Resource Management Agency Debuts Environmental Services Division

There is a new division within the County’s Resource Management Agency. Joining Planning, Building and Public Works is Environmental Services. This new division was put in motion at the first of this year, and formally approved by the Board of Supervisors in February. If you were not aware of the change, don’t worry. A new website is in the works for the new division, which will share its mission statement, values and program information.

Environmental Services has its roots in the Stormwater Program which was a part of the Public Works Division. In November 2-13, Senior Hydrologist Tom Moss transferred from the Water Resources Agency to the RMA and into that program. Within a few months, the Grading and Erosion Control Programs (formerly within Building Services) were transferred into the program and the Environmental Services division was born.
“Transferring to the RMA provided an opportunity for professional growth as well as an opportunity to continue participation in the lower Carmel River projects,” says Moss. “I worked at the Water Resources Agency for more than 17 years and supervised the Floodplain Management and Development Review Section for approximately 12 years.”

RMA – Environmental Services will provide grant administration and project management assistance for several projects located on the lower Carmel River, including:

- The Lower Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project
- The Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protection Barrier and Scenic Road Protection Structure Projects
- County Service Area #50 - Lower Carmel River Flood Control Project

The County’s Stormwater Program will stay within RMA-Environmental Services, including implementing the following Phase II National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal General Permit program elements:

- Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) Program
- Program Management Element, Legal Authority
- Education and Outreach Program
- Public Involvement and Participation Program
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program
- Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control Program
- Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations Program
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management Program
- Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Program Effectiveness Assessment and Improvement
- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Compliance Program
- Annual Reporting Requirements

To improve development review efficiency, RMA-Environmental Services was also given the responsibility to implement grading and erosion control regulations.
Environmental Health Brings Safety and Regulatory Education to the Salinas Valley

The Hazardous Materials Management Service of the Monterey County Health Department Environmental Health Bureau presented its 16th annual South County Environmental Compliance Workshop for the Agricultural Industry. This one-day workshop was held March 26th at the Salinas Valley Fairgrounds in King City.

Each year this workshop brings critical safety and regulatory information directly to those working in the heart of the Salinas Valley. More than 60 people from the agricultural community and local businesses came to hear more than a dozen speakers and a variety of topics such as:

- Ag Crime
- Ag Safety
- Drinking Water Protection
- Hazardous Materials Compliance
- Drought Management
- Emergency Planning

“This annual workshop has been a cooperative effort between the agricultural community, including the Farm Bureau and the Growers-Shippers Association, and the Health Department to keep attendees abreast of the latest changes and updates to environmental laws and regulations,” says Bruce Welden, Hazardous Materials Management Services Supervisor. “By educating and informing the agricultural community about environmental laws and regulations, those in the industry are better able to protect the environment, their workers and the public, and reduce the need for our oversight and responses to emergency incidents.”

Even those who were unable to attend the workshop can get the information provided. All of the presentations from the workshop are available on the Health Department website.
Health Department Honors Culture, Contributions

The Health Department used this past February’s Black History month designation to not only celebrate the diversity of its workplace, but to learn about local African American contributions to public health. Organizers are hoping it’s the first of many cultural celebrations within the department.

A lunch hour event, “Black History Month Learning and Celebration,” was initiated by the Health Department’s Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Unit in support of the department’s strategic plan, which states: “Ensure access to culturally and linguistically appropriate, customer friendly services.”

More than 70 employees, African American community leaders and Supervisor Simón Salinas participated. The event provided opportunities to learn about African American contributions to public health, as well as local Health Department employees who are the first African Americans in their roles. Among those singled out:

- Dr. James Stubblefield, the first African American EMS Medical Director in Monterey County
- Dr. Hugh Stallworth, the first African American Health Officer in Monterey County (retired)
- Joyce Brown, the first African America Director of Nurses for the Health Department

The luncheon featured African and African American cuisine, jazz music, African art and stories of local interest, such as information about the first African American family to settle in Salinas in the 1850s. The attendees got a true understanding of the African ‘diaspora,’ how Africans, though scattered and dispersed, managed to retain their traditions.