



## **STAFF REPORT**

**TO: Chairman and Board Members**

**FROM:** Robert Charpentier, Staff, Frankie Vigil, GoodStanding Outreach

**DATE:** May 6, 2013

**SUBJECT: Customer Communication and Community Outreach Plan FY 2013/2014**

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### **Customer Communication and Community Outreach Plan FY 2013/2014**

Attached please find a draft of TMWA's 2013/2014 Customer Communications and Community Outreach Plan. This document provides a strategic assessment of TMWA's communications needs and provides an outline of the various tactics that will be employed to address them throughout the year.

We look forward to any input the Board may have on this document.



**Customer Communication and Community Outreach Plan  
FY 2013/2014**

**Executive Summary**

Communications and community outreach are an important part of Truckee Meadows Water Authority's (TMWA) operations. Since TMWA provides an essential service to the community, its stakeholders deserve—and, in fact, demand—clear, open information.

**Situation Analysis**

TMWA's vision is to be the best customer focused water purveyor.

For the purposes of this communication plan, GoodStanding along with members of TMWA's communications team, reviewed the organization's goals for Fiscal Year 2013/2014 and examined where communications may support reaching those goals. The following plan reflects the organizational goals where communications can be the most effective.

**The purpose** of this document is to provide the goals, objectives and tactics for a coordinated communications plan for TMWA

**The overall communications strategy** is to consistently improve relationships with TMWA audiences using all effective and efficient communication channels.

**The goals** in this plan stress open communication and improving the understanding of the value and quality that TMWA delivers to its customers.

**The objectives** carry out the goals.

**The tactics** listed are planned to accomplish overall goals and objectives and should be measured whenever possible against industry norms.

**Customer Communication and Community Outreach Plan  
FY 2013/2014**

**Communication Goals:**

1. Position TMWA as a business leader in the water industry.

**Objectives**

- Pitch one story regarding capital projects that highlight partnership and efficiency during the fiscal year.
- Use social media avenues four times a year promoting watershed protection events.
- Pitch one story regarding infrastructure rehabilitation.
- Have at least one bill insert story about TMWA's credit ratings, risk of back flow non-compliance and value of protecting watershed and service and infrastructure rehabilitation.
- Explain rate setting process, as needed for rate changes, with one *from the source*, TMWA's internal employee publication, an employee workshop and an Intranet Q&A.
- Pitch quarterly stories regarding TMWA employees presenting at conferences.
- Send out quarterly social media messages regarding TMWA employees presenting at conferences, published articles, etc.

**Strategies**

- Communicate important milestones regarding TROA and how it benefits customers.
- Inform all stakeholders of STMGID DWR merger milestones.
- Engage customers and other stakeholders in education of TMWA's business practices.
- Continue to position TMWA as a leader in safety.
- Engage employees in actively anticipating customer questions.

2. Continue fostering public understanding of the value and quality of water that TMWA delivers.

**Objectives**

- Secure two service club meeting speaking engagements for TMWA leadership to present topics of interest including the importance of infrastructure rehabilitation.
- Pitch one story regarding infrastructure rehabilitation.
- Have four social media messages promoting all workshops.
- Respond to social media questions and complaints immediately.
- Send out press releases promoting customer workshops.
- Pitch one story to local media in regarding TMWA's openness to ideas from internal and external audiences.

- Provide support on giving customers accurate water usage information on their invoices.
- Provide at least one workshop on education and meter access and your bill.

**Strategies**

- Educate customers on the value of service and the importance infrastructure rehabilitation.
- Incorporate sustainability messaging.
- Foster customer understanding of water system and its users.
- Use social media to promote and drive customers to workshops.
- Engage external and internal audiences to identify topics that will increase both the understanding and perceived value of the water and service TMWA provides.

3. Continue fostering public understanding of the complexities of the water industry, our water system and areas of efficiency.

**Objectives**

- Pitch quarterly stories regarding different aspects of producing drinking water.
- Pitch three stories regarding major capital projects that are completed on or under budget
- Present to the Board and SAC construction projects completed on time and within budget.
- Produce one *from the source*, after construction season, highlighting at least three successful projects.

**Strategies**

- Create an understanding of what it takes to produce drinking water.
- Educate community on the value of protecting our watershed by engaging key players.
- Promote web-based or other non-phone options to customers to resolve their service issues and/or questions.

4. Strengthen trust among audiences

**Objectives**

- Lead a personalized tour for each Board Member.
- Hold annual public tours of Chalk Bluff and the Verdi Hydroelectric plant.

**Strategies**

- Educate TMWA Board of Natural Resources inventory and challenges.
- Create an understanding of TMWA's efficient financial management with all stakeholders

5. Position TMWA as the leader in customer service among utilities in the United States.

**Objectives:**

- Provide a customer service message in each Rotary presentation and employee meeting.
- Pitch at least one story regarding TMWA employee who went above and beyond to help a customer in need.
- Pitch one story to a trade publication regarding TMWA's commitment to customer service.

**Strategies:**

- Educate both internal and external audiences regarding customer satisfaction results.
- Educate customer service representatives regarding customer needs that take the most time to address and engage in a time reducing response.
- Educate the community that we care, we are here to help, and we will work with them to manage their water use and keep their water in service.

**Tactics**

**Infographics – MGD vs. number of TMWA employees**

**Videos**

**Customer Billing (direct to customer, monthly)**

- Bill statements
- Bill envelopes
- Bill inserts (TMWA)/owner agency inserts
- ebill notification email
- Login to your account landing page

**Customer Feedback**

- Overall Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Review of customer complaints and compliments
- Transactional Satisfaction Survey
- Website: Contact Us, Tell the Board

**Address-Specific Customer Interaction**

- Emergencies/main breaks
- Service door hangers
- Water waste doorhangers and letters

**General Customer Education**

- Info graphics (Info graphic showing MGD compared to employees)

- Bill Payment Options Brochure
- Enewsletters
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter and etc.)
- Website

### **Topic-Specific Education**

- Community events (Kids Free Fishing Day, Earth Day, etc.)
- Conservation buckets
- Demonstration projects (water-efficient landscapes, landscape retrofit)
- Facility tours (Treatment Plants, Hydroelectric Facilities, etc.)
- Fall cool down (when Glendale can be shut off and save on operational costs)
- Incident or crisis management
- Kids activity books (pencils & erasers)
- Hug High Garden
- Landscape tours
- Media interviews
- Planned construction and outages
- Speakers Bureau
- Topic Papers
- Truckee Meadows Community Forestry Coalition ([www.communityforestry.org](http://www.communityforestry.org))
- Truckee River Flows & Storage ([www.tmwastorage.com](http://www.tmwastorage.com))
- Truckee River Fund ([www.truckeeriverfund.org](http://www.truckeeriverfund.org))
- Water-Efficient Landscape Guide ([www.tmwlandscapeguide.com](http://www.tmwlandscapeguide.com))
- Water Quality Report
- Weather-Wise Watering Summer Campaign
- Workshops

### **Public Meetings & Outreach**

- Public meetings/questions and answer sessions
- Standing Advisory Committee
- Truckee River Fund Advisors
- Board meetings

### **Plans & Reports**

- Water Conservation Plan
- Water Facility Plan
- Water Resource Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report