Retreat Brings Ag Staff Together

Most of us remember the county-wide employee engagement survey last summer which was designed to address areas of interest and concern to employees.

That survey was the genesis for creating a recent off-site employee retreat for the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office.

“The retreat was designed to instill a sense of self as well as sense of organizational value for staff as employee retention is very important,”
explains Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales. “It brought us together to work towards creating a more engaged and energized workplace; and, it was fun.”

To create bonding time, staff gathered away from the office and a facilitator was brought in to coordinate activities and exercises designed for staff to get better acquainted as colleagues and better understand the diverse of jobs within the department. The Ag Commissioner’s Office has many divisions such as Weights and Measures, Pesticide Use and Enforcement and Produce Inspection.

Among the activities of the day was a discussion of the department’s vision and values. Staff was asked to come up with their own vision and values for the department. Most interestingly, what they came up with is nearly identical to the department’s vision statement developed some 25 years ago! The following is the vision statement that was shown to be as relevant today as it was in yesteryear:

“The Agricultural Commissioner’s Office is the voice of Monterey County Agriculture and a role model for agriculture. It is leading agriculture into the next century through innovation, communication, education, service and partnership, while honoring the requirements of the government, traditions of industry, and the needs of the public.”

Child Support Services Honored For More & Less

Child Support Services is regularly highlighted for its outstanding work increasing support collections for local families, but it is now being acknowledged for a reduction!
That reduction: the amount of time it takes for those owed support from when they open a case to when they get their first payment.

CSS’s excellent performance was acknowledged by David Kilgore, the Director of the California Department of Child Support Services, who wrote to compliment CSS on its extraordinary performance throughout federal fiscal year 2018.

“Monterey County exceeded its annual performance over FFY 2017 by increasing total distributed collections by $809,568” wrote Kilgore, who also mentioned CSS’s other achievement in “decreasing the average number of days from opening a new case with an existing order to receiving the first payment by six days.”

The total for collections for families in Monterey County totaled $43,504,539 last fiscal year and Director Jody Holtzworth says the department is on track to collect even more this year.

“Every member of the CSS staff works hard throughout the year and it shows in the results,” she says, thanking the entire department for the achievement.

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Natividad Doctor to Lead State Medical Society

Congratulations to Dr. Walter Mills of Natividad, who was selected as Board President for the California Academy of Family Physicians, the state’s largest primary care medical society.

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Monterey County Administrative Office
In this leadership role for the nearly 11,000-member group, Mills will guide the organization in championing the importance of family medicine, using his expertise as a faculty member of the Family Medicine Residency Program at Natividad.

Mills is Natividad’s Director of Medical Education, training new family physicians while also providing patient care at the hospital and outpatient clinics. This experience will be an asset as he helps set the organization’s policy priorities, which will include addressing the primary care physician shortage.

“The need for primary care physicians has never been greater,” Dr. Mills said. “Research shows that increased use of primary care is associated with lower mortality, fewer hospitalizations, greater patient satisfaction and lower costs. California faces a shortage of more than 4,000 of these doctors within the next decade. Rural areas like Salinas and Monterey County are already hard-hit.”

Mills says he knew he wanted a career in medicine at an early age and discovered family medicine in 1975 as a first-year medical student. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians and joined Natividad in 2014.