



# VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

## GM Newsletter

July 2024



Valley Sanitary District Wins CWEA Safety Plant of the Year!

A message from Jason Dafforn, General Manager:

VSD Board President Debra Canero and I were in Sacramento for the California Special District Association (CSDA) Legislative Week in May. This visit was essential for representing the interests of special districts across California and highlighting our community's specific needs. During our meetings, we advocated for both Valley Sanitary District (VSD) and the broader needs of special districts throughout the state.

We visited the following elected officials' offices:

- Senator Steve Padilla
- Senator Kelly Seyarto
- Assemblymember Esmeralda Soria
- Senator Alex Padilla
- Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
- Chief Consultant Pablo Garza at the Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee Office



From left to right, Jason Dafforn, General Manager of VSD; Benjamin Guitron, Trustee of Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District; Castulo Estrada, Board Vice President of Coachella Valley Water District; Crystal Horn, Legislative Aide to Senator Kelly Seyarto; Jeremy Wittie, General Manager of Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District; Bruce Underwood, Trustee of Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District; and Debra Canero, President of VSD.



From left to right, Jason Dafforn, General Manager of VSD; Debra Canero, President of VSD; and Erika Valle, Legislative Aide to Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia.

These meetings were crucial in ensuring that the needs and concerns of Valley Sanitary District are heard at the state level and I am optimistic about the positive impact our advocacy will have on future legislation.



[If you're interested in reading the newsletter in Spanish, please click here for a PDF version.](#)

[Si está interesado en leer el boletín en español, haga clic aquí para obtener una versión en PDF.](#)

Thank you,

Jason Dafforn, PE  
General Manager

# Valley Sanitary District Honored with Two Prestigious CWEA Awards



Valley Sanitary District was honored with both the Community Engagement & Outreach Award and the Plant Safety Award by the California Water Environment Association at their Annual Conference in Sacramento on April 11. This award recognizes VSD's exceptional commitment to safety, including effective injury prevention, thorough record-keeping, comprehensive in-house training, responsive emergency measures and robust safety program implementation.

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## Projects To Improve Our Neighborhood

### Westward Ho Drive Sewer Siphon Replacement Project

VSD has made significant progress on the Westward Ho Drive Sewer Siphon Replacement Project, a crucial endeavor initiated due to damage sustained during a storm in February 2019. The storm's intensity washed out a portion of the sewer siphon, exposing it and causing significant environmental concerns. A sewer siphon is part of a wastewater collection system used to go under obstructions such as roads or tunnels. The exposed sewer main, which is normally underground, was left vulnerable. Immediate emergency repairs were undertaken and the area was designated a disaster zone by FEMA.



Looking west, with Westward Ho Drive in Indio at the top of the embankment, showing the channel filled with water after a storm event.



Looking east, showing Indio Water Authority's (IWA'S) steel reservoir at the top of the embankment. Next to our concrete-encased sewer main (rectangular structure) is IWA's water pipeline, also exposed during the initial storm of February 14, 2019.

Following the storm, VSD submitted a complete redesign of the sewer siphon under the Coachella Valley Storm Channel to FEMA in 2021. The approval process took some time, but with proactive measures from General Manager Jason Dafforn, including traveling to Washington, D.C., to meet with FEMA officials, the funding has now been approved.

The construction will use directional drilling technology to minimize environmental impact. Directional drilling or horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is a trenchless construction method that uses a specialized drill rig to install the sewer pipeline. The project is expected to be completed by the end of this year or early 2025.

### **Recycled Water Project - Phase 1**

Phase 1 of the Recycled Water Project aims to replace and improve critical treatment structures, increasing the efficiency and reliability of VSD's wastewater treatment operations. This phase is the first of three that will enable VSD to produce recycled water. The project is halfway complete and includes replacing an old grit chamber, adding a second digester, expanding bar screens, updating the Main Switch Control Panel, and installing a sludge thickener unit. [For more information about the Recycled Water Project - Phase 1, please click here to visit our website.](#)



### Capital Improvement Projects

Valley Sanitary District is actively engaged in various Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) to enhance our community's infrastructure for a sustainable future. Capital Improvement Projects are construction, renovation, or maintenance projects that enhance or upgrade public infrastructure. VSD's CIP program ensures the long-term viability of our service area's wastewater system, supporting public health, economic development and environmental sustainability within our community. To learn more about these important initiatives, [click here](#).

### Employee Spotlight



We are excited to share that Valley Sanitary District has been honored with the [Government Finance Officers Association \(GFOA\)](#) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023.

At our recent board meeting, the Valley Sanitary District Board of Directors, led by President Deborah Canero, proudly recognized Jeanette Juarez, Chief Administrative Officer, Karen H., Accounting Analyst and Branden Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant, for their outstanding contributions.

Their dedication has been instrumental in achieving this prestigious award. This certificate represents the highest standard in government financial reporting and is a testament to our commitment to transparency and excellence.

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## Upcoming Meetings

August

13

[Board of Directors Regular Meeting](#)  
[1:00 pm](#)

August

27

[Board of Directors Regular Meeting](#)  
[1:00 pm](#)

September

10

[Board of Directors Regular Meeting](#)  
[1:00 pm](#)

Click here for the latest:  
[Board of Directors Meeting Minutes & Agendas](#)

Click here for the full:  
[Calendar of Events](#)

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## Sustainability Tip

Keep wipes out of pipes! Remember, even wipes labeled as "flushable" should never be flushed down the toilet. Dispose of all wipes in the trash can. Flushing wipes can cause costly blockages and damage to the sewer system. Help keep our sewers clear and functioning properly by discarding wipes in the proper bin.



## About Valley Sanitary District

Valley Sanitary District (VSD) serves and benefits Indio and the surrounding communities by collecting, treating and recycling wastewater to ensure a healthy environment and sustainable water supply.

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# Core Values

TRANSPARENCY  RESPONSIBILITY  RESPECT  INTEGRITY



Valley Sanitary District's newest Vector truck.

We invite you to stay connected with us through our social media channels. Follow us for the latest updates and opportunities at Valley Sanitary District.



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