



MEMO

To: Board of Directors
From: Steven Farrell
Date: Dec 15, 2016

Subject: ACWA/JPIA Fall 2016 Conference Report / Nov 28-Dec 2

See attached pages. I will report on highlights orally and of course be available for any questions at the board meeting.

JPIA

Monday

Executive Committee Meeting

Normal business and prep for the plenary Board of Director’s meeting.

Pre-Board Meeting Lunch w/ Keynote

Another remarkable and disturbing presentation by the FBI on cyber crime and the vulnerability of public agencies as well as private corporations. Spoofing and Ransomware were highlighted.

Board of Director’s meeting

Normal business and reporting. JPIA continues to do very well.

Announcement and more details of new Cyber Coverage.

A few changes to JPIA Employee handbook were approved.

Town Hall

An “Open Topic” session and discussion on JPIA and related topics.
GSA coverage?, Cyber, Retention increase, Other

Networking Reception

As always, a nice appetizer reception. I didn’t stay long, but did chat again with a number of folks.

ACWA

Tuesday

Local Government Committee

Chair –Larry McKenney – Orange County Water Director, MWD Director, and Counsel for SAWPA.

Continued discussion (from the Spring meeting) of the Committee’s 2-year plan, and a review of legislation of interest. Explored current issues of interest, and possible session topics for the Spring 2017 conference

ACWA 101

Attended with James Morales (East Valley Water District), and co-Region 9 Director with me). James and I are very interested in how new folks can better engage with ACWA and in particular, keep up-to-date with ACWA activity between conferences. Well attended session this time, but remarkably passive. James and I also met and talked privately with Tim Quinn (ACWA ED) during this hour about some of our concerns and ideas.

Water Management Committee Meeting

A reliable and excellent overview of what’s happening in water management across the state, and across most water issues. Reports from subcommittees and highlights of upcoming sessions and working groups

Membership Committee

Although I normally attend the Communications Committee on Tuesdays for my interest in social media, websites, and strategic messaging, because Region 9 has yet to appoint a Membership Committee liaison, I decided (again as I did in the Spring) to attend this session.

Discussion again revolved around their 2-year plan and efforts to increase city and small agency membership and participation.

Some new discussion around membership considerations regarding the new GSA’s that are being created, and how that will be addressed.

New ACWA members are invited to a private Meet and Greet, which I attended immediately after this session, hoping to find and talk to attendees from new-ACWA-member, City of Banning, since they are in Region 9. Unfortunately, I didn’t see them there.

Welcome Reception in Exhibit Hall

Kickoff of the official conference and exhibitions. Reviewed exhibits, and talked with new and old acquaintances

Wednesday

Opening Breakfast

“Unlocking the Science Behind Atmospheric Rivers”

From the conference guidebook:

Storms fueled by atmospheric rivers can make or break a water year in California. Dr. Martin Ralph is a leader in advancing scientific understanding of atmospheric rivers. The results of this cutting-edge research have the potential to improve short-term precipitation forecasting and operational decisions at key reservoirs to maximize water supply while maintaining public safety.

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Martin Ralph, Ph.D., Director, Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, Scripps Institution

The best presentation/overview I have seen or read on atmospheric rivers. There is one map/graphic in particular (not yet available on the ACWA website) that highlights why these patterns are so important to California. Only recently being appreciated and studied to the same degree of priority as hurricanes

Communications Committee Program –

Transparency 2.0: What You Need to Know about Public Records Act Requirements in the Digital Age

From the conference guidebook:

With the passage of recent legislation and an uptick in Public Records Act requests, transparency in the digital age is a growing area of focus for local public water agencies. Find out what you need to know about ever-evolving Public Records Act requirements and hear best practices and case studies from your colleagues for ensuring compliance and good customer communications and service.

Interesting reports from several agencies discussing the increase in PRA’s coming into agencies and the sometimes “mountainous” level of effort to respond to them. Suggestions on practices and the need for procedures.

Luncheon

The Big Reveal

Speaker: Tesla Foundation: Blazing the Trail for Water Sustainability and Innovation - Transition to Industry 4.0

As we transition from the Information Age to the Age of Autonomy, we are in a moment that enables us to connect massive amounts of data and hyper connectivity to our physical world. As a science + technology think tank, Tesla Foundation's focus on autonomous systems + aerial robotics may enable water management to innovate + efficiently develop water sustainability platforms. Hear how this cutting edge foundation is leading the way and what we can learn.

Keynote Speaker:

Keith Coleman, EVP Public Policy and Chief Strategy Officer, TESLA Foundation

A cool presentation about an alarming trend.

Attorney's Program – “Drought, Conservation Pricing, and the Law”

A panel of speakers will consider the tension between the need to conserve water and constitutional provisions that limit the ability of agencies to utilize conservation pricing. We will delve into case law and discuss methodologies for designing rates that both encourage conservation and comply with the constitution. Learn about how public agencies are thinking about this tension

Rather liked this one. Good info and some painful as well as successful experiences. If we have trouble with our ongoing rate-change, this session may help.

Legal Committee Meeting

One of my favorite meetings. Again though, no one from the SWRCB attended. The major business and discussion was regarding several requests for assistance again.

Thursday

Water Industry Trends Program - Stormwater as a Resource: Opportunities and Challenges

Californians are increasingly looking to utilize stormwater as a valuable source of water supply. The implementation of strategies to optimize the use of stormwater, however, presents unique technical, financial and legal challenges. Learn more about the opportunities and challenges that stormwater capture and utilization projects present for water agencies and other water managers.

Moderator:

Cindy Paulson, Executive Director, California Urban Water Agencies

Panelists:

Newsha Ajami, Director of Urban Water Policy, Water in the West, Stanford University

Alexandra Paxton, Program Manager/ Attorney, Water Foundation

David Pettijohn, Director of Water Resources, Department of Water & Power, City of Los Angeles

Robert Shaver, General Manager, Alameda County Water District

Wanted to attend this one to learn more about this topic as stormwater is increasingly an important element in regional water planning, if not on our mountain. Several good presentations.

Luncheon

Keynote: Mary Nichols, Chair, California Air Resources Board

Collaboration in Times of Changing Climate

An important topic regarding how water agencies participate and plan within California's aggressive Climate Change policies and goals, I nonetheless found Ms Nichols speech relatively unmoving. Essentially, it was, "We're leading on Climate Change in California with aggressive policies on Cap and Trade, EPA, GHG emissions policies. We've got to work together and I know you will even if it's hard."

Statewide Issues Panel: Framework for Long-term Urban Water Conservation Policy

The Governor’s Exec Order B-37-16 directs the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board to develop a “framework” for long-term urban water conservation policy that will help make water conservation “a California Way of Life”

Moderator:

Jim Peifer, Principal Engineer City of Sacramento; Chair, ACWA Water Use Efficiency Subcommittee

Panelists:

David Eggerton, General Manager, Calaveras County Water Agency

Paul Jones, General Manager, Eastern Municipal Water District

Dana Frieauf, Water Resources Manager, San Diego County Water Authority

Cindy Tuck, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, ACWA

A very important topic and one that all panelists scrambled on, because the report came out late and last minute. Nonetheless, an excellent overview, highlighting several challenges that ACWA will be commenting on.

Region 9 Business Meeting

My second Regional meeting as a new board member. As usual, it consisting primarily of reports and updates from region members on various ACWA business and committee activities during the convention. With several Region 9 committee reps not there, I reported on the Membership, Local Government, and Legal Committee activities.

James and I raised the issue of how we can encourage more engagement and “meat” in these meetings, as well as during the hiatus between conferences. There was some good discussion, but it did not result in any action.

A question about our Regional bylaw requirement to alternate Chairmanship between arid and Valley areas was brought up on the agenda and explored but again did not result in any action.

I will be attending the next Regional Board meeting when it is scheduled sometime in January.

Friday**ACWA’s Hans Doe Past Presidents’ Breakfast in Partnership with ACWA/JPIA)****“After the Election: WHAT NOW?”**

As the dust settles on the 2016 elections, come hear what political insiders have to say about the results

Most were still in shock as few truly expected Trump to win. Key points were how important it will be to educate Kamala Harris about California water issues, and of course the Trump administration. With Trump’s promise of infrastructural investment, it was noted that water infrastructure is not among the elements. Takeaway: ALWAYS say “California’s Water Infrastructure”, and not just “California Water”.