and researchers from various departments equivalent to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The primary focus of the



June 4 meeting was programs contained within EMD's Environmental Compliance Division. Air pollution and garbage generated by China's large population is a pressing issue as China's industrialization moves forward.

Environmental Health Division Chief John Rogers, Supervising Environmental Specialist Anthony Chu, and Environmental Health Specialist Jane Auyeung presented an overall description of Environmental Management Department programs including the color-coded placard system for rating food safety in food facilities, hazardous waste, and medical waste. The delegation had many questions regarding waste disposal, including incineration and recycling methods. The delegates were also amazed that Sacramento County uses such an explicit way to rate food facilities and were interested in learning about the public's reaction to the color-coded placards. China is currently offering subsidies for disposal of high emission vehicles to reduce pollution, but is still seeking additional ways to become more environmentally friendly as they become more industrialized. China is now being bombarded with electronic waste exported from other countries due to the restrictions in their current regulation. China quickly adapted by refurbishing the waste and putting it to use.

## EMD EMPLOYEE ASSISTS WITH GULF OIL-SPILL CLEANUP



Supervising Environmental Specialist Robert Duncan is currently living on a houseboat in oil-threatened Venice, Louisiana—a remote coastal town known locally as "the end of the world".

Robert said, "Sometimes it actually feels like it".

Venice is the closest point of land to the well that continues to leak into the Gulf of Mexico. Robert, 33, is a Reservist and qualified Pollution Investigator for the U.S. Coast Guard, which deployed him to the region on May 20.

Robert, who works in EMD's Environmental Compliance Division, has spent the last two weeks overseeing cleanup of Venice's beaches, where tar balls wash up daily. Robert also deploys and collects the booms designed to absorb oil from gulf waters and keep it from reaching the coast.

In principle, it's similar to what he does for EMD. Robert inspects facilities that store hazardous materials or waste. He responds to "incidents," like spills, and often leads the first stages of the cleanup effort.

Last Thanksgiving, for instance, he brought out the absorbent booms after a capsized boat began leaking oil into the Sacramento River, said Elise Rothschild, his supervisor and Chief of the Environmental Compliance Division. For the most part, though, County spills and leaks happen in an urban setting.

"When I'm in Sacramento dealing with a spill, the trustees that I'm trying to protect are the public," Duncan said. "Out here, my trustees are the pelicans, the turtles and the fishermen. We're trying to protect their way of life."

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## EMD EMPLOYEE ASSISTS WITH GULF OIL-SPILL CLEANUP *(continued from previous column)*

A marine biology major in college, he prefers the environmental work, he said.

That's why he joined the Coast Guard in the first place, he said. Duncan is a reservist in the San Francisco Sector's Incident Management Division, which responds to pollution incidents and other hazards to marine environments.

He took part in the sector's response to the 2007 oil spill by the container ship Cosco Busan in the San Francisco Bay. But he said he has never seen a situation like the one in Louisiana.

## STREAMING VIDEO INSPECTIONS SHOW PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE



EMD recently began field and office testing of two streaming video technologies for performing remote drilling inspections (i.e., well grouts). Testing was designed to evaluate whether live streaming video from a drill site could be used successfully to perform inspections without leaving the office. If successful, this technology could result in reduced regulatory costs to drillers and their clients and could potentially be extended to other programs. Cost savings would result from eliminating travel time, down time spent on site due to equipment breakdowns or tardy subcontractors (e.g., cement trucks), miscommunication of inspection scheduling changes and mileage charges.

Prior to testing the technology, Environmental Specialists (ESs) in the Site Remediation, Well, and Water Programs collaborated to create a checklist of ten critical inspection elements. During the test, ESs travelled to the drill site and used video capable

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## STREAMING VIDEO INSPECTIONS SHOW...

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cell phones to stream the inspected activity to an ES in the office who viewed the live video on a computer. The ES in the office noted whether he/she was able to observe each critical inspection element.

EMD tested several different cell phones, including the Android and HTC cell phones operating on the Verizon mobile network, and the iPhone operating on the AT&T mobile network. EMD utilized the Verizon network to test a free, public domain video streaming platform known as "Qik", and vMobile Technology's proprietary software platform that currently operates only on the AT&T network.

We found that each platform had advantages and disadvantages. The Qik program is free, easy to use, recordable for later viewing and provides good connectivity when using the Verizon network. It is not secure and may be viewed by anyone during video streaming. EMD staff would get text messages during the streaming from people in other states asking what we were doing. vMobile's technology provides log-in security, time/date stamps and additional features such as still pictures, start/stop/start mode and good archiving capability. Each vMobile license costs \$70 per month per phone. Connectivity on the AT&T network is a problem, especially in remote/rural areas. Audio integration is not provided on either platform. Speaking with the driller or ES required a separate telephone call although. As was mentioned, text messaging is possible. Most, but not all, critical inspection elements could be verified by the video feed.

A basic requirement such as "where are you?" is not easily confirmed by close-up video. EMD will experiment with getting a GPS on the sites from which we are transmitting. Dropped connections and the need for two cell phones for video/audio coordination is cumbersome. Contractors will need to be trained to stream the videos in order for this technology to realize cost savings. None of these drawbacks seem insurmountable but based on our test, video streaming of remote inspections does not appear to be quite ready for prime time. However, given the rapid acceleration of technology, we expect these videos to be playing in an office near you in the not too distant future.

## EMD EMPLOYEES HOLD "SAVE OUR SHELTER" BAKE SALE



Environmental Management Department (EMD) employees held a "Save Our Shelter" bake sale to benefit the Sacramento County Animal Shelter." The Shelter's many roles

include providing veterinary care for sick and injured animals, rescuing animals from abusive situations, returning lost pets to their owners and providing adoption counseling for unwanted animals. Approximately 15,000 animals are cared for by the Shelter each year. Two years of County budget cuts have resulted in a 40 percent reduction in animal care staff and further cuts will severely limit the Shelter's ability to save more lives through adoption and return-to-owner programs.

In response to this year's budget cuts, the Shelter launched the "S.O.S." (Save Our Shelter) campaign to raise awareness and support for its services throughout the County, which has included participation in many pet-related area events, several raffles, a flea market, and a late fee amnesty program for pet licenses. Shelter volunteers and EMD employees, Amanda Hakim and Lea Gibson, decided to contribute to the S.O.S. campaign by organizing a two week long bake sale" which became a three week long bake sale thanks to the overwhelming success of the first two weeks. Many EMD employees, including: Daniel Abellon, Lisa Christy, Sean Daneluk, Sue Erikson, Terri Fox, Sophia Johnston, Dennis Karidis, Victoria Krohn, Sharon Merker, Mary Ellen Oetzel, Jonathan Pollack, Justin Ross, Aida Rubio, Michelle Sever, Eric Sutton, Heather Tanner, Jeni VanDusen, Patrice Webb and Susan Williams participated in the bake sale by donating a variety of baked goods and hot lunches. The total proceeds from the sale were \$1,150.00.



Rocco



## EMD ACTIVITY SUMMARY

EMD Program Element	July 2009– June 2010
<b>Food Placarding</b>	Total: 12,068
Green (Pass)	11,375
Yellow (Conditional Pass)	603
Red (Closed)	90
<b>Inspections</b>	Total: 24,292
Food Protection	14,111
Farm Labor Camps	42
Public Swimming Pools/Spas	2,299
Solid Waste Facilities (landfills/transfer stations)	193
Liquid Waste	227
Medical Waste	112
Small Water Systems	55
Water & Monitoring Wells	774
Underground Storage Tank (UST) Facilities	448
UST Installations, Upgrade/Repair & Removal	206
Businesses/Facilities Generating Hazardous Waste	844
Businesses/Facilities Storing Hazardous Materials	1,184
Stormwater	1,681
Waste Tire	544
Tobacco Retailers	363
Commercial Recycling	1,209

EMD Program Element	July 2009– June 2010
<b>Investigations</b>	Total: 754
Food Borne Illness Complaint	214
Incident Response	418
Stormwater Complaint	94
Waste Tire	18
Childhood Lead	10
<b>Workshop Attendance</b>	Total: 1,026
Food Safety Education (Food School)	786
Hazardous Materials Business Plan	64
How To Get A Green Placard	176
Stormwater Compliance Workshop (General)	0
<b>Permits, Plans &amp; Reviews</b>	Total: 25,645
Hazardous Materials Business Plans	4,557
Monitoring Wells	848
Food Facilities	839
Public Swimming Pools/Spas	313
UST Installations, Upgrades/Repairs & Removals	120
Land Use	49
Cross Connection Permits (Blue Tags)	18,919
<b>Information Management</b>	Total: 114,514
Documents Imaged	114,337
Public Record Reviews	177

**County of Sacramento  
Board of Supervisors**

Roger Dickinson, District 1  
 Jimmie Yee, District 2  
 Susan Peters, District 3  
 Roberta MacGlashan, District 4  
 Don Nottoli, District 5

Steven C. Szalay  
 Interim County Executive

### HELLOS, GOODBYES & SERVICE RECOGNITION

for April 2010—June 2010

<i>Rehire</i>	None
<i>Promotions</i>	Judinae Ablang Sara Cardozo Kari Wagner
<i>Service Awards</i>	Sandra Leahy—15 years
<i>Retirements</i>	None

**Countywide Services  
Agency**

Bruce Wagstaff  
 Interim Administrator

Val Siebal  
 EMD Director

**EMD NEWS & NOTES** is EMD's periodic newsletter providing information on EMD activities and services that enhance our community.

EMD is a Department within the Countywide Services Agency of Sacramento County which serves the businesses and residents of the County. EMD is committed to protecting public health and the environment by ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

For more information about EMD's News & Notes newsletter, or to offer your feedback, please contact Linda Jimenez by email at jimenezl@saccounty.net