



## Contra Costa County Office of Communications & Media

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 16, 2019

**TO:** Internal Operations Committee

**FROM:** Susan Shiu, Director  
Office of Communications & Media

**SUBJECT:** Update on Office of Communications & Media's Public Outreach and Engagement Activities and Priorities

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Contra Costa County's Office of Communications & Media (OCM) is pleased to provide an update on its recent public outreach and engagement activities, successes, and priorities, including those of Contra Costa Television (CCTV).

Major activities and successes this past year include:

#### **New County Website Offers "Virtual Office"**

Contra Costa County launched a new website in July 2019 that has a fresh, visual design that offers a mobile-friendly "virtual office" for the public. The website [www.contracosta.ca.gov](http://www.contracosta.ca.gov) features new icons that can be clicked on to find information easily, a "How Do I?" option in the menu for frequently asked topics, highlighted news items, and new Board of Supervisors, Permit Portal and Tax Portal webpages to help the public find what they need more easily. A new dynamic mapping tool called "Find My Supervisor" was added and enables residents to enter their address to find their elected official. The County website increases usability with additional ways to navigate to information and improves access to information about County services and programs. Additionally, the website project strengthened and supported countywide departmental collaboration.

#### **Emergency Communications Coordination**

The Office of Communications & Media plays a vital role in coordinating emergency communications. As the lead Public Information Officer for the County, my role is to coordinate information and public messaging for incidents. The Joint Information Center (JIC) may be activated in an emergency to coordinate public information. Public information officers from other County departments may be called to work the incident with some reporting to the County's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) while others coordinate from their departments'

operation center or in the field. For recent emergency events in October, such as the refinery fire in Crockett and the subsequent Shelter in Place order for nearby communities, and the response before, during and after the PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff event that impacted over 39,000 residents in the Contra Costa County, this Office and County public information officers were engaged to coordinate and share messaging to keep the public safe and informed. Emergency communications is a multi-departmental and multi-agency coordination in real time to provide confirmed information from official sources to the public. County social media accounts and the website have proven to be important communications tools for emergency updates and resources. During the PG&E power shutoff event, the County website had 140 million views.

### **County Provides Services at Block Party Event**

The County Block Party event offered on the spot services, including voter registration and library card registration. Organized by County public information officers and supported by numerous departments, the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual event during the summer of 2019 drew over 800 people, which was the largest block party to date. Previous events were held in Martinez and Walnut Creek. This year's Block Party was held at Richmond Civic Center Plaza. The plan is to hold the Block Party in other parts of the County to reach and serve more and more County residents. We have been contacted by other counties to learn more about our event.

### **Contra Costa Television (CCTV)**

The Office of Communications & Media includes Contra Costa Television (CCTV). Its recent activities include:

#### **Closed Captioning Project**

In support of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, CCTV worked to enable closed captioning for the Board of Supervisors, County Planning Commission, and the Veterans' Voices show, the County's original programming, on cable TV and online. Meetings can be seen live or recorded on broadcast television and online via the County website and on the Contra Costa Television YouTube channel.

### **Public, Education and Government Services, Partnerships & Collaboration**

CCTV launched its sixth Public, Education and Government (PEG) channel as channel management services continued to grow as a core competency. The Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) and the City of Hercules are the most recent collaborators for the development of PEG services in the County. The County's other partners include the cities of Antioch and Pittsburg (DeltaTV); Clayton, Martinez and Pleasant Hill (City Channel); San Ramon, Moraga and Danville. PEG services continue to provide access to information and serve the public's interests.

### **Programming & Award Recognition**

Veterans' Voices is the original programming show CCTV helps to produce, direct, broadcast and stream live on the YouTube Contra Costa Television Channel. It explores issues from a veteran's perspective. The Office of Communications & Media and CCTV continue to support the Veterans Service Office. In September, 2019, CCTV went live with episode #62. CCTV also won a STAR Award from the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) for Sports Event Coverage of its live broadcast(s) of the Pittsburg Diamonds Baseball, produced on behalf of the City of Pittsburg.

## **OCM and CCTV Services & Support**

The Office of Communications & Media and Contra Costa TV continued to work with other departments and agencies to provide service and support for media and overall communications. Ongoing support includes the broadcast and recording in triplicate of Board of Supervisors meetings and access through the website. Efforts this past year included live coverage and streaming of County events, such as the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative Forum, Public Works videos for employee recruitment, County Library videos to support literacy and engagement with children and families, Census 2020 Steering Committee support through outreach activities in multiple languages, including adding Census information in the Election Voter Guide, and other projects and requests. Our wide engagement activities help us build more internal and external relationships to support County outreach and communications.

OCM's priorities include:

### **CCTV Facility Renovation**

After 25 years, we moved forward with the CCTV facility renovation project, including architectural plans, the placement of furniture for architects' electrical plans, and initial preparations for a physical move for some staff and how broadcast productions will take place during construction.

### **Cable Administration**

As the cable industry changes, OCM's goal is to strategize how best to serve the public's interests through its Contra Costa Television, including digital distribution channels. Live streaming to broadcast and its YouTube channel is already an important part of CCTV operations. We continue to administer our operations, including a review and refreshing of agreements with partners and clients for CCTV services, as appropriate.

Recently, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a rule regarding the implementation of Section 621(a) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended By the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992. The FCC rule took effect in September, 2019. The primary effect of the rule would be to allow cable operators to reduce their Franchise Fee payments to local government, using offsets based on in-kind benefits provided by the operators. In the County, this would include the value of cable TV service to County buildings and the value of the fiber interconnects that Comcast has installed between several County buildings. The National League of Cities, US Conference of Mayors, and several other municipal associations have filed a motion with the FCC to stay its cable franchising order. We are waiting to hear from the cable operators. We are currently gathering data on the value of any in-kind services provided by cable operators. PEG operations and channels are about serving the public's interests, which includes residents who may not have online access to information.

As OCM continues to strengthen its work to serve both the public and departments as communications, broadcast and multimedia experts, our team looks forward to working with the IOC, the Board, the CAO and departments to communicate with clarity and transparency so that our efforts and programs are accessible and more widely shared for increased impact.

Thank you.