



COUNTY OF MONTEREY CAO Weekly Report

In This Edition:

- > Environmental Health Bureau gives customer service award
- > Can U Jam? Meet the employee who can!
- > Staff share the AgKnowledge experience

SPECIALREPORT



Assistant Director of Health Elsa Mendoza-Jimenez (l), Customer Service Award winner Rich Patterson (center) and Environmental Health Bureau Director John Ramirez (right).

County Notes

- > Got overdue books? It's fine-free month all through January at Monterey County Free Libraries.

Health Department Gives Customer Service Awards

Consistently demonstrates the highest level of staff-to-staff customer service? Check.

Consistently demonstrates the highest level of customer service to the public? Check.

Meets the high standards of the Customer Service Award for the Environmental Health Bureau of the Health Department? Check.

Rich Patterson, Environmental Health Specialist II of the Hazardous Materials Management Services, checked off all the winning requirements to be honored by the Health Department's Environmental Health Bureau (EHB) as the 2015 recipient of its second annual "Robert Hoffman Customer Service Award."

The award was established in 2014 and is given in honor and memory of Robert Hoffman who worked in the EHB as an Environmental Health Specialist and exemplified the highest level of customer service.

Congratulations to Rich who was selected by Assistant Director of Health Elsa Mendoza-Jimenez after reviewing nomination materials provided by each of our program supervisors.

Congratulations to all who were nominated for their excellent work:

- Jesse Anaya, Office Assistant III/Animal Services
- Adam Wachtel, Environmental Health Technician/Drinking Water Protection Services
- Roger Van Horn, Environmental Health Specialist III/Environmental Health Review Services
- Ismael Chavira, Environmental Health Specialist II/Consumer Health Protection Services
- Matt Krenz, Environmental Health Specialist II/Hazardous Materials Management Services' Underground Storage Tank Program
- Maria Ferdin, Environmental Health Specialist III/Solid Waste Management Services
- Rosa Arreola, Principal Office Assistant/Environmental Health Division

"Congratulations to our colleagues within the EHB and their daily efforts in providing the highest level of Customer Service," says John Ramirez, Environmental Health Bureau Director.



Maegan 'Moves' Into the Spotlight

With more than 4,500 county employees, you are likely to find a lot of talent among the staff of various departments. Take for example Administrative Assistant Maegan Ruiz-Ignacio. When she steps out of the County Government Center at the end of her work day in the County Administrative Office, she steps to a driving, funky beat as a U-Jam athletic dance instructor.

Maegan hits the floor three nights a week at the Monterey Fitness Center, Creek Bridge Fitness in Salinas and Chamisal Tennis and Fitness Club in Corral de Tierra teaching this high energy dance class. The moves are a mix of hip hop and a fitness workout that may seem more at home in a nightclub than in the gym.

Maegan's expertise in this urban dance fitness phenomenon caught the attention of the [Monterey County Weekly](#) which featured her in an article this week and she was part of a Sacramento TV program showcasing the U-Jam style.



Ruiz-Ignacio was part of a U Jam showcase in Sacramento this month which aired live on local television.

Ruiz-Ignacio loves the music, the moves, the energy and knowing she and her students are dancing their way to better health.

“The more we reach, the more my students will know that they can have fun staying fit,” says Ruiz-Ignacio with an infectious enthusiasm that fuels her passion for fitness. “What drives and motivates me? Fitness is a lifestyle. I encourage everyone to find what they are passionate about and plug into that full throttle. Set goals, surround yourself with positive people who can help guide you along your fitness journey. With practice and perseverance you can reap the benefits of your efforts whether it be weight loss, increased confidence, change of lifestyle or just healthy living.”

Did I mention she also teaches ‘Hot Hula’ and “Fierce Funk” dance fitness classes as well? And she’d love to find a way to get a county ‘after work hours’ U Jam class going. Then she can pass along more of her workout ‘isms’ that motivate her students, like “If you close your eyes real tight, no one can see you; now cut loose!”



County Staff Appreciates AgKnowledge

Eight Monterey County employees got the chance to spend 10 Fridays last year immersed in Monterey County's number one industry: Agriculture. Those eight were among 20 participating in AgKnowledge, an educational and leadership program that gives participants

an up-close view of the industry and a better understanding of the interdependence of agriculture, local government and the community.

AgKnowledge is a project of the Growers-Shippers Association Foundation and co-sponsored by the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Courses focus on issues affecting our local agricultural industry such as food safety and security, labor and immigration, technology, conservation, air and water to name a few.

Many county employees have taken this program in the past and all have come away with a fresh take and new perspective on this critical part of our economy. Three county participants in the 2015 program offer some interesting reflections on their AgKnowledge experience:



Teodulo González.

I have worked in agriculture for many years, enforcing laws and regulations as a representative of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office in Salinas. Going through the AgKnowledge class made me deeply appreciate the skills and dedication of fieldworkers, growers, nurserymen, and shippers. I saw many faces doing their jobs with joy and passion.

-Teodulo González, Chief Deputy Agricultural Commissioner

When I was asked to participate in AgKnowledge, I saw the opportunity to learn about agriculture, not just remembering my father leaving home early and coming home late, dirty and tired; but as a way to learn about the multi-billion dollar, multi-faceted industry that has shaped the Salinas Valley and County of Monterey. Our class participated one morning in picking strawberries as part of a farm worker study session but most of our time included hearing from farm owners, agricultural experts, scientist, educators, lawyers, industry representatives, water regulators and many others and taking numerous field trips. AgKnowledge, a name rightly coined, does indeed educate one on the breadth, depth and complexity of what makes up new agriculture in Monterey County.

My "ah ha" moment for the course was realizing that AgKnowledge acted not only as a vehicle to share knowledge of agricultural best practices but as a catalyst of collaboration and leadership. The application of AgKnowledge to my workplace was gathering subject matter content and collaborating with industry experts to compile various Economic Development Pillar "infographics" that our department is using in presentations, marketing events and on our website. The experience was well worth the time and effort.

While I no longer perform stoop labor as I once did as a youth, I would encourage others to view agriculture in an enlightened and respectable fashion.

- Jerry Hernandez, Economic Development Department

I had the opportunity to participate in AgKnowledge 2015. It was an eye opening experience. Prior to taking the class, I thought all fruits and vegetables came from the supermarket (just kidding)! I had no idea how difficult and complicated the process really is from the field to the dinner table. The people I met were incredible for so many reasons - their passion, dedication and commitment to feeding our country is commendable. I strongly encourage anyone afforded the opportunity to participate in AgKnowledge to get involved, they won't regret it.

- Tim Burns, RMA Service
Manager



Tim Burns (left) and Jerry Hernandez (right).