



Purple Pipe

Volume XXVIII Winter 2022



“Oh, say can you see...” Giant American Flag Raised at VWRA



In honor of our nations military veterans, VWRA recently raised a huge American flag at our main plant in Victorville. Details on page 4

VWRA wins 3 CWEA/DAMS Awards



VWRA GM Darron Poulsen accepts the Engineering Achievement Award from event host David Wylie.

VWRA took home three awards at the Annual CWEA/DAMS awards banquet. VWRA won the award for Engineering Achievement for the Renewable Natural Gas Project that went online this year. The RNG project converts methane into natural gas that is injected into a Southwest Gas pipeline. VWRA also won a Community Engagement Award for the RNG Commissioning Ceremony in January

Continued on page 7

GM Poulsen Named to VVC Alumni Hall of Fame



Poulsen learns he is being inducted into the VVC Alumni Hall of Fame. VWRA General Manager Darron Poulsen will be inducted into the Victor Valley College Alumni Hall of Fame. Poulsen was surprised November 29th at an all staff meeting with the announcement from VVC Foundation Executive Director Kirsten Acosta. Poulsen will formally be inducted into the Hall of Fame during a ceremony on February 25th, 2023.

Continued on page 2



Page 2

Poulsen inducted into VVC Hall of Fame

Front page continued...

Darron's story is one of resilience and persistence. After graduating from Apple Valley High School, Darron had his mind set on becoming a civil engineer. After struggling during his first year of college, he quit school and took a job as a meter reader for a local water utility. During that time, he discovered his passion for the water industry and even ran his own backflow testing business. Eventually he returned to school and earned his Associates degree from Victor Valley College in 1996. He went on to earn a



Poulsen reacts during the surprise announcement by the VVC Foundation.



Poulsen celebrates with his family and VVWRA staff.

guide how VVWRA does business with stakeholders and the community. He strives every day to build a culture within VVWRA that embraces those values.

For Darron, his greatest accomplishments are seen in the people who he has been able to mentor and influence to achieve their very best and to reach their greatest potential. He would say, those accomplishments are the "most rewarding, longest lasting, and most impactful."

"Darron is one of the most committed and talented individuals I have worked with", said longtime industry consultant Robert DeLoach.

Darron is a life-long Apple Valley resident. His family once operated the Poulsen Danish Bakery in Victorville. He and his wife Donna raised three daughters and have two grandsons. Congratulations to Darron on this well-deserved honor.

Purple Pipe page 2

Commissioner Holland Retires



VVWRA Commissioner Bill Holland (Hesperia) retired from public service in November 2022. He was congratulated on his service by fellow commissioners (l-r) Debra Jones (Victorville), Holland, Dakota Higgins (SB Co.) and Art Bishop (Apple Valley).



The Purple Pipe is a newsletter published by the Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority. All rights reserved © 2022 info@vwra.com 20111 Shay Rd, Victorville, CA 92394

VVWRA Board of Commissioners

- Scott Nassif - Town of Apple Valley
- City of Hesperia
- Paul Cook - SB CSA 64 & 42
- Debra Jones - City of Victorville



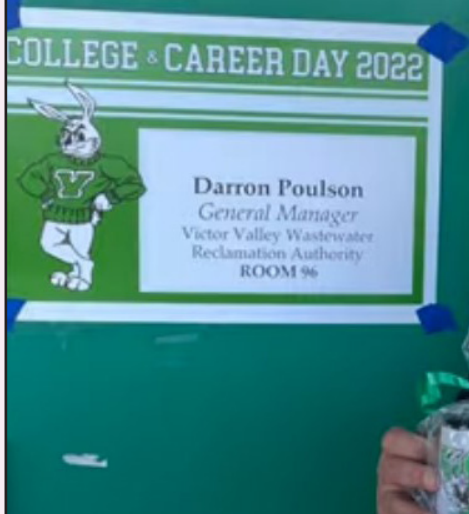
Around the plant

Congratulations on New Position!



Xiwei Wang is VVWRA's new Accounting Supervisor. Congratulations Xiwei!

Let's talk!



VVWRA General Manager Darron Poulson talked to students about opportunities in the wastewater industry at the recent Annual Career Day at Victor Valley High School.



Sample This!



Operator-in-training James Pasieka taking a sample of recycled water at the tertiary filters.



Hesperia Membranes

Workers replace the filter membranes at the Hesperia Subregional.

Congrats!



Operator Chase Cottrell has earned his Grade 1 certification



Mechanic Richard Swatzell (l) and Utility worker Chuck Trammel use a vector truck to clean out the grit basin.

Welcome to VVWRA!



Martin Cedeno
Maintenance Mechanic



James Carothers
Maintenance Mechanic



Resource Recovery

The State of Resource Recovery

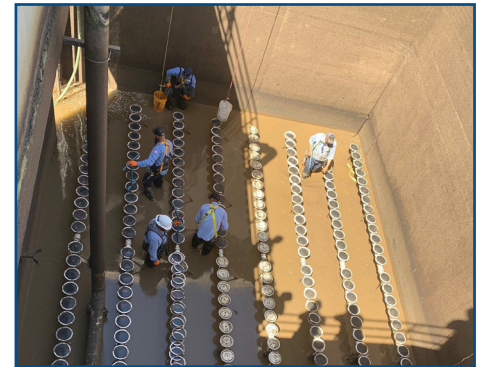
VWRA has a stellar year in recycling renewable resources.

2022 has been an incredible year of progress and innovation at VWRA with future plans in place to expand on our mission of responsible resource recovery. The year began with the commissioning of the Renewable Natural Gas Facility where biogas produced by sewer and food waste is converted into reusable natural gas. In six months of operation, the facility produced enough RNG to supply more than 7300 homes for a month and helped divert 4.1 million gallons of food waste from our landfills. That is helping companies comply with SB-1383 which requires that 75% of organic waste be diverted from landfills by 2025.



The Hesperia Subregional began delivering clean recycled water to the City of Hesperia. The water is used to irrigate the Hesperia civic center and local parks. The subregional is what called a “scalping plant”, meaning it takes a portion of the sewer flow and treats the water only. The solid material is returned to the sewer line and treated at the main plant in Victorville. A nearly identical facility is operating at Brewster Park in Apple Valley and is expected to begin delivering recycled water for the town in early 2023.

Also in the Spring VWRA, took several steps to improve the treatment process. The cloth media on our Aqua Diamond tertiary filters was replaced as were hundreds of air diffusers in our aeration basins. 90 % of the wastewater treatment process occurs in the aeration basins. The circular diffusers have small holes that help produce millions of small oxygen bubbles in the water. Oxygen helps keep the microbes happy while they eat the organic materials in the water.



In the Spring, VWRA resumed in person tours of our main plant after a two-year hiatus due to construction and the pandemic. The tours highlight the wastewater treatment process from the time it arrives at VWRA to the point where clean recycled water is discharged into the Mojave River. There is plenty to see, hear and smell here at VWRA. And you’ll learn some cool stuff too.



CWEA's Southern Safety Day a Big Success



VVWRA staff that attended the CWEA Southern Safety Day, from left to right: David Wylie, Latif Laari, Robert Coromina, Kristi Casteel, Daniel Enriquez, Richard Swatzell and Mike Medina.

The California Water Environment Association recently hosted Southern Safety Day at the Carson Events Center in Carson, CA. It was the first CWEA Safety Day in Southern California in a number of years and was attended by wastewater professionals from agencies throughout the region including VVWRA. The event featured educational sessions on things like confined space safety, spill response and developing a safety culture.



VVWRA was among the vendor participants at the High Desert Education Summit at Victor Valley College. Kristi Casteel and David Wylie were among the VVWRA employees on hand for the event that highlighted educational and career opportunities in the High Desert.



Giant Flag Raised Over VWRA cont.



VWRA raised the one of the largest American flags in the Victor Valley at its main plant in Victorville on a blustery Thursday morning. The flag measures 40 feet long by 25 feet wide providing 1000 square feet of red, white, and blue glory. It is being flown on a flagpole that is 80 feet tall. “When our old flagpole started showing signs of wear, we wanted to do something special to honor the men and women who have served our country”, said VWRA General Manager Darron Poulsen.

“We keep our veterans in our thoughts and prayers everyday because freedom is not free”, said Assemblyman Thurston “Smitty” Smith.

“We’re proud to have this flag here for this agency which represents pretty much all of the Victor Valley and do this for our veterans and everyone who is here in our community” said VWRA Commissioner Scott Nassif.

The flag raising ceremony was attended by a number of local veterans including members of the High Desert Marines. Three VWRA staff members who served in the U.S. Marines were also part of the group that raised the flag. The flag is a permanent fixture at VWRA and will fly 24 hours a day.





CWEA/DAMS Awards Banquet cont.

VWRA Accountant Kyle Parker won the award for Administrative Support Person of the Year. The annual awards recognize excellence in the wastewater industry. The local winners now qualify for a statewide award which will be announced in the Spring. This years event was held at the Bear Valley Country Club (formerly Spring Valley Country Club). Other agencies to win awards included the City of Barstow and Crestline Sanitation.



VWRA Accountant Kyle Parker accepts the award for Administrative Support Person of the Year.



GM Darron Poulsen accepts the Community Engagement Award for the RNG Ceremony.



VWRA staff enjoying the party with their spouses.



VWRA staff at awards banquet.

2023 P3S Conference

THE NEXT

50

YEARS

IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF CLEAN WATER

JAN 30 - FEB 1, MONTEREY

ONE COMMUNITY

ONE PURPOSE

APRIL 18-21, 2023 | SAN DIEGO

Uniting the wastewater community at AC23 San Diego

The Back Side...

Chili Champ



Congratulations to Senior Operator Eric Schweizer who won the 2nd annual VVWRA Employee Chili Cook-Off taking home the coveted toilet bowl trophy. Eric says the secret to his winning recipe was Carolina reaper peppers and a touch of tabasco sauce.



Good morning sunshine!

A beautiful High Desert sunrise reflected in one of our drying beds.
Purple Pipe page 8

Cornhole Winners



VVWRA recently held a lunchtime cornhole tournament. Maintenance Mechanic Mike Koncur (center) was our winner with Sr. Operator Eric Schweizer (r) capturing second and Lead Operator Kalin Westover (l) taking third.