



HOT, HOT, HOT SHEET



2003-2004
Board of Directors

Linda Crabill, President
Community Relations Manager
City of San Jose
4 N. Second Street., 10th Fl., Suite 1000
San Jose, CA 95113
408-277-4499 (Phone)
408-277-2489 (Fax)
e-mail: Linda.crabill@ci.sj.ca.us

Jeff Hobbs, First Vice President
Public Affairs Manager
City of Bellflower
16600 Civic Center Drive
Bellflower, CA 90706
562-804-1424 (Phone)
562-925-8660 (Fax)
e-mail: jhobbs@bellflower.org

Lynn Yaney, Second Vice President
Public Information Officer
Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services
40 Douglas Drive
Martinez, CA 94553
925-313-1524 (Phone)
925-313-1575 (Fax)
e-mail: lyaney@ehsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us

Rick Kitson, Past President
Public Information Officer
City of Cupertino
10300 Torre Avenue
Cupertino, CA 95014
408-777-3262 (Phone)
408-777-3366 (Fax)
e-mail: rick@cupertino.org

Micheline Golden, Secretary
Public Relations Manager
Children's Hospital Central California
9300 Valley Children's Place
Madera, CA 93638
559-353-7049 (Phone)
559-353-7109 (Fax)
e-mail: mgolden@childrenscentralcal.org

Donna Reyes, Treasurer
Public Information Specialist
City of Beverly Hills
455 N. Rexford Dr., #195
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
310-285-2438 (Phone)
310-273-1096 (Fax)
e-mail: dreyes@ci.beverlyhills.org

Brad Rovanpera, Director, Northern Area
Public Information Officer
City of Walnut Creek
1666 N. Main Street
Walnut Creek, CA
925-943-5895 (Phone)
925-943-5897 (Fax)
e-mail: rovanpera@ci.walnut-creek.ca.us

Frank Cowan, Director, Central Area
Media Survival Group
2168 Avenida Redondo
Santa Maria, CA 93458
805-459-7619 (Phone)
586-461-5245 (Fax)
e-mail: frank@mediasurvivalgroup.com

Bill Polick, Director, Southern Area
Public Information Officer
San Diego County Department of Public Works
5555 Overland Ave., Bldg 2 MS 0332
San Diego, CA 92123
858-495-5736 (Phone)
858-505-6374 (Fax)
e-mail: Bill.Polick@sdcounty.ca.gov

Adrienne Schmeling, Executive Secretary
Member Services Representative
League of California Cities
1400 K Street, 4th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-658-8278 (Phone)
916-658-8240 (Fax)
e-mail: schmeling@cacities.org

POINT OF VIEW



Bill Polick
CAPIO Southern Area
Director-at-Large

When this is all over—and that won't be for several more months—I'm going to paddle my surfboard as far out into the Pacific as possible and hurl my cell phone and pager into the briny deep. They seem to chirp and vibrate simultaneously every

requests, news releases and interviews that challenged the patience and stamina of the public information officers of San Diego County. It changed our lives.

This is an "I" story. It became personal at 12:30 p.m., Sunday, October 25 when the police car pulled up in front of our house and told us it was time to evacuate. The small brush fire that started 30 miles northeast of us a few hours

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time I pick up my desk phone while answering one of the 100 e-mails jamming my in box. Home? Beach? Driving? Sleeping? R*I*N*G. There is no escape.

This is not a complaint. When those electronic marvels don't sound off these days, I check them to make sure they're turned on. This is what we train for.

The largest wildfire in California history struck San Diego one weekend in late October and launched a firestorm of media

before, whipped by infamous Santa Ana winds, had jumped the freeway and was knocking on our door. With two pick-up trucks and a sedan my wife, son and I sped away carrying two dogs, a cat and what could have been the remnants of our lives. Fortunately, our house still stands but seven of our neighbors up the street weren't as lucky.

From the evacuation center I called our department's director to
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April in Monterey!

What could be better? Ok, ok. So we'll throw in the 2003 CAPIO Conference at the Double Tree Hotel! Mark your calendars for April 28 - 30. Lots of new workshops, the continuation of our PIO Institute and ample time to socialize and solidify contacts with other PIOs from around the state. If you have any workshop ideas or requests, please contact Lynn Yaney (925) 313-1524, or email her at LYANEY@ehsd.cccounty.us.

Welcome New CAPIO Members

Justin White

County of Madera

Allison Cabral

San Jose Fire Department

Ron Merckling

Casitas MWD

Philip Wagner

City of Bell Gardens

Michael Smith

City of Torrance

DeAnn Baxter

City of Torrance

Tanya Geren

Clovis Fire Department

Tom Sykes

City of Commerce

Imee Gacad

City of West Hollywood

Denise Vedder

City of Carlsbad

Taronda Crutch-Durant

City of Santa Fe Springs

Monique Valadez

City of Pomona

Cinda Cates

City of Burbank

Anne Haraksin

City of La Mirada

Hugh Riley

City of Moorpark

Linda Brewer

Delta Diablo Sanitation District

Bob Bowen

City of Davis

Job Opportunity

City of Ventura

Marketing Specialist

Salary Range: \$1,948 -

\$2,611/mo. (part-time with benefits)

Deadline to Apply: Friday, December 12, 2003

To Apply: Call the City of Ventura for application materials at (805) 658-4777, or visit www.ci.ventura.ca.us. EOE



President's Message

*Linda Crabill
CAPIO President*

Do you ever stop to wonder why you are so busy? Do you ever have *time* to stop and wonder? One only has to look to the daily headlines to see the reason why.

In the past few months many of us have assisted with preparation and passage of our agencies' budgets; attempted to prepare for the potential fallout from the State budget; followed a statewide campaign involving literally hundreds of candidates; witnessed a historic recall election; seen a major Hollywood star sworn in as Governor; and watched, for his first act, the repeal of legislation that will have a major impact on – you guessed it – your agency budget!

Feel like you're on a roller coaster waiting for that second of calm, before you are thrown back into the abyss again? These are only the most recent, high-level issues that we have been challenged to deal with – *and* communicate about! Whoever said that working for government was boring? I don't know about you, but there are certainly some days when boring would be a welcomed relief!

Meanwhile, of course, life goes on at the program level. The phones continue to ring, the email stacks up, reports are due, and it often seems like we are caught in the endless whirlpool of responding to other people's agendas, none of which are our own. So, how do you create order out of this chaos and move your own agenda forward? Who has time for strategic thinking when

you have 687 emails in your Inbox – *after* you deleted the spam? Yet we know that we need to think strategically in order to get ahead of the curve, be innovative and provide stellar customer service to more stakeholders than can comfortably fit into our Rolodex.

One of the best ways to regroup and refocus is to attend professional training that provides real value while, at the same time, refreshes your spirit as well as your mind. Toward that goal, CAPIO each year holds an annual conference designed as a premier training experience for public information professionals. Mark your calendars: Our next conference will be held April 28-30, 2004, in beautiful Monterey and we hope to bring you the best workshops ever, as well as trainers who will knock your socks off. Our new PIO Institute will offer four new courses toward this professional certificate. Institute courses offered at this year's conference will focus on: writing; publications production; communications strategic planning; and ethics.

Can't wait until then to create order out of chaos? Then plan to attend one of several CAPIO workshops, coming soon to a region near you. One will be held in Northern California, one in Southern California. Or, do what some folks from the North Bay just did: Form your own local group comprised of CAPIO and other PIOs from your region and host workshops of interest to your specific group. It is often when we think we have absolutely no time for training that we really need it the most. So, stay tuned to CAPIO for coming attractions that will re-energize your work and renew your spirit.

*Linda Crabill is the
Community Relations Manager
for the City of San Jose*

Growing Streams Continue to Flow



A Q&A with Tom Spengler, Co-Founder and CEO for Granicus, Inc., provider of streaming media solutions for local government.

Submitted by Jeff Hobbs, CAPIO First Vice President

Q: *In a nutshell, what is ‘streaming video’?*

A: Technically, streaming media is the digital compression and distribution of audio/video content over the web. For local government, it has become a powerful tool for communicating with a broadly distributed audience of constituents, employees, and other stake holders through a cost effective and high impact medium.

Q: *Outline a few examples of how streaming video is serving local governments.*

A: While the streaming and archiving of public meetings is the most popular use of our solution by local government, it is also used by multiple departments to deliver public education content, public service announcements, and live or on demand training. Basically, streaming can be used to transform your audio and video assets from tapes that are sitting on a shelf to content that can be viewed online at any time.

Q: *Why stream?*

A: Nationally, the percentage of households with cable access is decreasing while the percentage of households with Internet access has far surpassed that of cable and continues to grow. Based on this trend, cities and counties need to adjust their communications channels or risk losing touch with their constituents. Streaming media allows local government to continue producing high impact audio / video content in the same way they have for years, and expand the distribution of that content to their web site.

Q: *Discuss some advantages to the PIO in using streaming video?*

A: *Low Cost of Communications*

Repurpose and distribute the audio/video programming you already created for cable at a rate of one cent per hour.

Expansive Reach and Convenience

Provide Anywhere Anytime access to Audio/Video content through your web site, not just the local cable channel.

High Impact Messaging

Compelling audio/video content integrated with related documents, which adds impact to your website.

Q: *Costs vary, but what is a typical range for basic streaming capabilities, and what’s involved to maintain the service?*

A: Because most of the value in streaming comes from the ability to archive and index content for on demand viewing, there is some upfront investment in hardware and software. In addition, most cities and counties require an outsourced solution for storing and distributing their streaming content to the Internet. The upfront investment in infrastructure can range from \$15,000 - \$100,000, and annual hosting and services cost can run from \$9,000 - \$30,000.

Q: *Where do you see the future of streaming video in local government operations?*

A: It seems like cities and counties are coming up with new and innovative uses for streaming technology every day. A major trend has been to integrate the audio and video archives of public meetings with the documents used during those meetings. This requires the indexing of your streaming media with the meeting agenda and linking this archive the associated staff reports for each agenda item. The end result is a very complete record of your public meetings, which is conveniently available on the web.

Q: *If you could offer advice to PIOs who may be considering incorporating streaming video into their communications programs, what would you say?*

A: Invest in a streaming media content management and distribution solution that will allow you to focus on presentation and messaging rather than the mundane technical tasks that are required to manage a complex technology like streaming.

Headquartered in San Francisco, Granicus provides streaming video solutions exclusively for local government agencies nationwide. For more information call 415-357-3618 or visit www.granicus.com.

POINT OF VIEW: Wildfire

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find out when and where to report for work, just as our emergency plan calls for. By Monday at 6 a.m., I was on duty in the county's emergency operations center (EOC) with three other PIOs. As the public affairs officer for the Department of Public Works (DPW), most of my time is spent writing about infrastructure. In a disaster, the job shifts to handling countywide information and media relations. Working 12-on/12-off shifts we churned out news releases, set up news conferences with county leaders, updated web sites and answered media questions. Overtime was everywhere—mine totaled more than 75 hours during the early days—others worked even more.

Week 1 dealt with the fire, evacuations, road closures and emergency shelters. Week 2 was clean-up and recovery. Week 3 was rain, mudslides and erosion control. Daily and sometimes twice-day news conferences were set up and attended by local, national and international media during the first week. From the second week on, after the EOC deactivated, we worked from our offices, scattering to television stations and burn areas for interviews.

In the first three weeks, I did more than 70 interviews and sound bites for print and electronic media. There were seven live shots both in studio and in the field. Those interviews included reporters from Radio France, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times* and

every local news outlet. Other county PIOs also talked with media from South Africa, Australia, Asia, South America and Europe. I wrote news releases about things I had to learn about quickly—feed for rescued horses, air pollution, building permits. My name was misspelled more often than not in print and on the air. I was called a County Spokesman, Public

I wrote news releases about things I had to learn about quickly—feed for rescued horses, air pollution, building permits.

Information Officer and once a County Health Expert. You go with the flow, I guess.

I'll tell anyone who asks that I have the greatest job in the best department in the county. It's still true. But this disaster is the ultimate final exam—defending your thesis. I called on every subject I'd ever studied or taught about media relations, writing and interpersonal communications. You not only have to explain how your agency works to local media; you must explain the region to out of town reporters; and, in the case of foreign media, how the American government and bureaucracy operate.

All county PIOs stood duty at our three Local Assistance Centers where fire victims come to meet federal, state and local agencies who can help them recover. There was a continuing media interest in these locations. DPW opened five road stations to provide free erosion control devices to fire

victims and, since that's my department, I did interviews there in torrential rains.

In all, the fires—there were three at the same time—burned nearly 400,000 acres and destroyed 2,232 homes. Once scenic areas stand now blackened and barren. They do not look like a moonscape or war zone as reporters are fond of

saying. They are sad symbols of disaster.

DPW crews spent weeks clearing, cleaning, repairing and maintaining, and my job was to tell media about it. Every chance I got I raved about their performance.

The payoff came November 13 with the sub head in the San Diego Union-Tribune: "Weak rainstorm causes little damage to well-prepared county."

Maybe I'll keep the pager and cell phone a bit longer.

Bill Polick is the Public Information Officer for the San Diego County Department of Public Works.

Hot Sheet Deadline

Do you have a tip that would help others do a great job? We want to hear from you! Send articles for the next Hot Sheet to [Micheline Golden](#) by December 29.