

VWVRA's RNG Program Wins Two More Awards



An aerial view of the ADM receiving area where food waste is delivered.



Anaergia's Margaret Laub and VWVRA GM Darron Poulsen accept the CASA award.

The Renewable Natural Gas project at Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority has won two prestigious awards. In August, VWVRA received an Award of Excellence in Innovation and Resiliency from the California Association of Sanitation Agencies. The award was presented to VWVRA General Manager Darron Poulsen at CASA's annual conference in San Diego. The award recognizes VWVRA's RNG project for its innovative

application of technology in the wastewater field. "We are honored to be recognized by our peers for the innovative work we are doing here", said Poulsen. "The RNG project is a showcase of how public agencies can work together with utilities and private companies to help resolve significant environmental challenges."

In September, the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District recognized VWVRA's RNG program with its Exemplar Award for our commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The award was presented to Poulsen by MDAQMD Chair Kari Leon and Executive Director Brad Poiriez.

The RNG project at VWVRA is a public-private partnership with Anaergia Inc. that collects methane or biogas from the co-digestion of sewer and food waste. The biogas is cleaned and converted into renewable natural gas. The RNG is injected into a major Southwest Gas pipeline for distribution. The project, which was commissioned in 2022, treats 235,000 tons a year of food waste and biosolids collecting 320,000 Mmbtu of biomethane which is converted into



VWVRA GM Darron Poulsen accepts the Exemplar Award from MDAQMD Chair Kari Leon and Exec. Dir. Brad Poiriez.

Continued on page 5



Page 2

The Importance of Core Values

By Robert Coromina, Director of Administrative Services

In the ever-evolving landscape of our organization, our core values serve as the guiding principles that shape our culture and drive our success. These three pillars of our foundation: Dedication, Integrity, and Collaboration, are not just words on paper; they are the driving forces behind our success as an organization. They shape our culture, guide our actions, and ensure that we continue to thrive in a competitive world. By embracing these core values, we not only



benefit individually but also contribute to the growth and sustainability of our organization.

1. Dedication:

Dedication is not just about putting in hours at work; it's about investing your time, effort, and passion into everything you do. It means going the extra mile to achieve your goals and our company's mission. You may ask, why is dedication so important. The answer is quite simple, dedication fosters excellence by pushing us to strive for excellence in all our endeavors. When we give our best, we elevate the quality of our work, which, in turn, benefits our peers and our organization. Being dedicated builds trust amongst our peers, co-workers, and member agencies alike as they rely on our dedication. By consistently demonstrating dedication, we strengthen trust and build lasting relationships. A key benefit to being dedicated is innovation. Dedicated employees are more likely to explore new ideas, take calculated risks, and find creative solutions to challenges, leading to innovation and progress.

2. Integrity:

Integrity is the bedrock of trust and credibility. It means being honest, ethical, and transparent in all our actions,

both within the organization and in our interactions with the world. Integrity is important because it builds trust and "Trust" is the currency of any successful organization. When we act with integrity, we earn the trust of our peers, co-workers, and member agencies, which is essential for long-term success. When we demonstrate a high level of Integrity it enhances our reputation and a reputation for integrity is priceless. It sets us apart as a company that can be counted on, attracting not only the respect of our co-workers but also allows us to recruit top talent. Acting with integrity also helps the organization by mitigating risks. When we all act with integrity we reduce the risk of legal issues, scandals, and reputational damage. It ensures that we operate within the bounds of the law and our own ethical standards.

3. Collaboration:

Collaboration is the driving force behind our collective achievements. It means working together, leveraging each other's strengths, and fostering a sense of unity within our teams and across the organization. Collaboration boosts efficiency by allowing us to pool our resources, knowledge, and skills, making it easier to tackle complex challenges and complete projects efficiently. Just like dedication, Collaboration encourages innovation as diverse perspectives often lead to innovative solutions. Collaborative environments also promote the exchange of ideas and the exploration of new approaches. Just as important are the relationships we build and nourish through our strong collaborative efforts. This builds a positive work environment and enhances camaraderie and helps us learn from one another.

Let's continue to embody these values in all that we do, both within and outside our workplace. Together, we can achieve remarkable success and make a positive impact on our organization and the communities we serve.



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VWRA Board of Commissioners



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



Around the plant

Congratulations!



Operator Moises Castro has earned his Water Distribution Operator 1 and Water Treatment Operator 1 certifications.



E & I Technician Craig Taylor earned his Grade 4 Electrical and Instrumentation Technologist certificate.



Juan Alvarez has been promoted to a mechanic-in-training.

VVWRA Welcomes New Staff



Earl Faust
Operator



Tim Morris
Operator-in-
Training



Juan Perez
Operator-in-
Training



Megan Rodriguez
Administrative Aide



The Ripple Effect of Rumors: Why They're Detrimental to Any Organization

In today's fast-paced work force maintaining a healthy and productive work environment is crucial for an organization's success. Among the many factors that can influence workplace dynamics, rumors stand out as a



pervasive and often harmful element. In this article, we will explore why rumors are bad

for organizations and the far-reaching consequences they can have.

1. Erosion of Trust:

Trust is the foundation of any successful organization. Rumors, whether baseless or grounded in partial truths, erode trust among employees and between employees and management. When trust is compromised, teamwork suffers, collaboration dwindles, and productivity declines. Employees may become guarded, hesitant to share ideas or concerns, fearing that they may become the subject of the next rumor.

2. Decreased Morale:

Rumors can create a toxic work environment that negatively impacts employee morale. When employees feel uncertain or anxious due to ongoing rumors, their job satisfaction declines. This can lead to increased absenteeism, lower productivity, and a higher turnover rate. Disengaged and demoralized employees are less likely to put forth their best efforts or remain committed to the organization's goals.

3. Miscommunication and Distortion:

Rumors often arise from incomplete or inaccurate information. As they spread, the original message can become distorted or exaggerated. This miscommunication can lead to confusion among employees and result in poor decision-making. In some cases, critical information may not reach the right people at the right time, potentially harming the organization's ability to respond to challenges effectively.

4. Divided Workforce:

Rumors can create divisions within the workforce. Employees who believe one version of a rumor may find themselves pitted against those who believe another. These divisions can harm team cohesion, making it difficult to achieve common goals. A fragmented workforce is less likely to collaborate effectively or contribute to a positive organizational culture.

5. Impact on Reputation:

Externally, rumors can harm an organization's reputation. In today's interconnected world, negative rumors can quickly reach the community at large. Such rumors can undermine confidence in the organization, affecting the relationships with our member agencies and the general public. Reputation damage can be long-lasting and challenging to repair.

6. Legal and Ethical Consequences:

Certain rumors may involve allegations of misconduct, discrimination, or other unethical behavior. These can lead to legal issues, including costly investigations, lawsuits, and damage to an organization's compliance record. Handling such situations appropriately and transparently is essential to protect both employees and the organization itself.

7. Wasted Time and Resources:

Managing the fallout from rumors consumes valuable time and resources that could be better spent on productive endeavors. HR departments and management often need to divert their attention away from strategic initiatives to address and mitigate the impact of rumors.

Conclusion:

In the age of information, rumors can spread like wildfire, wreaking havoc on an organization's culture, reputation, and bottom line. As responsible members of our workplace communities, it's our duty to combat the negative effects of rumors. This includes promoting open communication, transparency, and fact-checking. By doing so, we can foster an environment where rumors find no fertile ground to take root, preserving trust, morale, and the overall health of our organization.

Robert Coromina is the Director of Administrative Services at VWRA.



Treatment

Hurricane Hilary Leaves Challenges for VWRA

The storm aftermath from Hurricane Hilary in August brought the Victor Valley an abundance of much needed rain, but it also has presented VWRA with some difficult challenges. VWRA typically treats about 11 million gallons of wastewater a day. But on the day of the storm our flow reached nearly 28 million gallons per day. Thanks to outstanding work by our staff, we were able to keep all the water in the pipe and contained it in back up equalization basins. It took several days after the storm to treat all the water.

While the main plant sustained some minor erosion damage, the biggest issue was the flooding of our drying beds. VWRA uses the sun and wind to dry our treated sludge. The summer heat is integral to drying the solids before they are hauled away for use as fertilizer, but the rains flooded the basins putting us back to where we were last Winter. With more rain expected in the coming months, our staff is exploring different ways or methods to catch up on the drying. While VWRA covers more than 400 acres, it is not easy to expand drying bed capacity. However, that is one of the options that is being explored.



HR Announcements

Open Enrollment is here. This is an important time of year for many of us as this is the time to make some changes to your existing benefits package.

- **Open Enrollment Dates**

September 18, 2023, through October 13, 2023

- **New VWRA Career Center**

The HR department has implemented a new career center for recruitment. The new center allows us to complete the entire hiring process on-line, so we are helping the environment and becoming more efficient in our hiring and on-boarding processes. Take a look at: www.vvwraca.gov



VWRA wins two more awards cont. from page 1

RNG. Methane is a greenhouse gas and is a contributor to atmospheric warming. The food waste from commercial manufacturers is delivered to VWRA by large trucks. By co-digesting off-site waste, the plant makes VWRA a regional champion for waste reduction even beyond its own wastewater responsibilities. The renewable disposal of food waste has become increasingly in demand with the passage of California's SB 1383 which requires 75% of organic materials like food waste be diverted from landfills.



Training

Tri-state Conference Offers Training Opportunities

Some 5000 wastewater professionals attended this year's Tri-State Seminar in Las Vegas in August including a contingent from VWRA. The four-day event offered in-depth training, exhibits on the latest innovations and professional tours of local wastewater facilities and water infrastructure.



Mechanic James Carothers gets an exclusive "hard hat" tour of the Hoover Dam.



Latif Laari gets a rare look at the turbines at Hoover Dam.



David Wylie and Kristi Casteel explore the vendor hall.



Upcoming DAMS Event

Mark your calendar!

Awards and Holiday Banquet

December 1st

Silver Lakes Clubhouse

Tickets available on [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)





DAMS Vendor Fair Fun in Crestline

The CWEA Desert and Mountain Section hosts an annual Vendor Fair and Training for agencies throughout the region. This year's event was held in September at the beautiful San Moritz Lodge in Crestline, CA.



Attendees taking part in training in San Moritz Lodge.



VWVRA staff enjoy the vendor fair.



A large group from VWVRA attended this year's DAMS Vendor Fair.



VWVRA's Daniel Kessell and Kalin Westover prepare for the confined space simulation competition.



VWVRA staff take notes during the math class.

The Back Side...

Oh say can you clean!



VWRA's new vacor truck is coordinated with the giant American flag at the entrance of our regional plant. The vacor truck was wrapped in a distinctive patriotic pattern making us easily recognizable wherever we are in the community. The vacor truck is used to "vacuum" rags and other debris from pipes and drains.

Take me out to ballgame!



VWRA staff took a fun trip to Anaheim to take in an Angels game this Summer.

Purple Pipe page 8

Good morning sunshine!



Photo by Moises Castro

A beautiful sunrise over VWRA.