



External Affairs' responsibilities include active Sacramento and Washington D.C. legislative efforts, a conservation Web site, elementary-to-college education programs, an online employee magazine and other publications, including reports prepared in close cooperation with other Metropolitan departments.

External Affairs

The External Affairs Group focuses on legislative services; community and customer services; educational programs; media, communications and publication services. The group is headed by the Group Manager and the Deputy General Manager of External Affairs

External Affairs works with state and federal legislators to enhance and protect the operational interests of Metropolitan and its member public agencies. The group communicates the adopted policies of the board and provides clear and direct communication about Metropolitan's operations, policies and programs and emerging challenges related to water supply, water quality and delivery, while offering responsive and appropriate services to member agencies and other target audiences.

A comprehensive array of programs provide communication and contact with member agencies; local, state and federal officials; the news media; the business community; environmental and community organizations and the general public. External Affairs staff produces and distributes numerous publications and brochures and a wide-ranging K-12 water resource education program.

Following is a summary of key responsibilities and programs of the respective sections within External Affairs.

Legislative Services

The Legislative Affairs offices in Sacramento, Washington, D.C., and Southern California promote and protect the interests of Metropolitan and its member agencies in their relations with the executive, legislative and regulatory branches of the state and federal governments, as well as local government bodies.

Legislative Services staff reviewed and prepared analyses of federal and state legislation and worked closely with member agencies and other organizations to evaluate and recommend legislative proposals related to the water industry. Additionally, staff provided legislative briefings to member agencies, the business community, environmental and community organizations throughout Metropolitan's service area.

The Washington D.C. office was honored with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold status by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Staff assisted in a series of House and Senate meetings to encourage congressional attention on the Energy Department's plan to remove uranium materials from the abandoned mine site in Moab, Utah. Metropolitan worked with representatives of Arizona and Nevada water agencies, meeting with congressional members and officials regarding legislation to authorize the Lower Colorado River Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. Staff also worked on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Reuse and Recycling Program (Title XVI) and the federal omnibus appropriation bill.

Staff worked with member agencies on a variety of federal issues, including efforts to help secure authorization for the terms of the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Agreement, and also promoted Metropolitan's interests in legislation authorizing tax credit bond financing for new local water supply projects.

Legislative Services facilitated House and Senate briefings in Washington, D.C. on the quagga mussel threat with federal officials, including U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano (D-Norwalk) and Senator Dianne Feinstein's staff.

On the state level, staff advanced Metropolitan-sponsored legislative measures, including the development of the Delta Strategic Plan, creating a baseline of water diversion information that is typical of many other regions of the state, and SB 1391 (Padilla) would serve as a legislative vehicle to address existing restrictions related to the responsible and effective use of recycled water.

Staff conducted numerous briefings with members of the Legislature to promote Metropolitan's Legislative Strategy for 2008. External Affairs

also held community leader briefings with two state senators and seven members of the Assembly.

External Affairs participated through testimony in several legislative hearings at the state and federal levels. Hearings were held on various matters, including chemical security in drinking water, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and other water supply issues.

Customer and Community Services

Customer and Community Services staff responded to member agencies, businesses and residents throughout Metropolitan's service territory on a variety of issues, including conservation, operations, maintenance, water quality, environmental issues, emergency communications and general public outreach. When Metropolitan performed planned shutdowns, emergency repairs and programs, staff engaged in multi-faceted communication efforts, including education and outreach and door-to-door visits with residents and businesses. Community meetings and briefings helped inform elected officials, business and civic leaders and the community-at-large about Metropolitan's key programs and projects. Additional outreach efforts included convening regular meetings with member agency managers and education coordinators.

Conservation & California Friendly Programs

Less than a month after the board approved an accelerated, enhanced education and advertising effort, the July 2007 "Let's Save Water" advertising campaign was featured on stations throughout Metropolitan's service area. In support of a regional message, Metropolitan worked with member agencies and others to promote water conservation through the "Time to Get Serious" education and advertising campaign, which ran from August to December 2007. In addition to education and advertising on more than 100 radio stations and more than 20 local papers, it featured educational ads using Web sites and online advertising. The "Cut Your Water Use" campaign ran from April 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008.

Many of Metropolitan's conservation programs fall under the California Friendly® program, founded in 2002, to promote water-wise choices. Since then, Metropolitan has invested in outreach, advertising and educational materials to promote water conservation to the business

community, building industry, neighborhood groups, associations and the general public.

External Affairs helped conduct a consumer attitude and awareness survey of more than 500 Southern Californians, produced and distributed conservation brochures and participated in water conservation forums for homeowner groups. More than 10,000 water-saving tip cards for restaurants and hotels were printed and distributed to member agencies and retail agencies in Southern California.

Key to outreach efforts is Metropolitan's bewaterwise.com Web site, which attracted nearly 200,000 "unique" visitors in 2007/08. Specially-created Web content – including Flash movies, artwork and supplemental information – helped support Metropolitan's education and advertising campaigns. A collaborative consultation with gardening specialists led to streamlining the Web site's Gardening Guide, which now contains a database of 1,000 water-wise plants. That is a key bewaterwise.com feature, along with gardening and landscaping classes, design tips, member agency conservation programs and rebates for homeowners, businesses and new home builders. Bewaterwise.com also served as a source of conservation information at various points during 2007/08, including Metropolitan shutdowns, expanded commercial rebate programs and the issuance of a water supply alert in June 2008.

Community Partnering Program

The Community Partnering Program (CPP) provides sponsorships for education and other water-related programs for community, environmental and non-profit organizations, member agencies and other public agencies. Established in 1999, the CPP coordinates, tracks and evaluates Metropolitan's sponsorship of these programs and projects through a centralized system. Additionally, the CPP helps foster new partnerships and enhances established relationships throughout Metropolitan's service area.

Since its inception, CPP has provided sponsorships to educational institutions, professional associations and other groups for short- and long-term water-related projects, programs and events.

Educational Programs

Through teacher in-service training and workshops, nearly 1,000 K-12 teachers were introduced to or received updated presentations about Metropolitan's educational programs. These efforts include a variety of K-12 curriculum and programs. Through these initiatives Metropolitan has provided classroom curricula, tours, assembly programs and field trips to roughly 100,000 K-12 students.

In August, staff hosted a one-day educational workshop for more than 250 K-12 teachers, the largest one-day workshop since Metropolitan's education programs began in 1983.

Staff kicked off the first of nearly 90 field trips for the Diamond Valley Lake Education Program in October. Metropolitan worked with member agency education coordinators on preliminary proposals for a revised conservation curriculum, in coordination with the 2007/08 education and advertising campaign.

Nearly 130 student artwork entries from 25 member and retail agencies were submitted in the "Water is Life" contest, which for 22 years has emphasized various aspects of water conservation. During July 2007, staff selected 38 entries to be showcased, ranging from kindergarteners to high school seniors, for display at various locations throughout Metropolitan's service area.

In May 2008, more than 800 students from 40 high schools competed at Lake Skinner in the sixth annual Solar Cup, the world's largest solar boat competition for high school students. The event, which attracted coverage from nearly a dozen local newspapers, culminated a six-month education program in which students learned and applied engineering, math and communication skills, wrote reports and created water-related displays. The multi-disciplinary effort earned Solar Cup an award of excellence from the Los Angeles chapter of the Public Relations Society of America for excellence in communications and public outreach.

Three years after Metropolitan created the Southern California World Water Forum College Grant Program to promote water quality and conservation research, Metropolitan awarded its second cycle of grants in 2007/08. College teams were eligible to receive up to \$10,000 each for innovative conservation and technology ideas, and 15 universities and

community colleges received 18 grants totaling \$178,000. College teams apply for research and development grants related to water-efficient concepts and technology that can be cost-effectively implemented locally, regionally or internationally. Partners in the 2007-2009 program include the Bureau of Reclamation, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, Friends of the United Nations, Water for People and American Society of Civil Engineers.

Media Services

The Media Services Section coordinates the efforts and represents the various mediums by which Metropolitan conveys its messages, programs, information and achievements. The section includes the Press Office, which is responsible for maintaining media contacts, preparing and distributing news releases, conducting briefings, preparing letters to the editor and opinion pieces, and providing videos. This section also includes the Publications team, which is charged with producing the printed and online materials that support Metropolitan's internal and external communications needs; and Web Services, which manages Metropolitan's various Web sites to achieve a unified presentation to Metropolitan's audiences and customers.

Staff also coordinated the development of informational flyers and a boater survey for distribution at Diamond Valley Lake, Lake Skinner and other sites to promote water quality objectives and education about quagga mussel containment efforts.

Press Office

The Press Office provides information to the media and the public about Metropolitan's programs and issues by working with reporters and editors from newspapers, Internet news sites, magazines, radio and television, and trade and specialty publications. News about Metropolitan is disseminated through press releases, letters to editors, opinion pieces, speeches, videos and special events produced by staff. The Press Office managed numerous media inquiries, including those related to record dry weather conditions, water supplies, pumping restrictions, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Colorado River issues. Efforts included on-camera, radio and print interviews, the management of op-ed writing and placement, and the preparation and distribution of press releases.

The Press Office issued press releases about various issues including: the emergency shutdown of the Colorado River Aqueduct to control quagga mussels; fluoridation of Metropolitan water supplies; water conservation and programs; the board's adoption of the supply allocation plan and the Water Supply Alert.

Staff also coordinated media briefings on major developments involving the Delta, while an April news conference on the "Cut Your Water Use" campaign generated extensive media coverage.

The Press Office also convened a statewide conference call with reporters and editors to brief them on the Water Supply Alert urging extraordinary local conservation.

Staff met and coordinated with member agency Public Information Officers on various water-saving messages, and also engaged in public outreach efforts related to shutdowns and capital improvement projects impacting millions of customers.

Metropolitan received coverage on National Public Radio and the Discovery Channel, in the Los Angeles Times, and in other print and electronic outlets throughout the region, Southern California, the state and the nation.

The Press Office also managed stories about proposed state water bonds, water supplies in relation to the October 2007 wildfires, the relocation of the Diamond Valley Lake Visitor Center, and trace levels of pharmaceuticals in water supplies. Significant coverage also resulted from Metropolitan's proposed supply allocation plan.

With staff's assistance, opinion articles by the general manager and directors appeared in the San Diego Union-Tribune and the Riverside Press-Enterprise.

Publications

People Interactive is Metropolitan's employee online newsletter, and provides employee profiles and news in a multi-media format. In 2007, *People Interactive* received a platinum award – the highest achievable – from the League of American Communications Professionals. *People* ranked in the top 4 percent of the 550 entries for the best internal and

employee communications publication. *Aqueduct Magazine*, which first appeared in the 1930s, has been the West's oldest magazine dealing with water matters. It published a Colorado River issue in December 2007.

External Affairs helped produce and deliver numerous brochures and publications, including the annual Water Quality Report, Annual Financial Report, and the annual report to the California Legislature on Achievements in Conservation, Recycling and Reuse. Staff also produced video updates on the General Manager's semi-annual business plan achievements for 2007/08.

Web Services

The Web Services program manages and updates several Web sites, including secured Web sites for the board of directors and member agencies.

The Web team produced and launched new Web pages including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Metropolitan's Water Supply Alert and Spring Green Fair.



Metropolitan staff coordinates with the board, member agencies and stakeholders in consulting with lawmakers and regulators on broadly beneficial solutions involving federal water policy.