Imagine opening your home to 1,000 people.

That is essentially what the Health Department’s Behavioral Health Bureau did last week, hosting the 2014 Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) International Conference in Monterey. This was the first time this conference has been held on the West Coast and it was an enormous undertaking - attendance was over 1,000 people representing law enforcement and mental health, families from throughout the United States as well as International representatives from Australia, Sweden and Canada.

“Our staff ‘rolled up its sleeves’ to make the conference run smoothly,” says Behavioral Health Director Wayne Clark, who says key employees were determined to host and coordinate the event after attending a CIT conference three years ago. “The ultimate accolades go to the Crisis Services Supervisor Devon Corpus and the Behavioral Health team she gathered to work night and day on this event. A big thank you also goes to bureau staff who kept community services running during the extensive planning process and while the conference was underway.”
Clark says many agencies helped out including the Monterey County Sheriff’s Office, the Probation and Health Departments, Monterey, Carmel, Marina and Salinas Police Departments and community-based agencies.

What is CIT and why does a conference about it draw so many? CIT is collaborative effort between law enforcement and behavioral health to help mentally ill consumers get the appropriate help that they need when in a crisis situation. In Monterey County, the Crisis Intervention Team, which is based at Natividad Medical Center, often accompanies local police to assist when a resident may be experiencing a mental health crisis.

For those in both the mental health and law enforcement fields, this conference was filled with educational opportunities, some one-of-a-kind. During the three-day event, there were 97 workshops offered with topics ranging from dealing with a variety of psychiatric challenges such as interacting with veterans and PTSD, hoarding, violence and suicide to explaining the symptoms of bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. First responders told of the lessons learned from crisis situations such as Sandy Hook and other agencies shared stories of successful professional partnerships and collaborations.

Director Wayne Clark says there were many ‘take aways’ from the conference for himself and his staff, but the one that stands out is confirmation from experts that Monterey County’s CIT team is meeting the needs of the community.

“Listening and talking to other professionals I learned that the level of effort that Monterey County already has in place to handle crisis situations is equal to communities like Chicago and Miami, both of which have more resources,” says Clark. “When I asked the founder of CIT what ingredients he thought were essential for a high quality
CIT program he listed five, four of which we already have in place; the fifth, mobile crisis response, we will be starting up in the next few months.”

Spaur Honored with National Leadership Award

Monterey County Economic Development Director David Spaur has been honored along with 19 others from across the nation, receiving the first Economic Development Innovation and Leaderships Awards given by GIS Planning Inc. of San Francisco, in partnership with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Intelligence, a division of the Financial Times in London.

The awards were handed out on Sunday, October 19th, during a ceremony in Ft. Worth, Texas.

Spaur, who has been the County’s Economic Development Director since 2012, was one of five recipients of the Leadership Team Award. He was honored for his work relating to the merger of the American Economic Development Council and Council of Urban Economic Development into the International Economic Development Council. Spaur was the maker of the motion that bridged dissenting members of the rural and urban organizations into an international organization.

“I was surprised to receive the Team Award for work we did as leaders back in 2001 to form and shape the new organization to become more inclusive,” says Spaur. “It was a very controversial issue at the time; both organizations represented different types of communities and they were merging at a time when the location of the
organization’s conference was at a hotel being boycotted by the NAACP. This created a deep division in the fledgling group. I saw the opportunity for leadership and urged the organization to move the conference to a friendly location and iron out the issues to do so and stay united. To this day I use the same analysis in making decisions... is it fair to all concerned, will it build goodwill?”

Awards were given for both individual and team leadership and innovation. Winners were selected by an international panel of judges.

Resource Management Agency Holds Employee Recognition Day

Each year, the Resource Management Agency (RMA) celebrates staff with an employee recognition day. This year’s event on October 16th not only brought agency staff together for an afternoon of food and fun, but also gave employees the chance to see where the agency and its divisions will be moving once renovations are complete - the newly acquired Schilling Place building.

The recognition event had a luau theme this year and many came dressed with that laid-back flair, leis replacing lanyards and badge holders.

At this event, the many talents of employees shined through: the Public Works Bridge Crew did a masterful job barbecuing; others provided music for the event. There were drawings for gift baskets which were created and donated by employees. But the most interesting aspect of the event was the location.

“We used this year’s event as an opportunity for RMA employees to preview where the

RMA staff enjoys the food and fun at the annual recognition event (above). The most popular place during the event? The line for barbeque (left). Facilities staff was able to prepare the newly acquired Schilling Place for the event.
RMA will be moving,” explains Carl Holm, RMA Interim Director. “People were able to walk around the building and see what everyone has been talking about. Many thanks go to our Facilities staff for getting the site and building ready for the event.”

Employees who reached significant milestones were awarded service pins and were applauded by their colleagues. The Agency also recognized Benny Young for his accomplishments over the past three years as the RMA Director, and bid him a fond farewell. Second District Supervisor and Board Chair Lou Calcagno and CAO Lew Bauman attended and shared a few words about the RMA.

Holding an event of this size (RMA has 260 on staff) is not possible without a team effort, including volunteers willing to stay behind and keep services open to the public, since the public counters for Planning and Building did not close. Those volunteers were not forgotten and were provided lunch. Many thanks to those who stayed behind to help the public.

The recognition event is funded entirely by managers within the RMA, who also were assigned to stay behind to clean up after the event.