Public Works staff get out of the field for a night to celebrate honored projects.

If You Build It They Will Win: Public Works Earns Honors

Two RMA-Public Works projects which have made huge impacts on two county communities have been honored.

Not only does public works staff have the satisfaction of jobs well done and the appreciation of residents, they now have recognition by their peers.

The most honored project thus far is the Castroville Bicycle and Pedestrian Path and Railroad Crossing, which rises over roads, tracks and fields just outside Castroville. The project is a 0.74-mile route from McDougall Street to Castroville Boulevard that includes a 1,170-foot bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Students in the area used to cross these active tracks plus farm fields and a busy roadway on their way to Elkhorn Elementary and North...
Monterey County High Schools. This pathway and bridge now provide a much safer and scenic route to school. The project was completed and opened to the public in May of last year, which also coincided with Bike Month! If you’d like to take a virtual walk along the bridge, check out this video.

Walkers take a stroll along the bridge (left). The bridge offers a comforting glow at night (right).

This project has earned a Transportation Agency of Monterey County Award of Excellence which was presented to RMA-Public Works staff last month as well as named a ‘Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association (APWA), Monterey Bay Chapter. APWA also singled out another RMA- Public Works project for recognition: the emergency repair work on Palo Colorado Road which was also named a Project of the Year.

Palo Colorado Road was severely damaged in the storms of 2017 which followed the devastating Soberanes Fire. During that winter, heavy rains overwhelmed a culvert which collapsed and took part of the road with it, isolating the community there.
A temporary bridge was placed, but permanent repairs could not begin until June of 2018 and were completed at the end of October. New culverts were installed which required extensive earthwork, crews graded and paved a new section of road way and relocated power poles.

Congratulations on jobs well done!

Child Support Services Makes Record Collections for Families

Child Support Services staff is celebrating a record year!

At the end of calendar year 2018, the Department tallied up a new record for support collections distributed to local families: $43,890,270! And while that number by itself looks huge, it is an increase of $1,070,257.57 or 2.5% over the previous year.

That collection record is the result of a lot of hard work by the entire department and particularly child support officers who work hard to help families by collecting long overdue payments.
You’ve seen stories from this department in the past about diligence that resulted in large payments to families and here is another recent success. Congratulations to Child Support Officer Albert Cavazos, who had extensive conversations with a non-custodial parent about his payment obligations. Those talks really paid off for the family involved, since Cavazos was able to collect a HUGE payment of $85,051 for them!

“I appreciate the hard work of every one of our employees,” says Jody Holtzworth, Child Support Services Director. “Our continuing increase in collections is due to their dedication to helping families and children be self-sufficient and have better lives.”

This department does outreach about its services both within the community and online. Check out this informative video that takes the mystery out of opening a support case or determining paternity.

IHSS Program Reaches Top Ranking for Home Assessments

Did you know that the Department of Social Services’ In-Home Supportive Services serves nearly 5,000 low-income seniors and those with disabilities?
This program allows these vulnerable residents to remain safely in their homes by providing payment to caregivers through Medi-Cal funding. But to keep this good program running, every person receiving IHSS services is required to have an annual home visit assessment which is done by one of 30 IHSS social workers.

These assessments are very important, in fact, IHSS programs in all 58 California counties are measured on their timely reassessments. Monterey County has been at the #2 ranking statewide for the last several months but finally reached the #1 position for Fiscal Year 2018-2019, with a timeliness rate of 99.9%!

To celebrate this successes, IHSS supervisors and managers provided a homemade breakfast to program social workers and social service aides to thank them for their hard work.

To give you a look inside this work, as part of the assessment, IHSS social workers must review the functionality of the patient, what services are provided and how often as well as determine if special services are needed. Did you know that caregivers provide general services such as housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping and personal care services such as assistance with bathing, dressing and ambulation (helping patients move on their own)? Some care providers even perform paramedical tasks such as assistance with tube feeding and giving insulin shots.