

CoCoTax

Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending

September 1, 2019

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Denise Sheehan
Business Manager

Next CoCoTax Meeting

September 27 – 7:45–9:00 AM
Denny's

1313 Willow Pass Rd, Concord
Guest speaker: **Maureen Toms**,
Deputy Director-Policy Planning
Division, Department of
Conservation and Development,
Contra Costa County

Our Last Meeting – August 23



Our guest speaker for August was **Randy Iwasaki**, Executive Director, Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (CCTA). Randy serves as the Authority's chief executive and is responsible for the overall management of the Authority, including its projects, programs, policies and procedures, the board-approved budget, and all personnel decisions. Randy has served the Authority since April 2010.

CCTA was formed in 1988 to manage a sales tax program created for "congestion management." A variety of traffic types is considered by the agency: local streets, highways, busses, ferries, BART, carpool/ride sharing, even pedestrian and bike lanes.

CCTA maintains a very high bond rating of AA+ from several rating agencies. This keeps interest costs low. The staff of 20 is small considering the large amount of projects and dollars under their management. Some accomplishments are:

- Building the 4th bore of the Caldecott Tunnel system – this project was brought in on time and under budget.
- The widening of Highway 4.
- BART extension to Antioch.
- Reinstatement of ferry service from Richmond to SF

BART has a significant ongoing problem of 5% fare evasion.

CCTA does not have PLA's (project labor agreements) requiring union only labor. They are however required to pay "prevailing wages" which means union rates. CCTA also requires local contractors to generate local jobs.

Future projects are estimated to cost \$10 billion. Full funding is yet to be determined.

For more information about CCTA, go to www.ccta.net/theplan



CoCoTax's Steve Mick presents the Good Governance Award to SRVUSD Superintendent Rick Schmitt of the San Ramon Valley United School District Facilities & Operations Division.

Are You What We Need?

CoCoTax needs people to work with Membership Chair Bill Baker. Without better funding sources and involved membership, CoCoTax could not continue to serve the residents of this County. It's a matter of some phone calls, networking, and outreach. This will work well as a team. We need YOU. Call the CoCoTax office at 925-289-6900.

Contact CoCoTax

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On Facebook:

**Contra Costa
Taxpayers Association**

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PG&E and Power Shutoffs

Report by Mike McGill, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San)



PG&E has announced, and has begun to present to the public, their program: Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).

The PSPS is a program where electricity will be turned off in designated areas, when necessary, due to extreme weather and wildfire danger. This will consist of turning off electric lines, both distribution and transmission, when elevated weather conditions are forecast. The areas affected are those designated by the California Public Utilities Commission as "elevated" (Tier 2) or "extreme" (Tier 3) risk for wildfire. When a shut off is possible, PG&E will try to notify customers 48 hours in advance.

When electric lines are shut down, and after the extreme weather has passed, PG&E must inspect all lines before re-energizing them. This can take 3 to 5 days to complete. You don't have to be directly in a Tier 2 or Tier 3 area to have your power shut off. If your power comes through one of those areas you could be impacted. PG&E is coordinating with various public agencies.

Central San, like many other public agencies, is preparing for possible shut offs, not just at our treatment plant but throughout our system which has many pumping stations. The preparations include additional training, backup generators and emergency fuel supply.

PG&E's Plan to Limit Liability Commentary by Mark Fernwood

PG&E has been placed in a very dangerous and unjust situation. The reason wildfires have become so enormous and uncontrollable are the negligently maintained forests. Unless proved to the contrary, PG&E is assumed to be the ignition source if their wires are present.

In a state with 169,696 square miles and with a population of 39,560,000, there will be accidental fires. According to Cal Fire, on average there are about 3,900 wildfires yearly. PG&E accounts for very few of these fires. PG&E has been forced to develop a strategy to protect itself from future liability and protect the safety of residents. Shutting off power service during and after at-risk storms will assure only other sources of ignition are possible. This means communities will face outages during the storm – and for days later while wires are inspected, as previously stated by Mike McGill's report.

Unfortunately, this also keeps the public from understanding the real problem so the great danger will continue: there are 129 million dead trees in California according to the US Forest Service. (Google: 129 million dead trees in CA) However, PG&E has no authority to remove these flammable trees on private, state and federal lands.

More on this in next month's issue.

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