



TO: GCSD Board of Directors

FROM: Peter Kampa, General Manager

DATE: November 13, 2018

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 6 E: Adoption of a Resolution Approving a 2018 District Communications Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION

I move to adopt the Resolution Approving a 2018 District Communications Plan

BACKGROUND

The adopted 2018 management objectives provide board direction to management for expected accomplishments. Due to the fact that there was an apparent very low customer understanding of critical district business, the board placed a high priority on increasing information output to increase awareness of the district and its services/needs. There are several management objectives related to customer outreach and communication as follows:

Support Customer Relations and Outreach

5) Improve the image of the District and treatment of employees through a variety of actions that raise public awareness of the good work of the District

- a) Support Customer Relations (**ongoing**)
- b) Conduct formal system tours with public and Board (**December 31, 2018**)
- c) Develop and publish press releases and articles on accomplishments (**December 31, 2018**)
- d) Engage public participation on key issues (**December 31, 2018**)
- e) Achieve SDLF Transparency Certification (**December 31, 2018**)

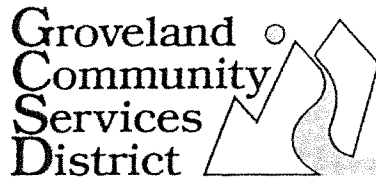
To accomplish this, the Board directed the preparation of a communications plan by June 30, 2019. Due to recent public interest and concern in the expenditures of the District on communications activities, management felt it important to expedite the creation of the communications plan for transparency and accountability.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Communication Plan 2018
- Draft Resolution Approving Communication Plan

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

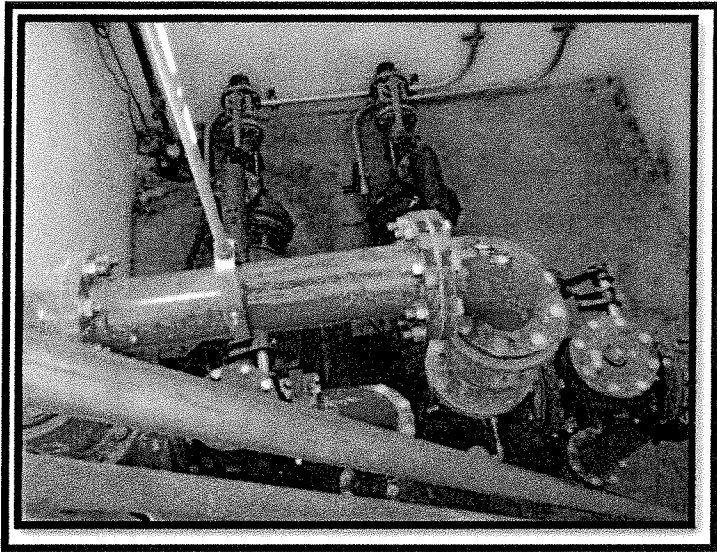
As stated in the attached draft Communications Plan, the cost of implementing the plan is approximately \$26,050 as contained in the approved 2018/19 budget.



G.C.S.D. Services - 209 / 962-7161
Fax - 209 / 962-4943
Fire Department - 209 / 962-7891
www.gcsd.org

water • fire protection • parks • wastewater collection & treatment

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COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2018

Groveland Community Services District

ABSTRACT

The District collects millions of dollars annually from ratepayers in the community. Where is this rate money spent? Who keeps the water flowing in my tap 24x7? Is my water safe and do we have enough for me to water my garden? Who is my wastewater provider and who controls them? The Groveland CSD (GCSD) has determined that the time is now to increase public awareness of the critical public service it provides. This Communication Plan describes the means to accomplish the goal of the District Board of Directors to increase public awareness of the District and improve its public image.

Administrator

Jennifer Flores, Office Manager

GCSD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Groveland Community Services District's communications typically can be categorized in the following key issues areas: Personnel/Organization, Financials/Accounting, Board, and Infrastructure/Capital Improvement. Staff has developed a Communications Plan covering all of these critical areas to maximize the District's budget and efficiency.

GOALS

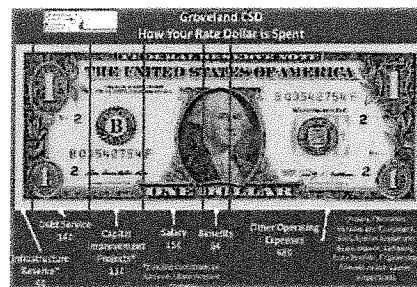
This Communications Plan has two major goals:

- To provide GCSD customers with a clear understanding of the District's operation, management and finances.
- To ensure that GCSD customers are aware of the high level of customer service and high quality of water, sewer, fire and park services provided by the District.



TARGET AUDIENCES

- GCSD Customers
 - Active metered water and wastewater customers
 - Customers with second homes in the service area
 - Vacant land owners
 - Customers utilizing the District park facilities
 - Property owners who benefit from the fire services provided by the CSD
- Internal Communications
 - Customer service
 - Field operations
 - Training and advancement
- Media Relations
 - Local print/radio
 - Regional print/radio/broadcast/cable
 - Legislative Outreach
 - Local elected/appointed officials
 - Regional associations
- Public Agency Outreach
 - County/communities
 - Surrounding special districts and service providers
 - Service clubs and civic organizations



RESEARCH

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Staff reviewed the following documents and/or programs to prepare this Communications Plan:

- Groveland Community Services District 2018 Approved Management Objectives

GCSD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- Website content at www.GCSD.org
- Facebook postings on a District specific site and on frequently visited sites such as NextDoor
- GCSD Board meetings/agendas/minutes
- Groveland Community Services Customer Service Requests
- 2017/18 Civil Grand Jury Report

OPPORTUNITIES

- To increase positive customer perception of GCSD customer service and quality of the delivery of water and sewer service over their cost.
- Knowledgeable and dedicated staff willing to support new communications initiatives.
- New and expanding grant programs specifically for communication/education programs for sustainable customer communications.
- Inform of the fact that GCSD consistently provides high-quality services to its customers.
- Educate residents and property owners within GCSD of the intricacies and cost associated with providing public services
- Secure feedback regarding community needs and interest in funding specific service levels

STRATEGIES

1. Engage GCSD staff to support communications efforts.
2. Focus branding and outreach efforts on programs that connect GCSD staff *directly* with high-quality service and programs.
3. Incorporate fact-based outreach for all major GCSD programs, plans and initiatives to help educate rate payers.
4. Better utilize Web-based outreach, including social media.
5. Secure consulting assistance with photography, information piece development, social media and program implementation

TACTICS

Tactics are the specific efforts and actions used to implement the Communications Plan. Each strategy has a unique set of tactics to be carried out by either GCSD or outside consultants as noted. Not all tactics will be feasible for implementation based on funding and/or staff availability; however, they should be considered when appropriate.

1. ENGAGE GCSD STAFF IN MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS.

Currently communications efforts are planned, managed and implemented by Office Manager Jennifer Flores. Communications efforts have been minimal primarily due to GCSD's small staff size, staffing changes and associated training needs, and lack of an integrated Communications Plan. It is critical to engage a wider cross section of staff to develop materials, information and content for communications efforts. This will be successful and cost effective to implement by using an outside consultant to augment in important areas such as photography, social media site/content management, and advising program contact/focus based on community needs.

GCSD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Develop Internal Pool of Writers (GCSD Staff and/or consultants)

GCSD has identified the following individuals to serve as conduits for information regarding their particular job/consulting function:

Staff Member	Expertise
Pete Kampa General Manager	Administration, Leadership, Management and Legislation
Luis Melchor C&D Operations Manager	Operations, Construction & Maintenance
Jennifer Flores, Office Manager	Customer Service, Record Keeping, Finances, Web Presence and Reporting
Greg Dunn, Chief Plant Operator	Water and wastewater treatment
Consultant	Staff Interviews and Expose Preparation, Photography and Information Piece Quality Review

It is anticipated the majority of these individuals will commit to at least one to two hours per month to support this effort.

These staff members and/or consultants will:

- Prepare brief summaries of activities, news, programs and initiatives within their areas of expertise on a monthly basis.
- Prepare brief stories and exposés that focus on staff members and/or service-driven actions as appropriate.
- Provide updates regarding progress/milestones achieved within their departments.
- Provide information on service needs and solutions identified or implemented, emergency responses, etc

This information will be used to populate newsletters, the GCSD website, social media, news releases and advertising efforts described in this Plan. We anticipate that overall management of these activities will be supervised by General Manager Pete Kampa; with implementation assistance from a third-party consultant. A detailed description of the frequency of these efforts is included in the timeline section of this Plan, however the majority of these efforts will take place on a monthly basis.

Develop Media Library (Photographs, video)

The District will develop a library containing a variety of photographs of all aspects of service delivery, including:

- Water and sewer utility maintenance, repair and emergency response
- Utility projects such as water or sewer line construction
- District equipment, vehicles and infrastructure
- Park facilities, their public use/community benefits and improvements
- Fire suppression, emergency response and related community services
- Governance and Administrative activities such as Board and/or meetings, customer service, public commendations and appreciations

GCSD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The library will contain both high quality (high resolution/professional) photos and video, to show the level of detail necessary for ease in internal/customer understanding of the nature, subject and purpose of the photo and communication piece.

Develop Internal GCSD Briefing (GCSD Staff and Board of Directors)

GCSD's employees and directors are not only the District's greatest asset for governance, administration, operations and maintenance; they can also serve a critical role in communications efforts. The vast majority are in fact customers of the agency they serve. They are the family, friends and neighbors of GCSD customers. Their ability to speak knowledgably about basic programs and services is critical to the overall positive perception of GCSD's governance and management. Uninformed employees and directors can inadvertently contribute to misconceptions about operations, resulting in negative perceptions of the District.

A simple, straightforward summary of key projects, programs, milestones and initiatives will be shared with staff and the Board on a monthly basis via email, Board and staff meetings. This will be a simple standard email compiled by Staff based on items received from the internal writer pool.

2. FOCUS BRANDING AND OUTREACH EFFORTS ON PROGRAMS THAT CONNECT GCSD STAFF *DIRECTLY* WITH HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE AND PROGRAMS.

One of GCSD's largest operating expenses is its personnel. It is important for the District to demonstrate that the number and qualifications of employees is appropriate to deliver the level of service expected by GCSD customers; as well as to meet the requirements of state laws, permits and other mandates. Consistent reinforcement of this message is extremely important.

Our recommendations are as follows:

Revise Advertising Strategy to Focus on Employees (GCSD)

All forms of advertising and education programs should use images and copy that link GCSD employees with specific services, projects/programs and/or initiatives.

Staff members who appear in advertising or collateral materials should be asked in advance to give GCSD permission to use their images for educational purposes.

Promote Both Department and Individual Achievement

When possible, GCSD should promote individual and/or department accomplishments or services. This reinforces the concept that staff members are ready to meet any challenge whether it's responding to a malfunctioning pump, a broken water main, a flood or a sewer spill. Real stories about real experiences with real customers are a great way to connect the public with GCSD operations. These events should be photographed and cataloged as detailed above, with stories generated as part of the monthly reports prepared by the writing pool. Appropriate stories will be chosen for inclusion in the eNewsletters and/or considered for news releases as appropriate. This is a call for a type of story to be included in outreach materials.

3. INCORPORATE FACT-BASED OUTREACH FOR ALL MAJOR GCSD PROGRAMS, PLANS AND INITIATIVES TO HELP EDUCATE RATE PAYERS.

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Over the next three years, GCSD will continue to have a number of major projects, programs and plans to develop and implement. These include the Big Oak Flat/Groveland Water and Sewer, Clearwell Rehabilitation and Flume Renovation projects, as well as park, facility and utility restorations from March 2018 storm damage.

Each of these efforts needs to have an education/visual component that clearly explains:

- The nature of the project;
- Why it is necessary;
- How much it will cost;
- Where that funding will come from;
- How it contributes specifically to GCSD's ability to provide high-quality service to its customers; and
- How it directly impacts the daily life of customers

GCSD will incorporate tasks specific to public outreach in Requests for Proposals and/or Qualifications as appropriate when seeking consultants for work on major projects, such as Master Plans. The costs for project-specific education and outreach will be assigned to those projects and not to the District's overall communications budget.

4. BETTER UTILIZE WEB-BASED OUTREACH.

Revamp Website (GCSD Staff and Consultant)

It has become clear that the residents of GCSD are interested in more information to be accessible at the click of a mouse. Over the past few years, we changed our outdated website platform and replaced it with a more user friendly one. The goal of this site is to make it a data base for customers to easily access public information that they would normally have to submit a Public Records Request for and make District information as transparent as possible. Based on our review, we believe that a simple reorganization of the materials with a few additions would improve its functionality and earn the CSDA Certificate of Excellence for Transparency.

Consistently Update Site (GCSD Staff)

The GCSD site can and should serve as a primary source for up-to-date information regarding GCSD operations. It is important to update the site at least weekly with new information to keep website traffic coming back.

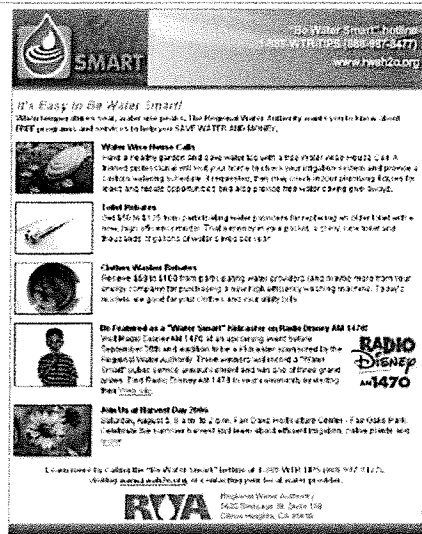
Staff members at all levels should be reminded of the importance and usefulness of the website and encouraged to promote the site to customers. This is especially important for Customer Service representatives. GCSD should ensure that all letterhead, materials, bills and emails include the proper web address. In addition, the District will work with the website designer and customers to include a form for site visitors to use to sign up for information, e-newsletters and notifications. Email addresses for customers interesting in receiving newsletters and information will be gathered and entered into mass email programs by customer service staff.

Baseline and As-Needed Customer Surveys (GCSD via SurveyMonkey)

GCSD has a very active community of customers who are willing to provide feedback to the District. Staff will actively collect emails to create a data base with which to send email blasts to our customers, leading them to a web-based survey intended to gather input on customer understanding of important baseline , the accuracy and understanding of which can be measured over time, such as where the district receives its water supply, where treated wastewater is disposed, number of District office staff, why employees

GCSD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

must be state certified, how fire and perk services are funded, etc. An increase in the level of customer understanding of the same indicator shows a positive impact of the communication plan.



E-Newsletters for Customers (GCSD)

Postage and printing is expensive — e-mail is not. District customer service staff will use a variety of means to maximize the current email addresses on file for its customers, and seek their input on the types of communications they would like to receive. Using the informational pieces submitted by District writers pool (staff and consultant), GCSD will populate an e-mail template and send quarterly news updates to customers.

E-newsletters will be graphic or photo prominent summary documents, with links to additional information, which can also be distributed to GCSD partners, elected officials, other agencies and service clubs.

Revise Billing Statements and Include News Briefs about GCSD Programs and Initiatives (GCSD)

GCSD will on a quarterly basis include an informational mailer with the District billing statements. The mailer may be a copy of the newsletter with encouragement to sign up for delivery, information about a specific project or information gathering effort, notice of an important meeting, or highlight of a staff member. Formatting cost is well within budget parameters and will provide more consistent communication with rate payers. Selection of the flyer material will be made based on the information determined most important, timely and relevant to customers by the General Manager and Office Manager.

A simple graphic will be prepared and kept current to show how GCSD spends money, separating operations and capital improvements, and this graphic be included in on a regular basis.

EVALUATION

It is important to measure the impact of any public education program in a meaningful way. The success of this program should be measured as follows:

- Increase in traffic to the District's website. We are seeking to double the number of visits to the site over the next 24 months.
- Increase in rate payer knowledge regarding key District programs and projects. This should be tested via survey as described above. Additional indicators include increase in public comments and active participation in Board meetings.
- Increase in the percentage of rate payers who know where their water comes from, or how their treated wastewater is disposed, numbers of employees, why certifications are required, etc. Target is a 20% increase.

GCSD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

BUDGET

BILL INSERT (QUARTERLY MINIMUM)	4 MAILINGS PER YEAR	\$2000
SURVEY SOFTWARE	2 MONTHS PER YEAR	\$50
CONSULTING SERVICES (PHOTOGRAPHY, CONTENT ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT, WEBSITE UPDATE AND CONTENT)	\$2,000/MONTH	\$24,000
	TOTAL	\$26,050

RESOLUTION 38-18

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GROVELAND
COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT APPROVING A 2018 DISTRICT
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Groveland Community Services District (herein referred to as District) is a local government agency formed and operating in accordance with Section §61000 et seq. of the California Government Code; and

WHEREAS, the District Board of Directors adopted Management Objectives in March 2018 requiring the development of a formal district communications plan; and

WHEREAS, District management has prepared a draft communication plan which is intended to accomplish the public outreach needs of the District, and to improve the overall understanding and image of the District, and is therefore attached hereto.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GROVELAND COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT DOES HEREBY approve the 2018 District Communications Plan.

WHEREFORE, this Resolution is passed and adopted by the Board of Directors of the Groveland Community Services District on November 13, 2018, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Jennifer Flores, Secretary

Robert Swan, President - Board of Directors

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, Jennifer Flores, the duly appointed and acting Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Groveland Community Services District, do hereby declare that the foregoing Resolution was duly passed and adopted at a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Groveland Community Services District, duly called and held on November 13, 2018.

DATED: _____