



# The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

June 2007

## Responsible Landscaping Grows at County

### Drought tolerant, fire resistant plants eyed for parks, libraries, roads

*Serving the Cities of:*  
El Cajon  
La Mesa  
Lemon Grove  
Poway  
Santee

*Serving the communities of:*  
Agua Caliente  
Allied Gardens  
Alpine  
Barrett  
Blossom Valley  
Bostonia  
Boulevard  
Campo  
Canebrake  
Casa de Oro  
Crest  
Cuyamaca  
Dehesa  
Del Cerro  
Descanso  
Dulzura  
Eucalyptus Hills  
Fernbrook  
Flinn Springs  
Granite Hills  
Grantville  
Guatay  
Harbison Canyon  
Jacumba  
Jamul  
Julian  
Lake Morena  
Lakeside  
Mount Helix  
Pine Hills  
Pine Valley  
Potrero  
Ramona  
Rancho San Diego  
Rolando  
San Carlos  
San Pasqual  
Santa Ysabel  
Shelter Valley  
Spring Valley  
Tecate  
Tierra del Sol  
Vallecitos  
Wynola

*Serving the Indian Reservations of:*  
Barona  
Campo  
Cosmit  
Cuyapaipe  
Inaja  
Jamul  
La Posta  
Manzanita  
Mesa Grande  
Santa Ysabel  
Sycuan  
Viejas

Trees, bushes and groundcover that help conserve water and can actually slow the spread of fire? Such species really do exist and a great many are native to California.

County supervisors think these water-wise, fire-wise plants should become a routine part of future landscaping efforts and voted unanimously last month to explore mandating responsible landscaping at all new County facilities, including active parks, libraries and County maintained roadways and medians.

Spearheading the effort was Supervisor Jacob who teamed up with Vice Chairman Greg Cox. While it's true that dwindling water supplies and catastrophic wildfire are constant concerns in semi-arid San Diego County, Supervisor Jacob has grave concerns about the lingering drought in the Western United States.

Up to 90 percent of the San Diego region's water is imported from the Colorado River and Northern California. The Colorado River Basin, which supplies one-third of Southern California's drinking water, is suffering through its eighth consecutive year of drought, say concerned

officials from the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, which manages the river.

The California Department of Water Resources reports that the water content in the Sierra Nevada snowpack is at its lowest level in nearly 20 years, less than 40 percent of usual. At less than four inches to date, the seasonal rainfall total in San Diego County is less than a third of normal.

Normal to date is 10.43 inches.

There is absolutely no question that water conservation is the order of the summer.

Where water seems scarce, the threat of fire is more extreme than ever. Years of drought and a massive bark beetle infestation have raised

the threat of catastrophic wildfire in local forests and other rural areas, warns Cal Fire.

In the wake of the 2003 Cedar and Paradise fires, the County secured millions of dollars to remove dead trees from fire prone areas. Despite the removal of some 500,000 trees, the fire threat remains alarmingly high.

This year, fire officials are reminding all homeowners, particularly those in fire prone areas, to clear 100 feet of defensible space around homes and other structures. As many homeowners learned during the 2003 fires, defensible space dramatically increases a structure's chances of surviving a wildfire.

Like defensible space, fire officials are encouraging property owners to landscape

**An estimated 60 percent of residential water in San Diego County is used for outdoor landscape irrigation.**



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### Landscaping

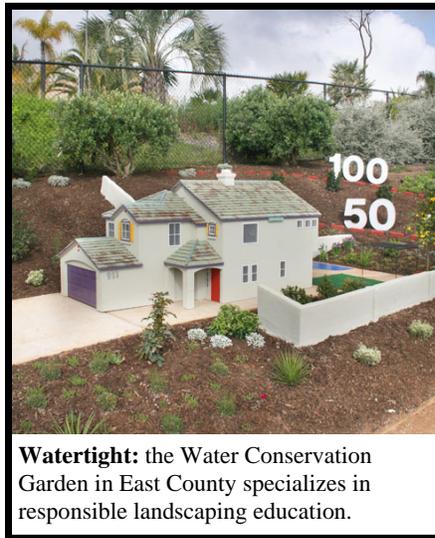
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using fire resistant vegetation, particularly native and California-friendly plants.

The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College is fast proving itself a tremendous local resource when it comes to saving water. In partnership with the San Miguel Fire Protection District, the garden recently unveiled a new Fire-wise Garden designed to educate homeowners about fire resistant landscaping.

In addition to showcasing drought tolerant and fire resistant landscaping, the fire-wise exhibit is helping residents learn that keeping plants pruned and maintained is an important fire protection tool.

Other fire and water-wise gardening tools include keeping low-growing plants within 30



**Watertight:** the Water Conservation Garden in East County specializes in responsible landscaping education.

feet of structures, removing dead and dying vegetation, properly spacing plants and using efficient irrigation methods.

Supervisor Jacob believes the County can and should seize the opportunity to employ these same plants and practices when landscaping public projects.

With an estimated 60 percent of residential water in the region

used for outdoor landscape irrigation, a water-wise and fire-wise County government will undoubtedly save water and has the very real potential to save taxpayer dollars by cutting down on landscaping costs.

It might also save lives.

## Energy Corridor is Unfair Power Grab

San Diego Gas and Electric is attempting an end run around California's transmission line permitting process by seeking to include the route of its controversial Sunrise Powerlink as a "National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor," Supervisor Jacob told federal energy officials at recent hearing.

The special designation would give federal regulators the power to step in and overrule the State if Sunrise is rejected. The California Public Utilities Commission is expected to rule on the project early in 2008.

"The Department of Energy should not steal energy transmission planning from the hands of California stakeholders and pile on yet another layer of costly, duplicative, bureaucratic review," Jacob said.

"The Department should consider disturbing questions surrounding the case for Sunrise, questions that negate the need for the Corridor Designation for San Diego County," Jacob said.



**Fired up:** Supervisor Jacob celebrates the arrival of new trucks alongside with rural fire officials.

## New Trucks Improve Rural Fire Protection

The summer fire season is heating up and rural fire agencies are better prepared with new fire trucks gifted by the County. Thanks to a decision by the Board of Supervisors to purchase the equipment, the \$4.2 million in trucks and tankers were presented to fire agencies by Supervisors Jacob and Bill Horn late last month.

The County of San Diego is moving aggressively to protect its communities from wildfires and the new trucks demonstrate the County's commitment to fire protection and its willingness to allocate general fund dollars to provide equipment to struggling agencies.



## County Earns Top Honors from Taxpayers Association



The San Diego County Taxpayers Association has an excellent reputation for highlighting efficient government and opposing unnecessary new taxes and fees. Once a year, the organization lets

it hair down at its annual Golden Watchdog and Golden Fleece awards, a spirited night that praises cost-conscious projects and condemns wasteful spending.

This year, the County of San Diego took home the Grand Golden Watchdog Award for its 2006 retiree health benefits proposal. The proposal, crafted by Supervisor Jacob and Supervisor Pam Slater-Price seeks to control runaway retiree health care costs and is estimated to save County taxpayers \$1.2 billion.

## Stellar News for County Finances

Fitch Ratings has upgraded County's bond rating to AA from AA-, giving high praise to the County's long-term credit situation. The rating upgrade, "is based on the County's positive financial trend, marked by consistent operating surpluses and resulting high fund balances, disciplined pension system funding, and positive actions to limit other post-employment benefits costs, sound underlying economy and conservative debt

management," the folks at Fitch announced. The trusted ratings service specifically noted the County's retiree healthcare proposal as a factor in the ratings upgrade.



## Cool Zones are Hot Spots



Hot weather can sneak up on you. Several hot days in a row can sap your energy. As you get older, your body is not as efficient in letting you know that you've had too much heat. Your body's ability to cool itself off with sweat decreases. If

your body can't cool down, it overheats like a pressure cooker.

Because of the danger that heat can bring to older adults, Supervisor Jacob created Cool Zones, designated sites where people can come to cool off during the hottest hours of the hottest days. The program, launched back in 2001, includes electric fans for homebound, low-income seniors, plus printed tips about staying cool.

This year, the Cool Zone program received a national award from the American Society on Aging, recognizing its benefits to the health of older adults and the fact that the program is easy to replicate in other cities and counties.



## Coffee and Conversation

Got ideas to make Rancho San Diego a better place?  
Join Supervisor Jacob at an informal community coffee!

**Friday, June 29, 2007 at 8:30 a.m.**

**Rancho San Diego Library  
11555 Via Rancho San Diego**

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We hope to hear from you soon!

June 07

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