

Submitted by staff at  
3/20/13 Public Outreach  
committee meeting  
Item 2

ENVIRONMENTAL  
RELATIONS



## **Public Outreach Proposal for Monterey Peninsula Water Management District**

**Submitted to: Dave Stoldt**

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**Prepared by:**

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## SUMMARY

The Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) lost its Community Affairs Liaison and is considering fulfilling those services on a contract bases. Meanwhile, the Peninsula is in the middle of working to resolve its water issue, deciding by whom, how, and at what cost water will be made available to residents of the Peninsula by the quickly approaching deadline. As a public entity, it is crucial to demonstrate to the public that the District is engaged and involved on behalf of its constituency. It is also important for the district to get ahead of the story, align its messaging and become a resource for timely, accurate information for the media and the community at large. A brief survey of the MPWMD's existing communication tools suggest that these tools are underutilized and are lack consistent common messaging. Upon request by the MPWMD, Environmental Relations PR (ER), based in Monterey, has prepared the following proposal to provide services that will strategically achieve the goals stated below.

## GOAL

*Play a role in crafting the message in the community and among stakeholders.*

- *Align and fine-tune communications tools to establish effective platforms to convey messaging*
- *Provide media with a resource to always have access to timely, accurate information, quotes, opinion pieces, and so on.*
- *Position the MPWMD as the go-to resource for timely, accurate information for the public*
- *Demonstrate via communications that the MPWMD is actively involved in the water situation in a way that fulfills its mission to "manage, augment and protect water resources for the benefit of the community and the environment" on the Peninsula*

## **ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS PR**

Environmental Relations (ER) is a full-service public relations firm that offers public relations specifically tailored to individual client needs. Taking a business approach, the firm surveys existing tools and crafts public relations strategies that support an organization's goals, rather than presenting a template checklist of to-do's. Founded in 2010 by Ashley Beleny, ER specializes in strategic planning, strategic communications, media relations, and social media.

ER was founded on the principle of offering quality, proactive, attentive public relations services. ER is dedicated to providing results and executing on deadline in a friendly, attentive client/consultant atmosphere.

ER is based in Monterey, California.

### **Ashley Beleny, *President***

Ashley Beleny is President of Environmental Relations and is actively involved in all client accounts. She has extensive experience in public relations and marketing and has worked for companies ranging from local start-ups to multinational corporations. Ashley has lived in Monterey since 2006, and is knowledgeable on the water situation on the Peninsula as well as the projects and stakeholders involved. She also has close relationships with the media.

Ashley is on the Board of Directors for the Monterey County Sheriffs Advisory Council, the American Red Cross-Monterey Bay Chapter and the Monterey Peninsula Sunrise Rotary Club. She is also a member of the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and the Public Relations Society of America.

Ashley received a Bachelor's Degree from The Ohio State University in International Relations and Diplomacy and a Masters of International Trade Policy and an International Masters of Business Administration from the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

ER recommends the following scope of work to fulfill the existing and ongoing needs of the MPWMD:

- Strategic PR Planning & Implementation
- Message Development
- Media Relations
- Stakeholder list development (for newsletters, emails and other electronic updates)
- Newsletter Writing
- Social Media
- Website Updating
- Monthly Reports & tracking
- Outreach Collateral Development

### Strategic Public Relations Planning & Implementation

ER will survey the District's existing messaging and its use in communications tools, as well as the messaging and communications channels of significant supporting and disagreeing parties. ER will then craft a public outreach strategy to strengthen existing communications channels and address the full range of constituencies and audiences. The goal, as mentioned above, is to take an active role in crafting the message so that the District has an influence on what the message is and the outcome the message facilitates.

### Message Development

After conducting the aforementioned initial survey, common messaging will then be developed that addresses the relevant areas of contention, general messaging, and the role of the MPWMD in the process. This messaging, once approved by the District, will be integrated into all messaging and will be available for District leaders to use in correspondence, presentations, interviews, and so on. Messaging will evolve as needed as it becomes apparent which messaging is most effective and where additional needs arise.

### Media Relations

ER will provide a number of functions as part of the District's media relations strategy and outreach. ER will maintain open communication channels with the media to ensure opportunities to have a role in the messaging are taken advantage of. Using approved messaging, ER will stay ahead of the story by being prepared with quotes, responses, opinion pieces and be a resource for the media with timely, accurate information as public activities warrant. ER will manage the writing and organization of this information, which it will have reviewed by the MPWMD so it will be available for immediate distribution as needed. ER will also write and distribute press releases and coordinate Letters to the Editor, as the situation requires—all while maintaining consistent messaging.

### Stakeholder List Review & Development

The state of the current stakeholder list in regards to level of completeness, and appropriate quality and quantity of contact information is unknown. ER will review the current list, ensure all relevant parties and individuals are included—stakeholders, community thought leaders and etcetera, and update the list with additional and corrected information as necessary. ER will also look at tracking on past electronic correspondents to this list (if tracking is available) to improve communications efforts via this media. If the website layout is upgraded (listed in Additional Optional Services below), a function will be added to further collect contact information of interested individuals.

### Newsletter Writing

ER will draft newsletters quarterly. Newsletters will heavily integrate District messaging and be considered part of the District's overall outreach strategy. Newsletters will be laid out so that they may be distributed via email or traditional mail. Electronic updates will also be developed as frequently as monthly, depending upon the situational needs, to maintain communication with stakeholders and engaged individuals.

#### Social Media

MPWMD's social media is currently not being used effectively. When functioning properly, it should serve as a platform for communicating the District's messaging, reaching a broad local audience, demonstrating the District's engagement in the process, and keeping the public updated with accurate information. It should also tie into the District's other communications tools. ER will manage the District's social media, providing timely updates as the situation requires, posting as needed to achieve the aforementioned roles of this platform, and building out the audience following these channels.

#### Website Updating

ER will work with MPWMD's website person to maintain and update information on MPWMD's website as needed to reflect changes, press releases, media coverage, newsletters, social media buttons and other information as needed.

#### Outreach Collateral Development

ER will develop any outreach collateral, whether brochures, one pagers, and so forth, as necessitated by services within the scope of work.

#### Monthly Reports & tracking

At the end of each month, the MPWMD will receive a report identifying the work completed during the previous month, work in process and upcoming plans for the next month. Also included in this will be tracking on press coverage and website & social media numbers.

## **ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL SERVICES**

### **Website Facelift**

This will include a redesign of the home and subpages. The full website will not be rebuilt. This is only cosmetic and includes both the design and coding changes for the design. These improvements will include a more user-friendly interface, a layout that enables MPWMD to more clearly convey its messaging and direct readers to appropriate information. ER will add the ability for people to enter their contact information to receive updates and materials both electronically and via traditional mail. This will help build out the District's current distribution list and communicate with a larger group of engaged individuals. The new layout will also make meeting notices more prevalent and will tie into the District's other communications tools, such as social media.

**Cost:** \$1,250

**Outcome:** New layout and design for website, coded, and built off existing website

**Benefit:** Better conveyance of information, more engaging, more user-friendly, becomes platform to clearly convey messaging, tool to collect contact information from those interested and expand existing contact list.

### **Perception Survey**

A perception survey can be conducted on whatever topics are of most interest to the District: general sentiment toward the MPWMD, preference and/or understanding toward water project options, utility of District's communications tools, and so forth. Perception surveys use a number of tools, depending on the particular survey topic, to gather and analyze information:

- One-on-one interviews with significant stakeholders and community thought leaders
- Online survey
- Phone survey (using a sampling from throughout all areas of District)
- Survey of quantity, type and bias of opinion pieces and media stories
- Focus group (depending on the issue, this can be at the beginning or the end of the process either to narrow down on the specific issue or to refine/further explore potential outcomes)

**Cost:** \$4,000

**Outcome:** Final report & presentation of findings- quantitative and qualitative. Information with which the district can base future decisions.

**Benefit:** Understanding of public perception and sentiment (which can, depending on situation, be used to calculate expected outcome in the case of a vote, etc.), recognition of which tools and which messaging are working best so that strategy may be adjusted accordingly, benchmark to measure future activity

### **PAC Creation & Implementation**

In light of a potential future referendum by organizations such as the Monterey Peninsula Taxpayers Association, the development of a PAC may become necessary. ER will meet with supporters, solicit contributions, pool funds and lay out a strategy to maximize support among the voting public for the MPWMD's position. This will include voter outreach, coalition building, fundraising, and may include advertising, calling and signature campaigns, arranging letters to the editor by community members, e-newsletter campaigns (which makes the website addition to collect signatures important in order to build up this list), direct mail, and so on depending upon the particular situation.

It is important to engage in public outreach as described in the Scope of Work to maximize community trust in the MPWMD so that the District will have more influence in challenging any referendums contrary to the District's desired outcome.

**Cost:** Not knowing the exact referendum or how long the PAC campaign will last, it is extremely difficult to estimate the cost.

### **FEE STRUCTURE**

ER requests a \$3,500 monthly retainer, based upon an estimated 35 hours at \$100 per hour, to perform the proposed Scope of Work.

The additional optional services are available and can be requested at any time. Fees for each services are as stated above and will be billed in addition to the monthly retainer.

An invoice will be submitted the first day of each month. Any outside expenses implicit to the scope of work will be included, along with receipt. No charge above \$100 will be made without prior approval. All invoices are due within 30 days of receipt.

### **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**