San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building

July 2015

The Planning Network

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The Planning and Building Department's Mission Statement:

Promoting the Wise Use of Land

Helping to Build Great Communities

PLANNING & BUILDING
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

We're on the web!
http://SLOPLANNING.ORG

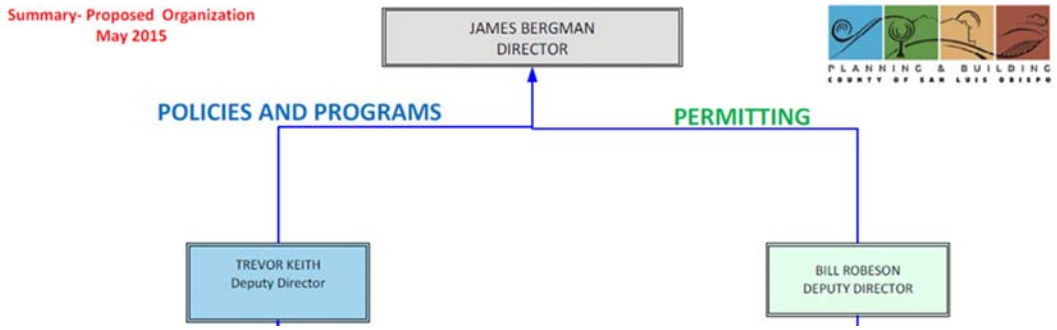
Organizational Focus

By: Jim Bergman, Trevor Keith and Bill Robeson

Organizations are formed to accomplish a common goal or mission that cannot be optimally pursued alone. Organizations are powerful because of the expertise each individual brings to the group and the framework in which they work. The Mission of the Planning and Building Department is to "Promote the Wise Use of Land and Help Build Great Communities." This is definitely a never ending mission that cannot be effectively worked towards alone or without organizational support. Daily, we are impressed with the good this department does whether it is keeping people and their investments safe through the use of the California Building Code, assisting people in entitling new uses on their property based upon the General Plan, or helping community organizations and individuals through grant administration.

Currently the Department faces a sizeable challenge due to the retirement of many long-term employees who have held key supervision and management positions. The Department has viewed this demographic shift as an opportunity to think carefully about the future, the changing needs of our customers, and how we contribute to the mission of the entire County Organization. We are taking a critical look at our structure and the organizational roles of each department tier in order to emphasize the critical value of "service." We are working to achieve an organizational form where each layer of department serves the individual employees who are on the front line assisting our customers. The Executive Team provides support, information, and resources to the Management Team, the Management Team supports the Supervisorial Team, the Supervisorial Team supports the front line experts and the entire group supports our customers.

Since the last issue of this newsletter, the Department reorganized by moving from the single Assistant Director model to a dual Deputy Director model. With the selection of Bill Robeson and Trevor Keith, the Department was split into two major business functions: "Permitting" and "Policies and Programs."



This arrangement will highlight the commonality and shared purpose of our work, which is to develop achievable plans and to efficiently and effectively move applications to decision makers.

The Management Team is strong with experienced and proven managers, specifically Ellen Carroll, Cheryl Journey, Matt Janssen, and Wes Drysdale. They will work diligently to bring their collective

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Meet the Staff — Jill Coomer

Every quarter, a different staff member will be featured.

Hi, I'm Jill Coomer and I am a Resource Specialist assigned to the Code Enforcement Section of the Planning Department.

I grew up in the small town of Auberry, located in the mountain region above Fresno. My father was a high school math teacher, and my mother worked at the local bank. I am the youngest daughter of three girls. After high school, I obtained my Liberal Studies/Criminal Justice degree from Fresno State University and worked as a Police Officer for over 12 years. I've been employed with the County of San Luis Obispo since 2005 and transferred to the Planning Department from Drug and Alcohol Services.

I am married to the most wonderful man in the world. He is a Sergeant with the California Highway Patrol, and combined we have five children. The oldest lives in Los Angeles, two have graduated from Cal Poly, one is a sophomore at Texas Christian University, and the youngest is a senior in high school. We have two dogs, a 175-pound Great Dane named Rooster Cogburn, and a Boxer mix named Mattie Ross. Some of you may understand the significance of these names.

Something you may not know about me is that during what was intended to be a pleasant vacation in Fiji, we became stuck in the middle of a typhoon and spent a week sleeping on the concrete floor of the airport. We were eventually rescued by the Australians and were flown to the beautiful city of Sydney, but were too exhausted to enjoy it. It was definitely a trip I will never forget. We hope to return to Australia one day and dive the Great Barrier Reef.

My husband and I live in Pismo Beach and enjoy wine tasting and taking advantage of the many wonderful wineries here on the Central Coast. Some of our hobbies include camping, hiking, and scuba diving. I've been extremely fortunate over the years and thank God for my many blessings.

ORGANIZATION … (*continued from page 1*)

skills and experiences to manage projects and activities in order for the supervisors to lead their expert teams of "doers."

The incredibly talented and capable Supervisory Team consisting of Steve McMasters, Ramona Hedges, Art Trinidade, Mike Stoker, Charles Maloney, Stephen Hicks, Martin Mofield, and Ryan Foster has recently been brought up to full strength with the promotions of Xzandrea Fowler, Rob Fitzroy, and Karen Nall. When we review our organizational chart in both "Permitting" and "Policy and Programs," we can't help but see a strong Supervisorial team that is a great blend of proven experience and motivated new comers.

The true strength and core of the department are those we call the "Doers." The many women and men (too many to list for this article) who bring their technical knowledge and experience to the teams tasked with our main functions.

On the "Permitting" side of the house, these teams include Current and Environmental Planning, Code Enforcement, Plans Review, and Building Inspections. On the "Policy and Programs" side, the teams include Long Range Planning, Housing and Community Development, Technology, Finance, and Energy. The majority of the good we do as a department can be attributed to these people and we can never thank them enough.

As we focus on the Department organization in order to improve our services, we are also working to help the County meet the goal set by our Chief Administrative Officer, Dan Buckshi, of becoming a World Class Organization. Our task now is to collectively focus our attention on the following attributes that make up a World Class Organization:

- High level of customer service that is responsive to community wants and needs
- Efficient and continuously improving
- Financial performance
- Data driven decision making
- Communicate well
- Learning organization
- Measure performance of all of the above

Inspection Tips—Swimming Pools —

Keep Your Swimming Pool Ultra Safe with an Automatic Pool Cover!

By David Rose

The industry standard for keeping swimming pools protected against accidental drowning can be found in the ASTM (American Society of Testing and Materials) under the heading of F1346. This specification establishes requirements for safety covers for swimming pools, spas, hot tubs and wading pools. When correctly installed and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, this specification is intended to reduce the risk of drowning by inhibiting the access to the water of children under five years of age.

Pool covers are a fantastic option to reduce maintenance time (blowing dirt and dust and leaves) and cost, and will keep the water at a more comfortable temperature. A pool covered with an opaque surface will absorb solar heat and can lower heating costs as much as 50%, according to info from the Department of Energy. By some estimates, a cover can boost the water temperature by 6 to 10° without running a heater. Reduced evaporation with the cover decreases the amount of water you will need to add to the pool by some 30 to 50%. By blocking harmful ultraviolet rays and preventing evaporation, a cover also reduces consumption of chlorine and other expensive chemicals. Activating an automatic pool cover is really a smooth, quiet, efficient and stealthy operation. A hidden track on two sides of the pool installed close to construction completion cleverly conceals a high strength rope that is connected to a motor or hydraulic pump at one end of the pool. An activation switch or a keyed device is installed a safe distance from the pool.

Remember, the most important detail of all is to use your automatic pool cover with a high level of common sense and keep it closed when not in use!! It won't work otherwise!

Permit Tracking System Replacement

By Ryan Foster

With the Board of Supervisor's recent approval of the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 budget, the Planning and Building Department has formally begun the process of replacing its outdated permit tracking system. The Department is currently using Tidemark Advantage, which was written for the Windows 98 platform, for our permit tracking needs. While this system has served the Department well since its implementation in 2002, its lack of extensibility (the ability to extend the system to satisfy new/changing needs) has become a growing concern. Department staff has put forth Herculean efforts to overcome this hindrance by building several parallel systems that interface with Tidemark Advantage – most notably, PermitView (http://www.sloplanning.org/permitview/), which is a web application that combines permit information from Tidemark Advantage with the County's geographic information system (GIS).

Department staff began working with a project manager from the Information Technology Department to prepare a rigorous set of requirements for the new permit tracking system last October, consulting with several other departments and agencies that use permit information in their day-to-day operations along the way. These requirements were part of the request for proposal (RFP) that was released through the County's General Services Purchasing Division on June 11th. Potential vendors have until July 31st to submit written responses outlining how their proposed solution meets (or exceeds) the Planning Department's needs. The entire project, which includes vendor selection and contract negotiation, design of the new permit tracking system, data migration from the old system to the new system, implementation, and staff training is expected to be complete by summer of 2017.

Image Source: http://www.shutterstock.com/

Save Water With Just One Click!

By Steve Hicks

Since January 1, 2014, our Title 19-SLO County Building and Construction Ordinance has required on-demand, hot water recirculating systems as part of our County Green Building Ordinance:

19.08.040 – Residential Standards. g. *Hot water recirculating systems: for new construction or when alterations or additions exceed 50% of habitable space, an on-demand recirculating system shall be installed.*

Just what is an on-demand recirculating system? It is a button that sends a signal to the hot water pump through a receiver and controller that is next to the pump at the water heater.

How does it work? The recirculating hot water system is meant to save water by not wasting the cold water in the pipes from the water heater to the fixture you are using. A return loop is installed from the furthest fixture or at each branch of fixtures so the pump can send hot water past the fixtures when you press the on-demand button.

What do you have to do to save water? Just remember to push the button when you walk into the bathroom. By the time you finish going to the bathroom and want to take a shower, the pump will have sent hot water past the fixture (usually takes 30 seconds in a normal-size home). You turn the shower on and wait for the water to get hot.

Did you know there is a device that can shut the shower off automatically when hot water gets to the showerhead? So with the on-demand recirculating pump and the thermostatic shut-off valve, you will be on your way to saving gallons of water on each shower.

emPower Summer Spin Series

By Emma Schoppe

Our utilities bills tend to increase with the temperature during the summer months. Learn how to beat the summer heat through the County of San Luis Obispo's emPower program. emPower staff and qualified contractors will be tabling at the Government Center Plaza Thursday afternoons this July to offer tips on how you can save with energy upgrades, and improve the comfort and indoor air quality of your home.

Each day will have a different theme and will discuss different topics relating to energy efficiency. Topics will include:

July 9: Intro to Energy Efficiency: Learn what's contributing to high utility bills, stuffy rooms, and poor indoor air quality.

July 16: Paying for Home Energy Improvements: Learn about rebates, financing, and resources available to fund energy saving projects in your home.

July 23: Ask the Energy Coach: Energy Coach, Paul Menconi, has visited over 100 homes in the County – find out what they all have in common.

July 30: Get your home ready for the summer: Learn energy saving tips and sign up for programs that will help you beat the heat.

Visitors to the booth will have the opportunity to spin a wheel for prizes and enter a raffle for a 3-pack of LED lightbulbs—a $30 value. Homeowners can also sign up for a free home energy site visit with an emPower Energy Coach for a comprehensive look at their home energy performance.

Date: July 9, July 16, July 23 and July 30
Time: 11: 30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Location: Government Center Plaza, 1055 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

For more information, contact emPower San Luis Obispo at 805-781-5625 or empower@co.slo.ca.us or visit emPowerSBC.

GUEST CORNER

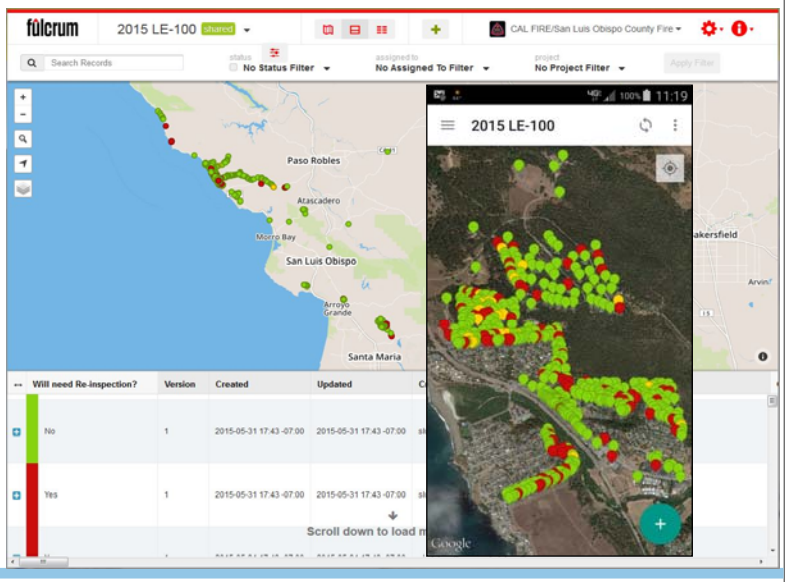
CAL FIRE's Defensible Space Inspection Program

By Alan Peters

Each year, generally starting in April, CAL FIRE personnel conduct defensible space inspections pursuant to PRC 4291 which was enacted in 2005 by the State Legislature. This regulation requires residents within State Responsibility Areas (SRA) to maintain at all times a fuelbreak around buildings out to 100' or to the lot line. Within this fuelbreak, dead vegetation and fuel ladders must be removed and grass must be mowed to less than 4" high.

In 2014, a cloud-based app called Fulcrum went into use. This tool allows inspection data to be easily collected, shared, and viewed on various electronic devices. Re-inspections are as easy as clicking on one of the red waypoints that indicate a violation and navigating to the address using GPS functionality.

The drought has significantly increased the fire hazard throughout the County and especially in Cambria due to a bark beetle epidemic that has killed thousands of Monterey pines. Due to the magnitude of this problem, CAL FIRE has chosen to conduct focused, door-to-door inspections in Cambria in cooperation with CCSD Fire. This was considered worthwhile in order to emphasize the importance of this work to the residents of Cambria. This was also a good educational opportunity to hand out numerous informational fliers to all residents, including evacuation fliers, Reverse 911 signups, and defensible space guidelines such as Ready-Set-Go. Through aggressive enforcement/education, the Fire Department hopes to help residents achieve compliance with PRC 4291 and the local weed abatement ordinance. If so, the community will have met its fire prevention obligations under the law and can then help develop support for other proposed activities in the Cambria Forest, such as fuelbreak expansion and forest thinning to create a healthier, more fire resilient forest.



Coastal Fast Fact Series:

Introduction to Development in San Luis Obispo County Coastal Zone

By Schani Siong

This article is the first of the Coastal Fast Fact series that will be featured in the Planning Newsletter. The Coastal Zone in the San Luis Obispo County spans 96 miles of coastline and consists of various important habitat, recreational and agricultural resources. The north coast is characterized by the rugged headlands to Big Sur and scenic rocky shoreline along the Hearst Ranch, compared to the sandy beach, extensive wetlands of Morro Bay, sheltered coves and beaches of Avila and Pismo Beach State parks that form the south coastline.

Why does the County issue coastal development permits?

The California Coastal Act (1976) mandates that local governments prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP) to guide development in the Coastal Zone, in partnership with the Coastal Commission. Development activities are broadly defined as building construction, land divisions, and activities that change the intensity of land use or public access to coastal waters. In March 1988, the County took over coastal permitting authority from Coastal Commission. The County implements the LCP through four separate documents: Title 23 Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, the local Coastal Area Plans, Coastal Plan Policies and Coastal Framework.

What are the Coastal Area Planning Standards?

The Coastal Zone in our county is so varied that it is important to have separate planning standards to suit local coastal communities. There are four coastal area plans;

1. North Coast: This Planning Area extends from the Monterey/San Luis Obispo County line (north) to Point Estero (south) and includes communities of Cambria, San Simeon Acres and several prominent properties such as the Hearst Ranch (and Castle) and Ragged Point Inn.

2. Estero: This Planning Area extends from Point Estero (north) to Point Buchon (south) and includes the communities of Los Osos, Cayucos and unincorporated areas surrounding Morro Bay.

3. San Luis Bay Coastal: This Planning Area extends from Point Buchon and Montana de Oro (north), Nipomo Mesa (south) and Highway 227/ Orcutt Road northeast of Arroyo Grande (inland). This planning area includes the Five Cities urban areas, i.e., Pismo Beach, Grover City, Arroyo Grande, Oceano, Halcyon, Avila Beach, and surrounding agricultural lands, i.e., See Canyon

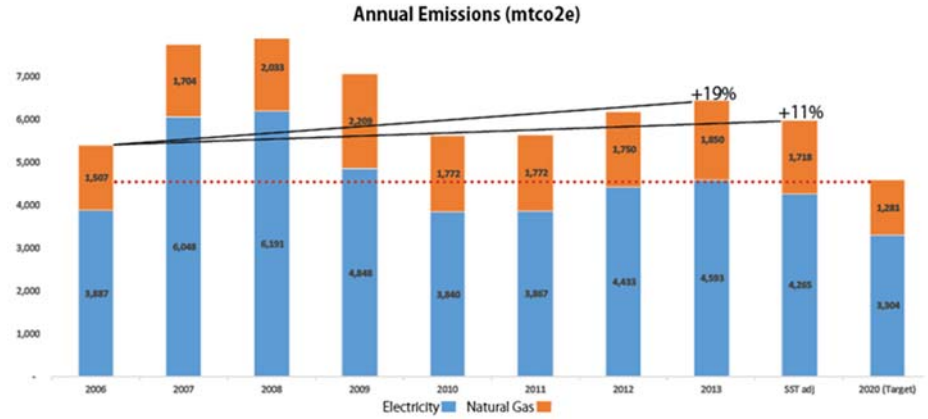
4. South County Coastal: This Planning Area extends from Five Cities (north), Santa Maria River (south) and Pismo Dunes (west) and includes the communities of Nipomo, a portion of the Callender-Garrett Village and the surrounding agricultural lands, i.e., Nipomo Mesa.

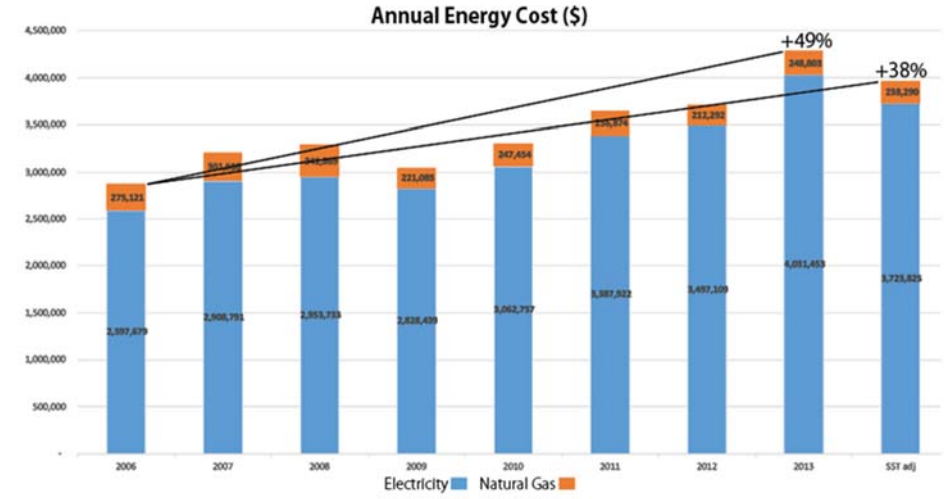
Stay tuned for more coastal fast facts in our next newsletter!

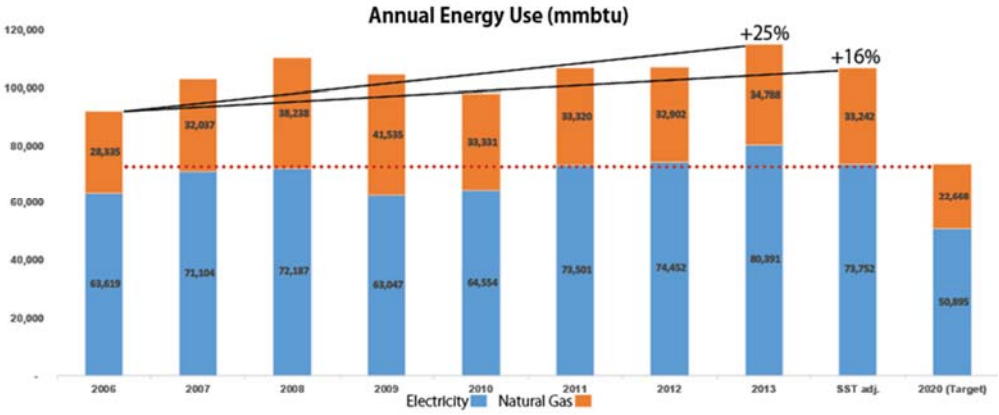
County Sustainable Solutions Turnkey

By: Stevie Schmidt & Jon Griesser

Category	Unit	Amount	Savings from 2013
Electricity	kilowatt hours	1,947,013	8.26%
Natural Gas	therms	15,460	4.44%
Electricity	dollars	307,628	7.63%
Natural Gas	dollars	10,513	4.23%
Emissions	mtco2e	461	7.14%







The County is currently engaged in a design-build, energy efficiency retrofit project utilizing PG&E's Sustainable Solutions Turnkey (SST) program. With a scope including 11 County facilities and 14 energy conservation measures, and a total construction cost of nearly $5 million, the initiative represents the single largest County-wide energy efficiency retrofit project ever undertaken in terms of its impact on County energy use, cost, and greenhouse gas emissions.

The charts show the impact of the SST measures on County government energy use and cost, and greenhouse gas emissions, as they pertain to previous years and applicable targets.

County government energy use (electricity and natural gas) has increased 25% from 2006 to 2013. The SST project is expected to reduce energy use (in mmbtu) by 9% from 2013. In order to achieve its adopted target (20% reduction in County government energy below baseline levels by 2020), the County will need to achieve an additional 31% reduction in mmbtu from 2013 by 2020.

County government energy cost has increased 49% from 2006 to 2013. In 2013, the County paid nearly $4.3 million in energy costs; the SST project will save the County more than $317,000 annually (or 11% from 2013). There is no goal to compare against for energy cost, but returning to baseline levels would require a 38% reduction by 2020.

County government GHG emissions (from energy use) have increased 19% from 2006 to 2013. SST is expected to result in a reduction of 461 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide (or 7% from 2013). There is no goal for County government emissions reductions specifically from energy use, but to reach the overall government operations target (15% below baseline levels by 2020), an additional reduction of 30% from 2013 would be required.

Service Learning at Cal Poly

By: Roya Javadpour & Sylvia Aldana

Community service and an intense learning experience are combined in PolyHouse, the centerpiece of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering Professor, Roya Javadpour's project management course. Class efforts focus on a home improvement project for an economically disadvantaged and physically disabled family.

This spring, Professor Javadpour's students were able to help Jennifer Dyer, a loving single mother in Santa Margarita who has a 21-year old daughter with Rett Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder, requiring round-the-clock assistance. It was the 12th successful home renovation service project in San Luis Obispo County the class has completed. Students spent six weeks planning for two short weekends of work, splitting into smaller teams that had to stay on budget, develop contingency options and plan the remodel from top to bottom. Over two weekends, the team managed and executed the installation of a chairlift system, laminate hardwood flooring, completely remodeled the bathroom to include a roll-in shower and accessible sink, widened doorways, replaced kitchen cabinets and appliances, landscaped the front and back yards, and brought all the electrical up to code. The students worked with a local engineer Mike Smith, from SSG LLP, County staff David Rose, Sylvia Aldana and Matt Janssen from Planning and Building, and Doug Rion from Public Works in obtaining the construction permits, waivers and going through the inspection process.

Upon using the chairlift, Jennifer said it was the first time in 20 years that she hasn't had to carry her daughter up the stairs. The PolyHouse project provides a rare educational platform that goes beyond the classroom setting into the actual implementation. It allows students to learn about some of the problems faced by other people, becoming more sensitive to the needs of others. The course project is a true example where "learn-by-doing" and "service-learning" make a real difference in the community. The students' commitment to the project extends far beyond a grade, they feel a sense of pride knowing they have helped a family in need. For more information please visit http://www.polyhouse.org

Department Mapping Updates

By Jeff Legato

June 2011—1 foot resolution

July 2014—1 foot resolution

Aerial Photography - In July of 2014, San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), in a partnership with the County and incorporated Cities, secured funding and a consultant to fly and photograph a new countywide aerial. As was the case for the 2011 aerial, the entire County was photographed at one foot resolution (meaning one pixel of resolution would be equal to one foot on the ground) and urban areas were flown at six inch resolution. It is anticipated that the aerial will be available on our mapping application PermitView as a base layer before the end of the year and as a download from USGS.

Parcel Layer - The County Assessor has partnered with SLOCOG and six incorporated cities to secure funding for digitizing the County's' 126,500 parcel boundaries. The County contracted with ESRI out of Redlands California for the work. A pilot area has been delivered and reviewed. Regular deliveries are expected to occur well into the next year. Once completed, a public version will be available to download for anyone who is interested. This layer will be more accurate and, therefore, all related layers will see an increase in their accuracy.

For more information on either of these layers, please contact Jeff Legato at the County Planning and Building Department jlegato@co.slo.ca.us.

Upcoming Events…

July 29, 2015 - emPower Healthy Home Workshop—5:30 to 6:30 at Pavilion on the Lake, 9315 Pismo Avenue, Atascadero (refreshments will be served)

August 12, 2015 - emPower Healthy Home Workshop—5:30 to 6:30 at the City of Paso Robles Council Chambers, 1000 Spring Street (refreshments will be served)

August 13 & 14—California Climate Action Planning Conference, Cal Poly Campus http://planning.calpoly.edu/CCAPC

August 18 - Board of Supervisors will begin the hearing on the Countywide Water Conservation Program DSEIR/Program (Title 8, 19, 22 and the General Plan amendments)

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Customer Survey

We appreciate your business and want to hear from you!

The Essential Tool Kit for Making Your Home Landscape Water Efficient

Calendar: Make a note to turn down the sprinkler timer as the summer turns to cooler fall tempuratures. Schedule routine maintenance, including regular times to test the sprinkler system.

Tuna Cans and Clock: To find out how long to run your sprinkler system, you can use several cans or straight sided containers of equal size. Place them in a grid pattern between sprinklers on the lawn. Run the sprinklers for 15 minutes. With a ruler, measure the depth of water in each of the cans. Add up the depths and divide the total by the number of cans. This is the average depth. Multiply the average by four to get the precipitation rate in inches of water per hour from the sprinklers. Ask your local water agency how many inches of water are required per week for your lawn. Once you know how much water is being put out by your system, your water agency should be able to help you determine a schedule to water your lawn in your area. www.water.ca.gov/WaterUseEfficiency/landscape.

Broom: Use brooms to sweep instead of rinsing pavement.

Timer: Use a kitchen timer as a reminder to turn off the water when using a hose-end sprinkler. There is also a wide range of battery or manual wind-up timers that go right on the faucet and garden hose.

Screwdrivers: Small screwdrivers can adjust sprinklers. Large screwdrivers can be used to determine soil moisture depth. Simply push a large screwdriver into the soil; dry soil will be difficult to push through. If the soil has moisture, the plants may not need water yet.

Water Pressure Gauge: When building a new sprinkler system or maintaining an existing system, an inexpensive water pressure gauge can be used to check each faucet. Choose irrigation heads that will operate with the pressure you have; irrigation heads are labeled with the optimum pressure range. If the pressure is too low, reduce the number of heads on each valve (you may need to break up the system and add more valves) and run the zones one at a time. Low pressure causes uneven coverage and dry spots. If the pressure is too high to operate the system correctly, a pressure regulator is required. Excessive pressure damages irrigation equipment and wastes water by misting and uneven coverage. Drip irrigation systems always need pressure regulation to operate correctly.

Mulch, Compost and Balanced Fertilizers: These will help plants stay healthy and save water. Compost and mulch are available by bag or truckload or make your own from grass clippings and leaves. If you use fertilizer, choose slow-release fertilizers with balanced nutrients such as 5-7-2, 4-8-4 or 10-10-10. High Nitrogen mixtures (the first number in the formula may be 24, 28 or 32) may burn your plants and cause fast growth that is attractive to pests. Apply fertilizers carefully; excess fertilizers may enter storm drains and creeks in rainwater or irrigation runoff.

Sprinkler Timer Manual: Become familiar with the timer's features and how to adjust the timer with the seasons. If you cannot find the manual, download it off the web.