Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority

Purple Pipe

Volume II Winter 2015

VVWRA Cuts Ribbon on Omnivore Project

(l-r)VVWRA board members Jeffrey O. Rigney, Russ Blewett, VVWRA GM Logan Olds, VVWRA board member Scott Nassif (with scissors), Congressman Paul Cook (red tie)

VVWRA was proud to officially unveil their new Omnivore Project at a September ribbon cutting ceremony. VVWRA, with the help of an Innovative Technology Grant from the California Energy Commission, joined forces with Anaergia LLC to retrofit an older, decommissioned digester at the plant. The upgraded digester, with the help of the Omnivore recuperative thickener, has tripled its previous capacity to digest sludge and other waste. The resulting biogas is being collected in storage tanks and will be used to power two large generators that will produce 1.4 megawatts of electricity. As final infrastructure is installed, those generators will be fully up and running in early 2015 and will produce enough electricity to power virtually the entire plant! The Omnivore Project at VVWRA is the first of its kind in North America and is part of our continuing efforts to be environmentally responsible and sustainable.

Inside the Purple Pipe

A Message from our General Manager

Ambivalence or Opportunity?

Why don't public utilities actively pursue new technologies, alternative project delivery methods, private partnerships and alternative financing arrangements? It's a question I am often asked. The simple answer is that the water industry is risk averse. The excuse often used in the industry to justify this position is the tough regulatory environment. Frankly, that's a bunch of hooey!

The real reason is a pervasive lack of courage in our society. That lack of courage results in a desire to seek excuses before pursuing opportunities.The demands on a public utility are exceedingly diverse and admittedly complicated by the regulatory environment. But, this situation provides un-paralleled opportunity for collaboration. The first step on that pathway is to recognize that continuing to do business as usual is not wise. For example the second biggest cost at a wwtp, after personnel, is energy. Due to California's pursuit of renewable energy (AB32), electrical energy costs are rising. Business as usual would be to pass along that cost increase to the rate payers.

Instead VVWRA found novel solutions to leverage its existing resources encouraging private companies to partner with the Authority and invest over ten million dollars in infrastructure. VVWRA will now reduce its energy cost by over 30% and be energy neutral without having to raise rates one penny to do so.The status quo is no longer viable and we, as an industry, must find new ways of doing business. Secondly, the industry needs to have the courage to have an open mind and seek solutions that may not be comfortable. Our industry is in a state of ambivalence, do we stay the course or explore new ways of doing things that can pay environmental and financial dividends; It won't be easy. It will require courage and the risk of failure to succeed. But if our industry is going to find solutions to address 21st century problems, we must be willing to explore new ways of approaching old problems.--Logan Olds, VVWRA General Manager

VVWRA Receives Exemplar Award

l-r Eldon Heaston, MDAQMD, Meganne Harvey, Anaergia, MDAQMD vice chair Robert Lovingood, VVWRA Director of Operations Gilbert Perez

VVWRA and its partner Anaergia LLC received the Mojave Desert AQMD's prestigious Exemplar award for their work on the Omnivore project which debuted in September 2014.

BREAKING NEWS

NATIONAL Environmental Achievement AWARDS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLEAN WATER AGENCIES

VVWRA has been selected to receive the NACWA National Environmental Achievement Award in the Operations and Environmental Performance category.
NACWA selected VVWRA for the award based on its innovative Waste to Energy Projects like the Omnivore.

Finance Team Wins Budget Award

The VVWRA's Finance Department has been recognized for their superior work receiving the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association. This is the highest award given by the GFOA in governmental budgeting. VVWRA Director of Administration Angela Valles said, "Our finance team has once again raised the bar in governmental budgeting. We are extremely proud of their accomplishment and how it positively reflects on the VVWRA."

A spokesperson for the GFOA says the award represents a "significant achievement" by VVWRA and its staff. The award is particularly impressive given the small staff in the Finance Department and the large area they cover.

Accounting Technician Haik Seropian, Director of Administration Angela Valles, Accounting Supervisor Chieko Keagy and Accountant Xiwei Wang

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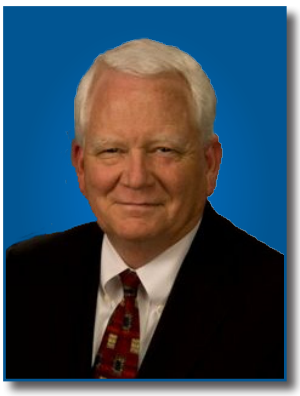
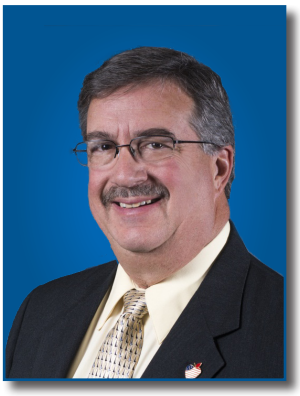
VVWRA Board of Commissioners

Jeffrey O. Rigney
County of San Bernardino



James N. Kennedy
City of Victorville



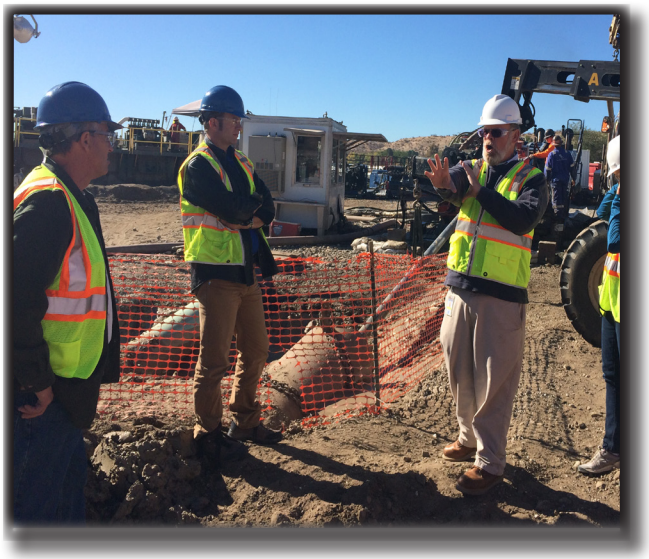
Scott Nassif
Town of Apple Valley

Russ Blewett
City of Hesperia

Construction of Sub-regionals Approved

VVWRA is set to break ground in early 2015 on two new sub-regional water recycling facilities in Hesperia and Apple Valley. The VVWRA Board of Commissioners awarded the construction contract to WM Lyles Co. during their December meeeting.The plants will provide 2,240 acre-feet of recycled water per year, which is equivalent to filling 36,500 swimming pools, or completely refilling Spring Valley Lake every 2 years! These subregional water reclamation plants will produce high quality recycled water to be used for construction, irrigation and to water local parks and golf courses.
Construction is expected to take about 28 months.

Upper Narrows Pipeline Nears Completion



The much anticipated Upper Narrows Pipeline Replacement project is nearing completion. Construction on the pipeline began in late February of 2014 .The massive project became necessary after a series of storms in December of 2010 caused serious damage to the existing pipeline. A temporary emergency pipeline has been in place since. The replacement project includes a pair of 1700 foot long, 16” pipes from Apple Valley and another 16” pipe from Hesperia. They will intersect in the Upper Narrows and join a larger pipe that runs underneath C St, and then continues to the VVWRA treatment plant. Dense clay and equipment issues have caused some delays, but the project is set to be completed by mid 2015.

This 'n That

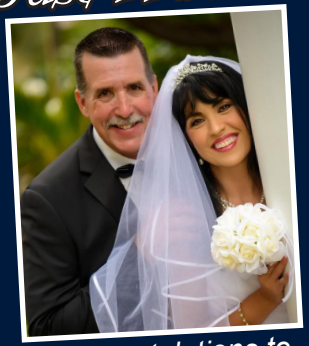
Kristi Casteel — Employee of the Quarter

Kristi Casteel has been named the VVWRA Employee of the Quarter! Kristi has been with VVWRA for over 12 years and was recently promoted to Secretary to the General Manager She was instrumental in scheduling and planning last years move from our Hesperia offices back to the plant. Kristi's positive attitude and attention to detail make her a valuable part of the VVWRA staff. Congratulations Kristi!

Employee Spotlight - Robert Coromina

Robert Coromina has been the Network Supervisor at VVWRA for 8 1/2 years. He makes sure all our technology at VVWRA is working properly and up to date. Whether its a problem with computers, software or cell phones, Robert is always a welcome sight. He manages to quickly resolve technology issues and keep VVWRA on the cutting edge. Robert recently received his Project Management Professional certificate from Cal Tech!

Just Married!

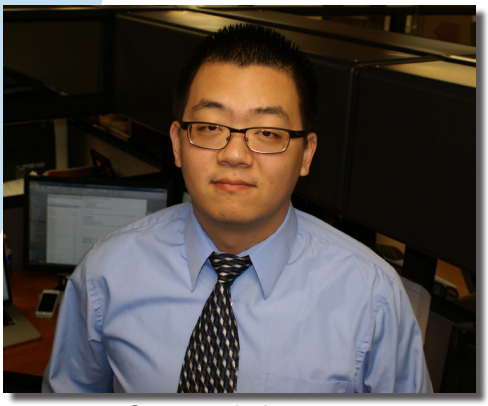


Congratulations to VVWRA's Director of Administration Angela Valles on her November marriage to Rick Roelle in Maui!

Grade 3 Cert!

Congratulations to Senior Operator Ryan Love who passed his Grade 3 certification!

Great with numbers!



Congratulations to Accounting Technician Xiwei Wang who passed his CPA exam!

New Faces @ VVWRA!

Paul Heder
Administrative Aide

Daniel Enriquez
EC/Safety Aide

David Wylie
Public Information Officer

Learn more about Omnivore!

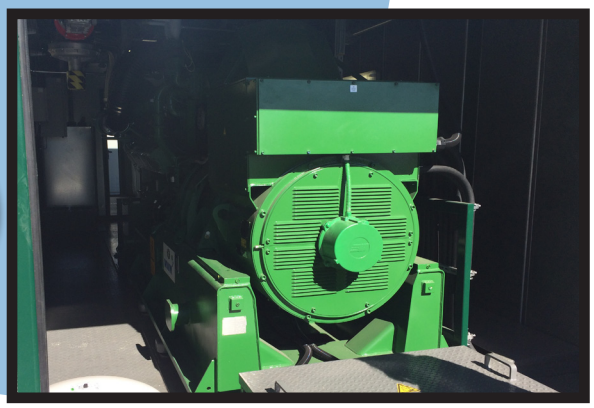
The Omnivore retrofit debuted at VVWRA in late September of 2014 and brings a 21st Century solution to an age old problem...how to effectively handle sludge waste in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

The Omnivore recuperative thickener is a technological breakthrough that removes additional moisture from the sludge that would normally go into a traditional digester. The thicker the sludge, the more material that can be processed and, in turn, the more biogas that can be produced.

The retrofitted digester has tripled its capacity and can accept external feedstock such as FOG (fats, oil, grease) from local businesses, which dramatically increases the amount of biogas produced. Evidence of the biogas production can be seen by the inflated soft shell roof on the digester.

The biogas, which is primarily methane, is treated, conditioned and stored in large, pressurized tanks.

The biogas is then used to power two large generators that produce a combined 1.4 megawatts of electricity. That's enough to power 90 to 100% of the plants entire operation.



**The entire Omnivore project was funded by Anaergia and an Innovative Technology Grant from the California Energy Commission.*