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From the Director...

Parks Department Joins the Community for California Coastal Cleanup Day

The Ventura County Parks Department has had a very busy couple of months as the summer season winds down into fall, and they're eager to show what they've been up to. From clearing graffiti along the Rincon, to beautifying our beaches, to planting trees, our park rangers, parks maintenance staff, and parks operations teams are out and about, ensuring that patrons of Ventura County parks enjoy these beautiful locations we are fortunate to have in our parks system.

In September, our Parks team showed their community spirit for California Coastal Cleanup Day. More than 50 volunteers, including students from Rio Vista Middle School, joined the parks team on September 18, 2021 to pick up trash along the beach and road shoulder from Emma Wood State Beach to Solimar State Beach (photo, above). The number-one item removed from the beach was cigarette butts, while the most unique items were wood pallets, clothing and throw pillows. Staff is committed to developing additional locations for Coastal Cleanup Day 2022.



Its amazing how fast 2021 has gone by, and here we are with the final *GSA Insider* for the year. While the year might be winding down, GSA is gearing up—wrapping up a very busy summer season in our parks, for our maintenance teams, and out at Fleet, for starters. I'm excited to tell you about some of those accomplishments in this issue, as Maintenance and Utilities launched their new 3-MW solar facility in Fillmore, Fleet took delivery of several new EV charging stations for the remote motorpool, and Parks has so many new projects going on, we can barely contain them here!

In the middle of everything, GSA committed to recognizing the milestone service anniversaries of our employees, and did so in a creative and responsible way, visiting each of the departments in GSA in a week-long series of meetings. We handed out GSA's years of service awards as well as some tasty treats!

Our Administration group has certainly been busy, not just with awards but with accreditations and certifications, too. Inside this issue, you'll find details about GSA Procurement's latest achievements as they earned a coveted national accreditation from NGIP, and what that means for our County customers.

Until next time,



David J. Sasek, P.E.

Continued on Page 2

Meanwhile, the day before, volunteer clean-up action was taking place in other County parks as Boy Scout Troop 622 assisted the Ventura County Parks Department by camping in the soon-to-open Camp Comfort Tent Camping area. This newly cleared area had been closed to tent camping since 2005, but will be reopening in spring 2022 to tent camping once again for the public at large.

The Boy Scouts assisted the Parks Department with clean up in San Antonio Creek in support of Coastal Cleanup Day and provided feedback on the amenities they would like to see in the tent camping area—a valuable service indeed! The Parks Department sincerely thanks Robert Barna and Troop 622 (pictured here) for their support.



Just prior to Coastal Clean Up Day, Parks Maintenance staff went above and beyond the call of duty when the Rincon Parkway day-use seawall was hit with major graffiti along its beach-facing side of the wall—see photo, left.



Parks Department staff Jared Rohlving and Fernando Naranjo worked tirelessly to remove all the graffiti—see photo, right—to prepare it for beach-goers before the upcoming weekend. Great job, Parks team, for a rapid response!

Parks Supports Collaboration Between Piru Neighborhood Council and Ventura County Community College District to Provide ESL Community Classes



Beginning on October 5, the Piru Neighborhood Council and Ventura County Community College District began offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes two times per week at the Piru Community Center. This facility is one of five community centers operated by the Ventura County Parks Department. Currently the ESL classes are scheduled to be provided to the community during the fall 2021 semester and are free to the community. The Parks Department staff is working with the college district and the Piru Neighborhood Council to continue to provide facilities in which the college district can offer classes for the community for the foreseeable future.

GSA Brings 3MW Solar Array Online in Fillmore

The County of Ventura General Services Agency in partnership with Ventura Solar, LLC brought a new off-site solar panel array installation, located in Fillmore, online in September. Slated to provide 3 megawatts of electricity for County facilities at a reduced rate, the solar array is located at 67 E. Telegraph Road, Fillmore, at a former superfund site that was repurposed into the current 3-MW solar photovoltaic system, consisting of more than 11,000 solar panels and estimated to reduce more than 2,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, or a 5% reduction, annually, from the County's operations. This equates to an estimated annual savings of \$100k, or a total estimated savings between \$3.9 and \$5.4 million over the life of the 25-year agreement with Ventura Solar.

"This project is an excellent example of the County's commitment to environmental sustainability and also the creative solutions that are possible when government partners with private industry," said David Sasek, Agency Director. "GSA worked closely with Ventura Solar, LLC to develop this 3MW solar field which didn't require any investment on the part of the county but will save the County approximately \$100,000 per year on our electric bills while providing significant portion of our electricity in the form of clean solar power."



The project was initially formed under the Southern California Edison Renewable Energy Self-Generation Bill Credit Transfer (RES-BCT), a program that allows local governments to generate renewable energy from one generating an account for bill credits that are applied to benefitting accounts. The installation was completed without incurring any capital costs to the County, carries a 7-year minimum commitment, and allows for an additional 5-year extension at the end of the 25-year contract.

The long-term owner of the project has recently transferred from Ventura Solar to Ecopower, and the County of Ventura GSA looks forward to an exciting partnership with the Ecopower group. The system officially reached its commercial operation date on September 14, 2021 and is now drawing power. A formal ribbon-cutting ceremony will be scheduled for early in 2022.

"Bringing this project online is consistent with a number of the County's goals including those in the General Plan that call for the County to be a regional leader in energy efficiency, minimize energy consumption, and promote the development and use of renewable energy resources," said Alejandra Téllez, Sustainability Officer, County of Ventura Sustainability Division.

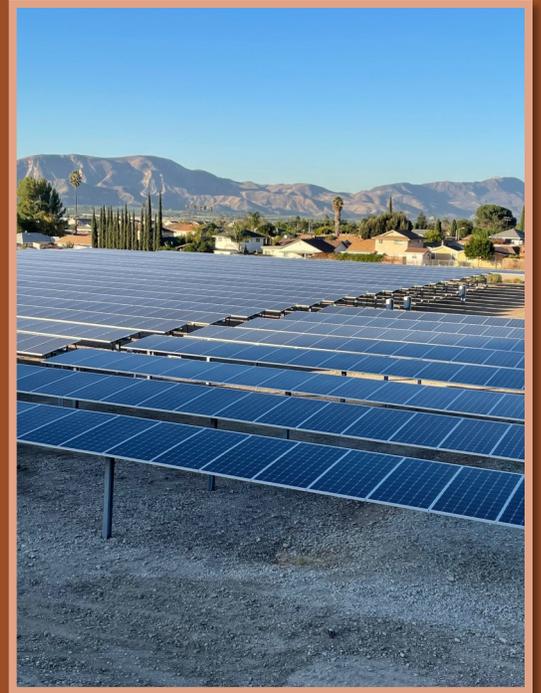


Photo: GSA Energy Manager Mike Duncan onsite in Fillmore.

Milestone Years-of-Service Anniversaries Commemorated Across the Agency in Small, Intimate Celebrations



35-year honoree James Martinez was celebrated at an outdoor ceremony at the GSA Parks Department attended by his peers.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected operations across the County in a number of ways—both on a large scale, and in ways that may have been smaller, but were still keenly felt. In 2020, as many of our workforce shifted from inhouse operations to working from home whenever able, agencywide meetings were refocused to virtual (as was noted in the first GSA newsletter for 2021), holiday parties and other large gatherings were postponed indefinitely, and our agency years of service awards meeting was cancelled for 2020—although service award gifts and certificates were still given, of course.

This year, the agency director was determined to present our years of service awards in person and, with some finessing, we worked out a post-pandemic, socially responsible way to do so. The end result? The agency’s management assistants set up small, personal awards ceremonies for each of the departments—6 total—that had employees to receive awards, and Director David Sasek visited each one, bearing service award certificates and cake. While the method of conducting the years of service awards ceremony(ies) may have been slightly less conventional than in years past, the end result was much more intimate, as Director Sasek was able to speak about each department’s individual accomplishments over the past year, and interact one-on-one with the

team members before and after the meetings.

Years of Service Facts by the Numbers:

- ◆ Total years of service celebrated in 2021: 572
- ◆ Total number of employees receiving awards: 43



Photos: Above—Patrick Squires accepts his service award for 30 years. Below—GSA Maintenance gathered as a group to honor 13 total recipients for a total of 145 years.

Why the “2?”

Years of service is usually an even number in increments of 5, so why the odd number? To account for SSM Patrick Squires’ service hours with the Courts when he transferred, which calculate into VCERA but don’t automatically calculate into overall County years of service.

- ◆ Total departments hosting awards ceremonies: 6
- ◆ The highest single number of service years in one department: 145, in GSA Maintenance
- ◆ Highest number of years of service celebrated this year by one individual: 35—see the above photo



Congratulations! GSA Procurement Earns QPPD Accreditation

The General Services Agency Procurement Department is now nationally accredited by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing. Through a thorough and extensive value-driven self-assessment and application process that demonstrated alignment with the Quality Public Procurement Departments (QPPD) standards, GSA Procurement achieved this exclusive status for the first time this past October, and their accreditation period extends through 2024.

Procurement departments meeting the accreditation standards must, during the application process, identify the laws—i.e., the codes, ordinances, regulations, and statutes—that authorize a procurement department to perform and delegate their activities, which is invaluable in providing procurement support. Ultimately, the accreditation:

- Establishes GSA Procurement as an industry leader
- recognizes excellence in procurement operations
- Recognizes best practices implemented by GSA Procurement
- Acknowledges GSA Procurement’s on-going pursuit of excellence

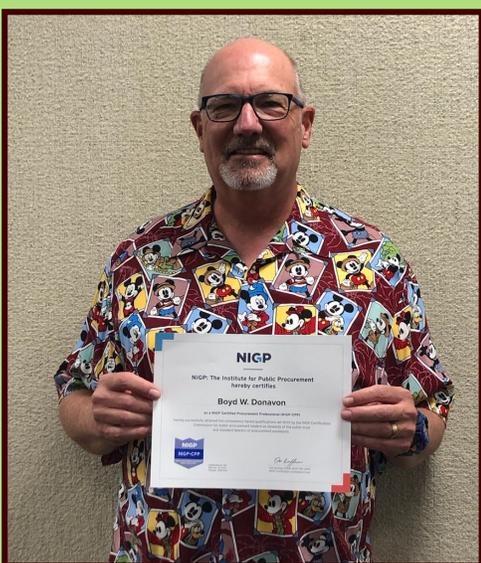
“Our procurement department works very hard to provide our County with the best service we can,” said Julie Miller, the Principal Buyer who oversaw the application process for the department. “This accreditation shows that we are definitely a Quality Public Procurement Department.”



Procurement’s Boyd Donavon Earns Prestigious NIGP Certification



In October 13, 2021 Boyd Donavon, GSA Procurement’s Assistant Purchasing Agent, earned a rare honor in the procurement field: he successfully attained the competency-based qualifications set forth by the National Institute for Public Procurement Certification Commission, earning their prestigious Certified Procurement Professional Certification (NIGP-CPP) and



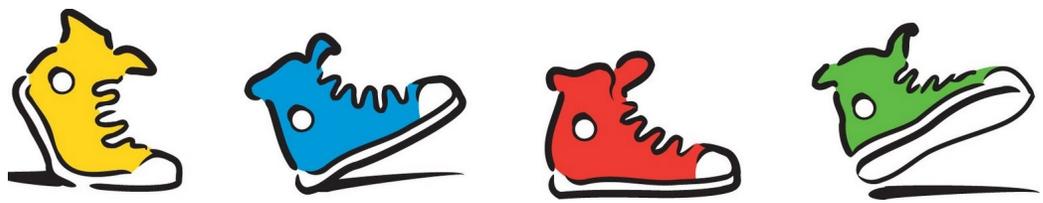
becoming one of the first leaders in the field to earn this distinguished honor.

The NIGP-CPP program is the only certification that:

- Is anchored in the Public Procurement Competency Framework, which is rooted in research that seeks effective public service through workforce competencies
- Targets mid- to executive-level procurement leaders in the public sector
- Integrates with NIGP’s Pathways program, featuring competency development within 33 learning modules

Expands beyond public procurement’s technical aspects and assesses the more holistic competencies needed to be successful leaders within a public entity—embracing elements of leadership, business principles, and procurement strategy Boyd had to embrace and master these elements of the program, and more, showing a desire to lead by example and bring everything he learned back to his GSA Procurement team. “Boyd is an inspirational beacon for others to follow,” commented NIGP certification director Diane Daly. “Congratulations to Boyd, and congratulations to your team.” We wholeheartedly agree!





Who's coming, who's going in GSA

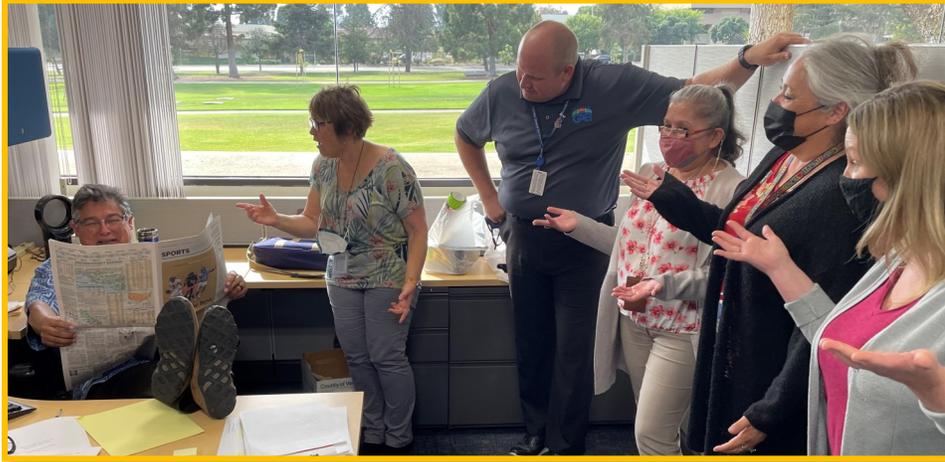


Photo: Retiring Principal Buyer Ernie Griego (left) decides to catch up on the news on his last day, to the consternation of his coworkers.

New Hires

Rory Aronsky, Purchasing Technician, Procurement
 Meighan Batinica, Management Assistant III, Fleet (transfer from RMA)
 Patrick Brown, Building Equipment Utility Worker, Maintenance
 Jose Galaviz, Automotive Service Worker, Fleet
 Leopoldo Guzman, Garage Attendant, Fleet
 Miranda Myers, Park Service Ranger I, Parks Department
 Edward Olafsson, Maintenance Engineer, Maintenance
 Jorge Ramirez, Maintenance Engineer (rehire), Maintenance

Enrique Reily, Custodian II (rehire), Housekeeping/Grounds
 Anthony Requena, Graphics Technician II, Business Support Services
 Juan Manuel Rivera, Maintenance Worker II, Housekeeping/Grounds
 Jielei Robledo, Accountant I, Fiscal (transfer)
 Dana Vodantis, Accounting Manager II, Fiscal (transfer)

Promotions

Matthew Alamillo, Maintenance Engineer, Maintenance
 Josh Gannon, Staff Services Specialist I, Business Support Services
 Alfonso Gonzalez, Senior Auto Mechanic, Fleet

Melissa Lorenzen, Senior Buyer, Procurement
 Julie Miller, Principal Buyer, Procurement

Retirements

Lea Hubbard, Accounting Manager II, Fiscal—13 years of service
 Paul LoVerme, Facilities Manager, Security/Special Services/Housekeeping/Grounds—8 years of service
 Ernie Griego, Principal Buyer, Procurement—27 years of service

Resignations/Separations/Transfers

Katie Barrett, Tech Specialist IV-PH, Admin Extra Help
 Samantha Borunda, Student Worker, Procurement
 Evan Brown, Student Worker, Fleet
 Arthur Cervantes, Custodian II, Housekeeping
 Leopoldo Guzman, Garage Attendant, Fleet
 Spencer Herson, Purchasing Technician, Procurement
 Paul Hinton, Maintenance Engineer, Maintenance
 Cynthia Lopez, Purchasing Technician, Procurement
 Evan Michel, Park Service Ranger I, Parks
 Eric Strohmusch, OSC I, IT Group
 Marina Verdian, Chief Deputy Director
 James Walton, Park Service Ranger I, Parks

In Memory of Our Friend and Colleague, Tom Watts

Thomas Watts, Senior Auto Mechanic for GSA Fleet Services, passed away on September 21, 2021. Tom started his County career in 2017 as a Senior Auto Mechanic in Satcoy, and he was a valued member of the Fleet Department family.

Tom leaves behind his wife, Mary Watts, of 41 years, as well as 4 children and 3 grandchildren, with a fourth grandchild on the way. He was a loving spirit who will be greatly missed by everyone.



Employee Shout Outs

Sara Luna, Administrative Assistant for the Sheriff's Forensics Services, expressed thanks and appreciation for Records Technician **Kit Pendergraft** when Kit helped schedule a pick up of over 220 boxes of records by a specific deadline for Sarah's department. Kit patiently answered Sara's questions with her usual thoughtful detail—which Sara has come to expect whenever she works with Kit.

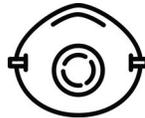
Sara also expressed her appreciation for **Ruben Silva**, Inventory Management Assistant III, who worked with Kit to schedule the removal of some large shelving units. "Ruben is always receptive to our requests," Sara stated. "He shows up with a can-do attitude and always provides excellent customer service."

Way to represent GSA, Kit and Ruben!

Parks Maintenance Worker III **Diane Grace** received a shout-out for leading a service project for Boy Scout Troop 761 on August 22 at Oak Park campground. They all worked together to paint the fence at the campground—and the entire troop also enjoyed a weekend of camping and fellowship.

Great job, Diane, teaching these young men a new skill and helping them receive their service badge!

Thank you to **Tim Baker** for creating a user-friendly, easy-to-access and track SharePoint site for GSA employees to request their own N95 masks. Tim integrated the required form (located in Appendix D of the training guide) and training information for employees to review and digitally sign, making it easy for the user to click a link to complete their required training and request however many masks they need—all from one SharePoint site. What a great online tool—one that saves time and is definitely Lean. Way to go, Tim!



"Thanks for all your help, **Anthony De Anda**. It's nice that you are available to us—especially when you were here to do something else! I really do appreciate it, it's great to have a maintenance guy so quick to help."

– Becke Corr, Behavioral Health

Kudos to **Seen Robinson** in Business Support Services—Graphics for helping to develop slides and some social media images, which helped Ashley Bautista and Jackie Nunez in the County Public Information Office put together and promote a great presentation by CEO Mike Powers for the *State of the County* address at the end of September. The entire presentation is available on the County's website via the CEO's web page. Thank you, Seen!



Fleet Services' **Roland Houben** commendably showed diligence in completing the integration of Fleet's new telematics vendor and their dataflow into GSA's own program, AssetWorks. This was no small task! Roland performed all of the testing, finding the "bugs" in the system and resolving them, including one persistent issue that was affecting mileage data collection.

Thanks, Roland, for your concentrated and continuous effort to finish this herculean task!

Congratulations to the GSA softball team, coached by Parks Deputy Director **Colter Chisum** and Administrative Services Director **Greg Bergman**—both of whom also played on the team! The 16-member team took 2nd place in the recreational division in the annual County softball tournament, playing 5 games over 2 days on October 2nd and 3rd. Way to represent GSA!!



The team consisted of: Tina Arellano, Luz Avitud, Greg Bergman, Colter Chisum, Jeri Cooper, Boyd Donavon, Darren Downey, Curtis Heath, Alicia Ibarra, Cynthia Martinez, Gabe Martinez, Joel Miller, Rebecca Moak, Tara Nelson, Brittany Stephens, and Bob Talaugon



Employee Spotlight On... Two New Managers in GSA Administration

Julie Miller Earn Promotion to Principal Buyer

GSA is proud to celebrate the recent promotions of two of its hardest working team members, Julie Miller and Dana Vodantis, to roles of leadership in the agency. Julie Miller has worked her way through the ranks in Procurement, from Purchasing Technician up to Principal Buyer, in just over 5 years. In fact, Julie celebrated her 5-year anniversary just last year – a milestone that was pushed back a bit because of the pandemic, but we were proud to honor her achievement during this year's service awards ceremonies.

Julie Miller was born and raised in the County of Ventura in the city of Oxnard. She is number 10 of a family of 11 – most of which still live in Ventura County. Julie has been married to her husband Chet for nearly 28 years, and they have two daughters, Katherine, 26, and Elizabeth, 22. An animal lover, Julie's family also includes two dogs, two cats, a guinea pig, and five African Cichlids.

While Julie joined the County of Ventura in 2015, she started her procurement experience much earlier, in 1985. She has worked in manufacturing and for both profit and non-profit organizations. For GSA Procurement, Julie started as a Purchasing Technician, promoting up to Buyer, Senior Buyer and now Principal Buyer. She recently received her Certified Public Procurement Buyer (CPPB) certification through Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC) and will be testing soon for her Certified Procurement Professional (CPP) designation through National Institute of Governmental Procurement (NIGP). Julie has been the driving force behind a great many of GSA's recent complicated RFPs, as well as Procurement's recent successful drive to earn QPPD accreditation (see page 5), and we look forward to many more great things from Procurement's newest member of leadership!



GSA Welcomes Back a Former Employee In a New Capacity When Dana Vodantis Takes Over as Accounting Manager in GSA Fiscal

GSA's new Accounting Manager, Dana Vodantis, returns to the agency after a very brief sojourn with Public Health as a principal accountant. Dana is no stranger to either GSA or the County in general, having started her County career 8 years ago and, like Julie Miller, worked her way up through the ranks, from Accounting Assistant to Fiscal Technician, and then through the

Accountant series. Dana has served time not only with GSA but with the Auditor Controller, Harbor Department, Public Works Agency, and Public Health, but spent the bulk of her service time, 5 years, with GSA.

A graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Finance, Dana augmented her skills over the years with college-level Accounting courses at various UC Extension campuses. After graduating, she worked 11 years in the defense contractor and financial management industries.

Dana and her husband Nicholas have lived all over the world as a proud naval family, raising three

children. In fact, Dana's children were born in Hawaii, Kansas, and Italy! Here daughter, Eleni, is a freshman at UCSB, son Leo is a sen-



ior at UC Davis, and son Lukos graduated from San Diego State and is now a Navy Ensign at flight school in Corpus Christi, Texas. While Dana may have spent the formative years of her children's lives being a stay-at-home mom, volunteering with the school, church, and club sport programs, she's always been active, and still enjoys hiking, jogging, and swimming. Proud of her Greek heritage, she loves to travel to Europe, especially Greece to visit relatives and Italy to visit friends, taking in ancient history and delicious food.

Dana grew up in Pittsburgh, where she spent weekends going to museums and rooting for the Steelers, Pirates and Penguins. After moving to California, she developed a love of the outdoors: hiking in Joshua Tree, Yosemite, John Muir Wilderness, and many other parks along the coast.

And what does Dana say about her recent return to GSA from Public Health? "I love working for GSA," confirmed Dana. "I love the big agency, it's similar to enjoying the big city and the big school – Penn State – love the high-energy level of the many different people and the versatility the job has to offer. I'm glad to be back."

What's New in Parks?

GSA Commemorates Clean Air Day with a Livestream Tree Planting at Saticoy Community Park During County Board of Supervisors' Meeting

One of the County's climate change mitigation programs is to oversee the planting of 1,000 trees per year Countywide, an effort that GSA Parks is actively involved in. To this end, the Parks Department participated for the first time in a livestream tree planting during the October 5, 2021 Board of Supervisors meeting, planting a coastal live oak at Saticoy Community Park (pictured below) as part of the commemoration of Clear Air Day 2021, which fell this year on October 6th.

Initiated in 2018, Clean Air Day—which falls on the first Wednesday of October each year—illustrates the fact that air pollution causes serious health problems and asks that individuals and organizations take action to reduce air pollution. Those actions can include reducing vehicle emissions, switching out harmful cleaning products to reduce pollutants and emissions, and planting trees—all actions GSA is committed to in its day-to-day operations.



“We all play a collaborative role in reducing air pollution,” said Chair Linda Parks during the Board meeting on October 5th. “To commemorate our Board’s proclamation of Clean Air Day in Ventura County, our County Parks Department will live stream a tree planting in a County park... a first-ever in the history of our County.”

To further cement GSA’s commitment to the County’s dedication to planting 1,000 new trees annually, 38 more coastal oak trees—which have a high carbon absorption rate and are ideal for reducing air pollution—were planted at Santa Rosa Park on October 7th (see photo, left).



Contact Us

If you have questions about park projects, please e-mail Colter Chisum at colter.chisum@ventura.org. All other inquires can be directed to the appropriate e-mail address or phone number listed below.

Park Reservations Line:
(805) 654-3951
(to reserve group day-use areas and individual campsites)
Park Ranger Desk:
(805) 672-2071
Park Maintenance Desk:
(805) 672-2073
General Questions and Comments:
county.parks@ventura.org

Visit us on the web at:
www.ventura.org/general-services-agency/parks-department.



2021
CAN TREE
 10TH ANNUAL

Mark Your Calendars!

- November 17:** Monthly Safety Council Meeting
- November 30:** Quarterly Supervisors' Meeting
- December 10:** Food Share CAN-Tree Build
- December 15:** Monthly Safety Council Meeting
- January 10:** Parks Advisory Commission Meeting



After a year's hiatus, Food Share's annual in-person CAN Tree build is back, bigger and better than ever, and celebrating the 10th anniversary of the popular event. Last year's canned food tree drive, although still held, was something of a "virtual" tree build, as in-person gatherings were restricted due to COVID protocols. GSA still managed to raise our largest amount of money ever—\$1,950—and looks to exceed that this year.

"This year, we're really excited about being able to join the other County agencies at the in-person tree-building event on December 10," said agency Director David Sasek. Anyone can participate in the tree-building event, just be sure to talk to your manager or supervisor first—maybe they'll join you for some tree-building fun!

For details about fundraising, and about how you can participate in the tree-building on December 10 in downtown Ventura, contact Lieba Butler or Denise Santoyo.



Fleet Services Takes Delivery of New EV Charging Stations



GSA Fleet Services (Fleet) is proud to announce the delivery of the first of nine solar-powered electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, along with two Chevrolet Bolt EVs, to the Fleet Remote Motor Pool location at the Telephone Road Building. With funding from a grant from the California Electric Commission and in partnership with the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance (VCREA), Fleet has contracted with EV ARC for off-grid EV solar-powered charging systems for four of Fleet's Remote Motor Pool locations.

"Fleet was looking for a charging infrastructure solution to solve charging requirements without having to wait for construction and electrical projects to be completed," said County of Ventura Fleet Deputy Director Christopher Melton. "The partnership with VCREA on the CEC grant provided an opportunity to place EV charging infrastructure quickly, and mitigate the costs to the County's taxpayers. Our goal is to use this self-sufficient, and zero-emissions charging platform to charge the EVs that we will begin to assign to select Fleet Remote Motor Pool locations." The American-made, rapidly deployable, off-grid, solar-powered EV charging system will support the integration of electric vehicles into the County's and Fleet's vehicle pool. "Electrification of transportation in the fleet, using 100% renewable energy, will contribute to reducing the environmental impact of vehicles used to conduct County business in a sustainable way."



Don't Forget—November is Benefits Open Enrollment Month!

Open enrollment for your 2022 health plan benefits is going on now through November 30th. The plan handbook is available online at <https://hr.ventura.org/benefits/py2022> and you can enroll and/or make plan changes via VCHRP. You can also enroll manually; all forms and supporting documents must be completed and submitted via email to

benefits.ServiceRep@ventura.org by 5pm on November 30th. Questions can also be addressed to this email address, or call (805) 654-2570.

Please remember to confirm your health plan information and choices in VCHRP starting December 7th. You have until December 17th to make any corrections.