Earth Day 2013
Building Sustainable Communities

Which Three Inland Area Cities Are Leading The Way?
ONE DAY SALE

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Cover Art

VOICE Creative Director Chris Allen designed this collage for our first sustainable cities issue celebrating Earth Day 2013.

point of view

Riverside-based Toro Company reminds residents to be “Waterwise” to reduce their environmental footprint while Southern California Edison presents tips to reduce home energy use during the summer.

Building Sustainable Communities:

Corona, Fontana & Riverside…meet the Inland cities that are doing “green” right

inland places

Writer and Inland expert Laura Klure revisits the Riverside Metropolitan Museum

ie people

Meet San Bernardino’s Dr. Imran Farooq, the architect of an innovative public-private partnership solution for the housing crisis

publisher’s note

Paulette Brown-Hinds, PhD

I have a confession to make. And please don’t be offended. Don’t email me or Tweet me or leave comments on my Facebook page. Don’t call to tell me just how wasteful and inconsiderate I am. I am well aware of the magnitude of my bad behavior. I know I have a bad habit. I know because it’s something I’ve struggled with for years. Although I’ve tried, I just haven’t been successful…I don’t recycle.

Now before you make any judgments or reach for your smart phone to berate me and my environmentally negligent behavior, please understand I have every intention of recycling those reusable items that make their way into my home and office – papers, bottles, cans - anything that can be legitimately placed in the blue bin and left on the curb to be reclaimed, restored, or repurposed.

A few years ago my husband, in an effort to help me kick the habit, purchased a special waste container just for our recyclables. It has helped. At least when I’m in the kitchen, I crush soda cans and throw them in there instead of the trash can. I put plastic bottles and bags in there. And if I happen to be reading the newspaper at the dining room table – which by the way I rarely do – I toss the stack in there when I’m finished as well.

I guess my problem is that I’m not consistent. Unless it’s convenient, I can’t be trusted to do the right thing and always separate the garbage from the recyclables.

So as our team worked on this week’s issue and I read more about the commitment our local cities are making to develop consistent and substantial sustainable practices, I am inspired. I am inspired to work at developing new habits. I made a promise to myself to make the effort to practice sustainability. I’ll recycle more. I’ll encourage my family and staff to reduce their energy use. I’ll reduce my own energy footprint. I am now even more determined to be an environmentally conscious citizen.

If you suffer from the same condition, I encourage you to join me this Earth Day, April 22 in pledging to break the habit of environmental indifference. Start small. Turn off lights when leaving the room. Turn down the thermostats in your home or office. Install low-flow showerheads inside your home and efficient spray nozzles in your yard. Carpool. And of course, recycle.

Until next week…

@mygoldenstate
Norma Torres For 32nd District Senate Seat

With the election of Gloria Negrete McLeod to the 35th Congressional District, her former state senate seat became vacant and as of Monday, early voting began to fill this vacancy. On the ballot for the position are Assembly Member Norma Torres (D) of Pomona and Paul Leon (R) of Ontario.

Both individuals have local government experience - serving on city council and serving as mayor of their respective cities. Torres has additionally served her district well as a member of the state assembly since 2008.

While both candidates have similar backgrounds at the local government level, in my opinion the edge would go to Torres with her Assembly experience. And with the Democrats in control of the Senate, Assembly and executive branch of our government, she will have a greater chance of being heard in bringing our regions issues to the top of the state’s agenda.

I know Torres will continue in the fine tradition of female senators that started with Nell Soto and continued with Negrete McLeod. In her current position Torres serves on the Economic Development and Job Creation Committee, Housing & Community Development Committee, and the Banking & Finance Committee. She has the full support of labor unions and the Democratic Party.

The 32nd Senate District serves the communities of San Bernardino, Rialto, Fontana, Ontario, Colton, Montclair, Bloomington, Muscoy and Pomona. So citizens living in these cities must exercise their civic duty and vote.

Our district is in great need of good paying jobs that will sustain families above the poverty level. Our local cities need help recovering from current financial hardships. Our educational institutions are in need of attention and Torres will help with that as well.

I am recommending that the voters in the 32nd Senate District vote and elect Norma Torres.
Child Abuse Prevention Walk Draws 600 Feet

San Bernardino

Three hundred community members came together for an important cause, the awareness and prevention of child abuse as well as to get some physical activity in honor of Child Abuse Awareness Month earlier this month.

Organized by the Court Appointed Special Advocates (C.A.S.A.) of San Bernardino County and Youth Action Project (YAP), the 6th Annual Run for Child Abuse and Violence Prevention and Awareness held at Glen Helen Park offered participants the option of walking or running 3K or 5K.

The event is aimed at bringing together people in the San Bernardino community and surrounding areas in support of child advocacy, civic engagement and social justice. In 2011, there were almost 60,000 cases of child abuse in San Bernardino County. The estimated cost of investigation and reporting costs for child abuse cases across the country is $24 billion per year.

The two organizations, C.A.S.A. of San Bernardino County and Youth Action Project, work hard throughout the year to combat these statistics. The Court Appointed Special Advocates work to improve the quality of life for foster youth and juvenile offenders with stable and consistent advocacy and mentoring through trained volunteers. Youth Action Project works to empower San Bernardino’s youth by developing the skills and habits needed for economic and social success.

Sponsors of the event included: Children and Family Services of San Bernardino County, The California Endowment, Union Bank, San Bernardino Community College District, Nestlé Waters, and Road ID.

For more information about the event, visit C.A.S.A.ofsb.org/events. To show support for Child Abuse Awareness Month, C.A.S.A. is asking community members to wear a blue ribbon for the rest of the month of April.

Clark Named CSUSB Chief Diversity Officer

San Bernardino

Longtime Cal State San Bernardino administrator J. Milton Clark, who is currently the university’s associate vice president for undergraduate studies, will also serve in the newly created position of chief diversity officer, CSUSB President Tomás D. Morales recently announced.

In his additional role, in which he will serve on an interim basis, Clark will assist students, faculty and staff and will work collaboratively with appropriate campus groups and offices to ensure the university is responsive to any and all issues of discrimination from members of the campus community.

In addition, he will work with legal counsel to ensure that the campus is in full compliance with all state and federal regulations with respect to diversity and inclusiveness.

“Cal State San Bernardino is among the most highly diverse campuses in the nation, and we serve a region which is changing demographically,” said Morales. “Diversity in all its manifestations and at all levels of the university will strengthen our university community.

Clark said that he has been blessed to be able to serve students who have come from backgrounds like his. “I know how powerful an impact being welcomed and valued in a place like Cal State San Bernardino can be for our students. In this new role, I can continue to help open doors and make our institution an even better place

continued on page 6
Riverside

What do you get when you combine developers, attorneys, city councilmembers, government agencies and a congressman in the same room? A Celebration! Or at least that was the case for the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice’s Tribute Luncheon. More than 110 people gathered at Indian Hills Country Club to see this unusual and unlikely crowd come together. Honorary Host for the event was Congressman Mark Takano who spoke about the long history of CCAEJ and the model they have set in bringing such a diverse group of interests together to find solutions. The emcee was Dr. Imran Farooq, a former student at Jurupa Valley High School and now the CEO of Omnibus Group that works to build sustainable communities.

The first awards were to recognize the groundbreaking settlement on the Mira Loma Commerce Center. The agreement outlines a series of major actions that will greatly reduce the impacts from the projects in the area. CCAEJ recognized all those that made the settlement possible.

CA Black Chamber Recognizes Rialto Mayor

Sacramento

The California Black Chamber of Commerce Foundation (CBCCF) will honor prestigious African-American leaders and living legends during its African-American Leadership Weekend, April 26-28 at the Hilton Hotel in Sacramento. Rialto Mayor Deborah Robertson will be one of two honorees. Mayor Robertson’s dedicated service as a government leader, determined to include diverse business opportunity as applied policy, made her a top pick for the CBCCF honor.

Robertson governs an ethnically diverse community of nearly 100,000 people located in the center of the Inland Empire. She is one of a few African-American mayors in California and has shown commitment to community service and civic leadership.

The African-American Leadership Conference is a three-day forum of national, social, political and economic leaders, providing in-depth analysis of the status of the African American community in California.

“We share the goals of these honorees to revitalize minority communities,” said Aubry Stone of the California Black Chamber of Commerce Foundation. “We will work closely with them to develop positive solutions and remove barriers to growth in the Black community.”
Ray Johnson, attorney for CCAEJ, received the Community Champion Award for representing community organizations throughout the area from Friends of Riverside’s Hills, Sierra Club, Save our China Town Committee and even representing Temecula residents in their long battle against Liberty Quarry.

Certificates were presented to CCAEJ’s Task Force members Steven John, Director of the Southern California Office of U.S. EPA Region 9; and Sarah Morrison Deputy Attorney General who did the actual negotiations for the settlement. Mira Loma residents that developed the platform upon which the settlement was based were also recognized.

Corporate Good Neighbor Awards went to Obayashi Corporation that played a significant role in making the settlement a reality. Other developers that have stepped forward to work with the community to make their projects meet community needs included: Alan Sharp, IDI; Randall Lewis, Lewis Group of Companies; and Brandon Birtcher of Goodman Birtcher.

Two special awards were presented to Betty Stinson and Cindy Newman for the service to CCAEJ and the community for more than 20 years.

In closing Dr. Farooq commented on the model developed by CCAEJ of reaching out to all segments of the community—residents, businesses, workers and city government in order to identify all concerns and find comprehensive solutions. As the Attorney General said in announcing the settlement, this is “a model for local governments, developers and communities” trying to balance the need for industrial development with residents’ rights to breathe clean air.
Earth Day reminds us to look for ways to reduce our environmental footprint

Free nozzle program helps local homeowners become water wise while cutting water bills

By Mike Baron

As we live our lives each day, we often overlook how we affect this place we all call home. Earth Day, April 22, is a reminder to take a closer look at the concerns we face and find ways to reduce our environmental footprint.

During these recessionary times, we’ve all become more accustomed to watching where we spend every penny, and for many, “going green” is simply too expensive. But what most people don’t realize is that in many cases holding onto inefficient products will cost you much more long-term than upgrading to eco-friendly options available today.

Today, the average household uses roughly 93,000 gallons of water each year, and nearly half of that precious water is wasted. With waste and limited resources the cost of water in Southern California has increased approximately 96 percent since 2006, raising the average water bill to historically high levels. Significant population growth, environmental legislation, variable weather conditions and dependence on imported water have increased the pressure on regional water resources; making it imperative to reduce the per-capita consumption of water.

And while there has been a lot of hype around “water wise” appliances and fixtures, a quick upgrade of your sprinkler nozzles will go much further in lowering water use and reducing water bills.

In Southern California and specifically the Inland Empire, 50 to 70 percent of annual residential household water consumption is used outdoors, on lawns and gardens. What is even more staggering is that the average sprinkler system wastes 40 to 50 percent of the water dispersed in overwatering and runoff because of high-flow spray nozzles. But recent breakthroughs in spray nozzle technology have made these small devices much more water wise.

Most homeowners don’t realize that they are using the old “gas guzzler” of spray nozzles, rather than the new, more efficient “hybrid” models that are available today. High-efficiency spray nozzles are one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to cut down outdoor water use without compromising the look or health of your lawn, which is why many local water agencies are giving them away for free.

In a recent push to help residents cut water waste and protect local water resources, water agencies across the region have come together to offer a local program that provides homeowners free vouchers to exchange their high-flow spray nozzles for more efficient, lower-flow models for free.

If you are looking for a way to participate in Earth Day this year, you can join The TORO Company at the 6th annual Earth Night in the Garden organized by Western Municipal Water District where they will be turning residents into water-wise advocates by providing education about water efficiency and the nozzle program. The free community event will be held on Earth Day, April 22 at the Landscapes Southern California Style Water Efficiency Garden, 450 E. Alessandro Blvd. in Riverside from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. All local families are invited to come learn about the nozzle program and see Toro demonstrate the new technology and how to install them.

Attendees interested in the program will receive one free spray nozzle to take home and use as a guide to determine which nozzles they need when they sign up for the program online. The first 10 people who sign up for the program within two weeks of the event and call the main number will receive a free installation of their nozzles.
Join Your Community in Saving Energy This Summer

The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station near San Clemente, Calif., historically has been the region’s most reliable source of electricity and plays a critical role in the reliability of the state’s grid. With the nuclear plant offline, SCE is working to ensure reliability this summer. Last summer, mild weather and conservation efforts of our customers — as well as accelerating transmission projects and targeted customer conservation programs — helped Southern California Edison (SCE) maintain a reliable grid with the San Onofre nuclear plant offline.

While there appears to be enough resources throughout the state to cover expected summer demand and offset the lost power from the San Onofre nuclear plant, if the greater Los Angeles basin experiences extreme weather conditions or transmission emergencies, there may be insufficient local resources to reliably serve all electricity demand.

SCE hopes that all Nuclear Regulatory Commission procedures to safely restart Unit 2 can be completed without delay, in time to meet summer demand. Meanwhile, SCE is expanding its transmission, customer conservation programs and community outreach efforts.

Why the San Onofre Nuclear Plant is Important
San Onofre can generate 2,200 megawatts of power — enough to meet the needs of 1.4 million homes.

Additionally, the plant offers a number of benefits to the state and to the electricity grid, including:
• Producing virtually emission-free energy.
• Helping meet the state’s air quality standards to reduce greenhouse gases.
• Generating power 24/7.
• Proving a secure fuel source.

Both units at the San Onofre nuclear plant are currently safely shut down. Unit 2 was taken out of service Jan. 9, 2012, for a planned outage, and Unit 3 was safely taken offline on Jan. 31, 2012, after station operators detected a leak in a steam generator tube.


For more information, please visit www.SONGScommunity.com.

Key Tips to Reduce Home Energy Use During the Summer

• Set thermostats no lower than 78 degrees.
• Use electric fans instead of air conditioning, when practical.
• Turn off unused appliances and equipment.
• Turn off lights when leaving a room.
• Avoid using evaporative coolers or humidifiers when air conditioning is running.
• Operate swimming pool equipment and energy-intensive appliances, such as dishwashers, washing machines and dryers, during early morning or evening hours.
• Limit the opening and reopening of refrigerators, which are major users of electricity in most homes.
SAN BERNARDINO JOB FAIR
April 19, 2013
San Bernardino County Probation Job and Resource Fair. 10 am – 2 pm. A one-stop opportunity to meet and hire workers to fill full and part-time hourly and salaried positions. Admission, parking, and lunch are FREE. Location: San Bernardino County Behavior Health Building – Auditorium, 850 E. Foothill Avenue, Rialto, CA 92376. For more information, please email Mark Ling at mling@wdd.sbccounty.gov or visit www.csb-win.org.

INLAND EMPIRE WALK FOR WISHES
April 20, 2013
Inland Empire Walk for Wishes. 8 am – 12 pm. Location: Castle Park, 3500 Polk Street, Riverside. Cost: $25.00 registration fee. This day of celebration features a World of Wishes Festival, a family-fun walk and inspiration for all! To register, go to http://walkforwishes2013ie.kintera.org.

MS WALK 2013 AT CITIZENS BUSINESS BANK ARENA
April 20, 2013
Walk MS 2013. 9:30 am. When you participate in Walk MS, the funds you raise give hope to the more than 19,000 people living with MS in our local Southern California & Nevada communities. The dollars raised support life-changing programs and cutting-edge research. Route Length: 1 mile or 5k walk/run. Location: Citizens Business Bank Arena, 4000 East Ontario Center Parkway. Buy Tickets at axs.com! Event details axs.com!

BLUES CONCERT FEATURING ROBBIE KING AND TINA JACKSON
April 21, 2013

COLLEGE BOOT CAMP
April 22, 2013
Inland Empire College Boot Camp. 7:30 am – 3 pm. Providing resources and information to make your college journey successful! Event includes several breakout sessions designed specifically for service members, veterans, and military families. Admissions representatives from various Inland Empire colleges and universities will be in attendance. Location: Metropolitan University Village Cinema, 1200 University Avenue, Riverside, CA. Cost: Free. For more info, please visit: http://icollegebootcamp-eventful.eventbrite.com/r/eventful# April 27

GRID ALTERNATIVES INLAND EMPIRE CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH SOLAR INSTALLATION AND OPEN HOUSE
April 19, 2013
GRID Alternatives Inland Empire and their job trainees will be celebrating Earth Day 2013 with a Solar Installation and Open House for a hardworking Riverside/Jurupa Valley Family. In honor of the event, several city and state officials, as well as community dignitaries will be on hand, including special guest Senator Richard D. Roth. The event will take place on Friday, April 19th starting at 10:00 a.m. with the program beginning at 2:00 p.m. at 4213 Aero Lane Riverside, CA 92509

GRID Alternatives is a non-profit organization that brings the benefits of solar technology to low-income communities. Using a barn-raising model, GRID Alternatives leads teams of volunteers and job trainees to install solar power on qualifying homes, providing needed savings for families struggling to make ends meet while preparing workers for jobs in the fast-growing solar industry and cleaning our air. More than 1,000 California families have benefitted from the program to date, saving over $82 million in lifetime electricity costs, and more than 11,500 people have received hands-on solar installation experience. Here in the Inland Empire, over 360 families have been served to-date, for a combined lifetime savings of more than $12 million in electricity costs.

RIVERSIDE DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP HOSTS LUNCHEON MEETING
April 23, 2013
Al Zelinka, Community Development Director for the City of Riverside, will give an update on the Community Development departments and the formation of a downtown entertainment district as part of the Downtown Specific Plan at the next meeting of the Riverside Downtown Partnership, Tuesday, April 23rd at ProAbition (on the corner of 6th and Main in Downtown Riverside).

The Community Development departments include: City Planning; Building and Safety; Code Enforcement; Real Property Services; Infill and Reuse Development; Housing and Homeless Services; Neighborhood Planning and Reinvestment, and the Successor Agency (formerly Redevelopment).

LEUKEMIA AND LYMPHOMA SOCIETY FASHION FUNDRAISER
April 24, 2013
Survivor Strut. 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Models are cancer survivors and supporters and will be sporting hair, makeup and the avant garde stylings of Karen Allen Salons. All proceeds will benefit the Woman of the Year campaign for the Inland Empire candidate, Victoria Brodie, for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Tickets are $40. Location: Riverside City Hall, Grier Pavilion, Riverside, CA. For information contact victoria@womanoftheyear2013.org or visit www.facebook/womanoftheyear2013.

MONEY CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN
Saturday, April 27, 2013

FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER WORKSHOPS
April 27, 2013
Fair Housing Council of Riverside County, Inc. (FHCR) received an Education and Outreach Initiative (EOI) Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which enables FHCR to offer free workshops, seminars, presentations and Town Hall meetings throughout Riverside County.

FHCR conducts FREE First Time Homebuyer Workshops throughout the County of Riverside. Upcoming Workshops include:

April 27    English Riverside Habitat for Humanity
May 4 Spanish Riverside Habitat for Humanity
May 18 English Perris Senior Center
June 1 English Riverside Habitat for Humanity
June 22 Spanish Mecca Branch, Public Library

Classes are held on Saturdays and a certificate is issued to participants who complete the day-long workshop. If you are interested in attending one of our upcoming workshops, please call, FHRC, at 951-682-6581, TTY 1-800-735-2929. All sites are handicap accessible.

FHRC is now setting up our workshop schedule for the remainder of 2013, please contact FHRC if you would like to set up a workshop in your area of Riverside County. If you would like more information about this topic please call FHRC, (951) 682-6581, or email fhrc@fairhousing.net.

SB CHAPTER OF THE LINKS INCORPORATED SCHOLARSHIP BREAKFAST BALL
May 11, 2013
Join the San Bernardino Chapter of the Links Inc. May 11, 2013 for their 35th Scholarship Breakfast Ball at the Doubletree Hotel in Ontario.
They will honor 2013 high school seniors from San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Proceeds from the scholarship breakfast support Links programs including scholarships used to assist students in achieving their college education and career goals. Tickets are $45.00. Please call 909-875-0614 if you would like to attend the event. Since 1979, the organization has awarded over $350,000 in scholarships.

healthy living
with Dr. Ernest Levister F.A.C.P., F.A.C.P.M.
Caring For Aging Parents

Dear Dr. Levister: My family has been caring for our frail aging parents since 2010. We feel lost, angry, guilty and overwhelmed. Where can we go for help? B.E.

Dear B.E.: First, contact your county agency on aging. Arrange for a face to face discussion on caring for your parent.

Caring for our parents as they age is a job most of us shoulder willingly, yet with warring emotions. Despite our desire to repay the love they showed in raising us, the shifting dynamic of the parent-child relationship can spark feelings for which we are unprepared. For both generations, this is a complex passage—a time of burden and reward, of conflict and reconciliation, of frustration, fulfillment, and finality.

As baby boomers live longer, healthier lives, any assistance that is required typically becomes the children's responsibility. For many families, the discussion about who will take care of mom and dad comes on the heels of a crisis. As a result, most families find themselves unprepared to handle their parents' increased dependency.

More than 20 million in the U.S. alone provide care for an aging parent or in-law. What's more, families rather than institutions provide 80 percent of long-term care.

Learn to deal with the inevitable challenges that accompany this life transition.

Begin by openly discussing each person's role and responsibilities within the family structure. While care giving can be extremely stressful, sharing duties is a guaranteed way to ease the tension. Whatever distance family members live from one another, devise a care plan so everyone can be involved.

Addressing the sensitive topic of finances is also a must, as is compiling important personal and financial documents. Finally, take the time to evaluate how to build unity among siblings—in spite of the high potential for tension.

There's no question that many caregivers only find frustration and exhaustion. But with solid support and communication, caring for an aging parent can bring a renewed sense of love, compassion and tenderness into any family.
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

These three innovative cities are leading the way in creating, implementing & promoting substantial, sustainable and measurable strategies and preserving the local environment for future generations.

The first Earth Day celebration held April 22, 1970 is considered the birth of the modern environmental movement. The celebration forced the issue of environmental protection onto the national stage and led to the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency and passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts. It also mobilized the nation. Embracing the connection between the economy, the environment, and social responsibility, cities across the nation are now invested in finding long-term solutions to environmental protection and community sustainability. In the Inland Empire, we found three cities -- Riverside, Fontana, and Corona -- that are doing “green” right.

Riverside, An Innovator and Emerald City
Designated an “Emerald City” in 2009 the first in the state of California, the city of Riverside has gained a national reputation as a leader in developing and implementing sustainable strategies that have been embraced throughout all sectors of the community.

From using light-emitting diodes in all city traffic lights, to installing solar panels at its Utilities Operation Center to its Tree Power shade tree giveaway program, Riverside has been recognized for innovative and effective approaches to implementing renewable energy resources and greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

Awarded last week by the California Municipal Utilities Association, Riverside’s green programs continue to serve as a model for other cities to follow. The Whole House Program, which earned
Get Moving In Fontana, Building A Healthy City

Fontana City Council’s “Green Goal”, to preserve the local environment for generations to come and to create a healthy economic and environmental future, has led to the development of numerous sustainable programs. Like Riverside, the leaders of Fontana believe that success can only be achieved when all sectors of the community – government, business, community organizations, and residents – embrace environmentally conscious practices. In the city of Fontana, those practices include promoting healthy living as a basic quality of life choice.

Established in 2005, the nationally recognized Healthy Fontana program encourages healthy nutritional choices, promotes active living, and endorses Smart Growth to create a more livable and healthy community.

Fontana has also developed a pilot program “Green Fontana Energy Star” that features a $2,000 fee rebate to any builder that constructs a home that adheres to Energy Star standards. “My colleagues and I have been working with staff to provide a policy that will not only create jobs and generate economic growth, but create incentives for the builders with reduced fees to develop energy efficient homes that will serve our environmentally conscious community for years to come,” Mayor Acquanetta Warren said of the program. “We believe this is a model volunteer incentive program to emulate that serves as a win-win-win solution for the residents of Fontana, the local economy, and the environment.”

Substantial, Sustainable & Measurable, Corona’s Green Strategy

With over 35 waste recycling programs for residents, businesses, and schools, in 2012, Corona residents have been effective in recycling and diverting over 60 million pounds (30,369 tons) of waste, 95,775 pounds of household hazardous waste collected and 35,080 pounds of e-waste recycled.

All three cities subscribe to the belief that education is key. Corona’s outreach efforts focus on educating residents on recycling and energy efficiency. Internally, the city’s green strategies are required to be substantial, sustainable and measurable.

“A few years ago, the city began a ‘20% by 2020’ campaign to encourage our residents and businesses to reduce their water consumption by 20% by 2020 or sooner,” explained Carolina Torres, a management analyst with the city. “To help our consumers reduce their water usage, the Corona Department of Water and Power offers a number of programs at little to no cost such as “landscape check-ups” to check [residents'] property for sprinkler leaks and irrigation timing, turf removal programs, and even landscape classes to teach them what types of plants are drought-resistant as well as beautiful for their yard.”

To launch this new program, the city will host a grand opening of their California-Friendly Demonstration Garden at City Hall on April 27. This garden was designed and built to save water and educate residents and visitors about California-friendly landscaping.
Omnitrans’ Journey: 100 Million CNG Miles
Compressed Natural Gas Bus Fleet Contributes to Clean Air

San Bernardino

This month, Omnitrans buses will surpass the 100 million mile mark in CNG miles traveled. That’s like driving from here to the sun, and then some.

The journey began in 1997 with the arrival of Omnitrans’ first CNG buses. Omnitrans led the way in the transition from diesel fuel to compressed natural gas, adopting the clean fuel technology years before South Coast Air Quality Management District regulations mandated the switch for transit fleets. By 2009, the entire transit agency’s fleet of 160 buses was running on clean-burning natural gas.

“Omnitrans helps keep the San Bernardino Valley clean and green by using alternative fuels to reduce harmful emissions,” said Omnitrans CEO/General Manager Milo Victoria. Natural gas buses release 88% less particulate matter per passenger mile than traditionally fueled diesel buses.

CNG fuel is also more economical. “Natural gas fuel prices have stayed about the same since we started,” said Maintenance Director Jack Dooley, “however diesel fuel costs have consistently risen over time.” Currently Omnitrans pays about $1.30 per gallon for natural gas compared to diesel at about $4.00 per gallon. The United States has abundant natural gas resources, which provides low cost reliability.

Safety is another advantage of CNG, compared to petroleum based fuels, which are highly toxic and contain known carcinogens. Natural gas is nontoxic, dissipates harmlessly into the atmosphere if released and leaves no residue, making for a cleaner and safer working environment for mechanics.

“Natural gas propulsion is becoming mainstream in commercial vehicle fleets,” said Dooley. Omnitrans uses about 2.1 million gallons of natural gas annually.

The newest additions to the Omnitrans CNG fleet are 60-foot, articulated vehicles for the sbX bus rapid transit line set to launch in 2014. They are the first CNG-powered, 5-door transit coaches ever manufactured for a United States transit agency and thus required rigorous industry testing. The 5-door configuration is needed to serve both curb-side and center-street stations now under construction in San Bernardino and Loma Linda.

To celebrate 100 million CNG miles, Omnitrans plans special activities during this month including a chance to win a $100 retail gift card and 100 days of free bus rides. Contestants are asked where they would go and who they would take along on a 100 million mile journey. For more information go to: www.omnitrans.org
Omnitrans’ Journey: 100 Million CNG Miles

Omnitrans Clean & Green Contest

Since this month Omnitrans will surpass 100 million CNG miles! Help them celebrate in their Clean & Green contest by visiting the Omnitrans website: http://www.omnitrans.org/blog/2013/04/09/enter-to-win-our-grand-prize-drawing/ before April 25th. Entry forms are also available in the Connections passenger newsletter. You could be their Grand Prize Winner!
Minority Business Development Agency Hosts Financing Forum
Los Angeles
Southern California minority business owners have an opportunity to learn the benefits of correctly and creatively structuring M&A and corporate financing transactions at the upcoming Innovative Financing Alternatives Forum held by the Minority Business Development Agency on April 26, 2013 at the University of Southern California campus.

Hunter Wise Financial Group, LLC CEO, Fred G. Jager, will be the keynote speaker. Mr. Jager, with over three decades of industry experience, is a prominent figure in middle-market corporate finance. He is a nationally known investment banking speaker, and has authored over 450 published articles on mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, and corporate finance.

The Minority Business Development Agency, a US Department of Commerce agency, helps create and maintain jobs by promoting the growth and global competitiveness of businesses owned and operated by members of the minority and Diaspora communities through its national network of more than 40 business centers and domestic and international strategic partners.

For more information email fjager@hunterwise.com.

Solar Project in Mojave Desert Seeks Diverse Contractors
Abeinsa EPC, the constructor for the Mojave Solar Project is seeking qualified and certified diverse firms (minority, woman, disabled veteran-owned, and disadvantaged small businesses) interested in submitting bids for ongoing construction service and product needs.

Being constructed by Abeinsa EPC, the Mojave Solar Project is a solar thermal power facility on 1,755 acres of land near the city of Hinkley, CA in the Mojave Desert. The project is being constructed for Abengoa Solar, a global leader in planning and designing high-capacity solar energy facilities for municipal and private energy service providers. The 250 MW plant should complete construction in 2014. The facility will generate steam in solar steam generators, which will expand through a steam turbine generator to produce electrical power from twin, independently operable solar fields, each supplying 125-MW (net) power islands. Once operational the plant will generate enough power for more than 88,000 households and will prevent the emission of over 350,000 metric tons of CO2 a year.

Abeinsa EPC is currently interested in engaging subcontractors who offer the following services/products:

• Mechanical assembly
• Piping insulation
• Mechanical equipment insulation
• Supply of instruments: pressure gauge, pressure transmitter, thermometer, level indicators, pressure switch, etc.
• Electrical tracing of piping
• Platforms and structures: manufacturing, supplying, installations, erection
• Foundations (concrete works)
• Electrical and instrumentation assembly
• Mechanical assembly of piping and equipment ( tanks, pumps, vessels, etc.)

Please forward inquiries to: Bruce Van Malkenhorst, Abeinsa EPC at diversityprogram@abeinsaepc.abengoa.com.
Champions for Justice

The Fair Housing Council of Riverside County held its 11th Annual Champions for Justice Awards at the Riverside Municipal Auditorium last week. The event recognizes efforts of those who work to improve the lives of residents in the Riverside region. Champions honored were Arthur Littleworth, Tom Schultz, Riverside County District Attorney Paul Zellerbach, and John Start. Dr. Lulamae Clemons was recognized for Lifetime Achievement. The Poly, Ramona, North, and King High Interact Clubs were acknowledged as Champions on the Rise. The Fair Housing Council is a non-profit, HUD-approved organization that fights to protect the housing rights of all individuals. Since 1986, the organization has strived to ensure that all individuals will live free from unlawful housing practices and discrimination.

Photo by Michael Elderman

State of San Bernardino County

Hundreds of San Bernardino County stakeholders filled the Citizens Business Bank Arena to listen to Janice Rutherford, Chair of the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors. She presented an optimistic vision for the future of the largest county in the US. She also introduced the leadership team that will implement the Countywide Vision to improve the quality of life for county residents and create the foundation for a prosperous future. To get involved email: visionproject@sbcounty.gov.

Photo courtesy of SB County

African American Mental Health Coalition

The African American Mental Health Coalition recently celebrated the graduation of Community Mental Health Outreach Workers at the New Hope Family Life Center in San Bernardino. 1 - AAMHC President Linda Hart President, presented Precious Jewels awards to County Mental Health Commissioners Veatrice Jew and May Farr. 2 - Assembly member Cheryl Brown presents certificates to graduates.

Photos by John Coleman
Roaming Through the Riverside Metropolitan Museum

By Laura L. Klure

All the museums in Downtown Riverside are in interesting historic buildings. I hope you occasionally visit them all but the Riverside Metropolitan Museum (RMM) building has had a long history, involving three different types of service to society – located diagonally across from the Mission Inn, on the southeast corner of Mission Inn Avenue and Orange Street, it is currently presenting a variety of worthwhile exhibits.

The RMM building was constructed in 1912 and was originally used as a U.S. Post Office. The Riverside Police Department occupied most of the building from about 1945 until 1966, after which the entire building became the Riverside Municipal Museum (name changed to Metropolitan in recent years). My personal acquaintance with the building began when I worked briefly for the Riverside Police Department as a warrants clerk. That was back when the RPD had only one female officer, who worked as a Juvenile Detective. The ladies in the office sometimes had to do matron duty on nights or weekends, and my experiences included briefly watching kids or riding along with a woman the cops were taking somewhere. Times have changed since then.

The RMM is now a very respected showcase for history, nature, and culture. Current exhibits at RMM include a new one on “Telling Riverside’s Story in 50 Objects.” This is an unusual mix of items and photos from pre-history up to 1930, and I think folks will find at least something in it that they enjoy seeing. A display about “Native Americans of Southern California” features baskets, pottery, blankets, and other items. A large, very meaningful exhibit honors “Riverside’s Participation in American Wars,” with personal stories, uniforms, and memorabilia.

For families with young children, I think some of the most interesting things in the museum are the animals. On the main floor, in the exhibit about “Edmund C. Jaeger, Naturalist,” the animals are preserved, stuffed. But upstairs, in the Nature Lab, children can safely get close to turtles, lizards, a snake, various insects, and other live critters. The Nature Lab is open Tues.-Sat., 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

During April, special events are honoring Smithsonian Week, and free talks are being given related to the exhibit about California’s early, well-known naturalist, John Muir. On April 24, 3-5 p.m., visitors can learn about “Treasures of Yosemite.” On April 25, the 3-5 p.m. program is a botanical illustration demonstration, and from 7-8:30 p.m. there’s a talk about “To Reach Perfection – the Challenge of Botanical Illustration.” The speakers are experts visiting from the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C.

The RMM gift shop is selling copies of the 1997 booklet, “Our Families – Our Stories,” about the local African American community, for only 50 cents.

As you enter or leave the front of RMM, I recommend noticing the graceful statue of a lady on top of the vintage 1907 Women’s Christian Temperance Union fountain, which is on the sidewalk.

For details about RMM programs, see www.riversideca.gov/museum, or phone (951) 826-5273.
who declares as true, information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime.)

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For advertising opportunities, contact Lee Ragin at 951.682.6070
What has been the impact of your community development efforts?

It began as a modest grassroots initiative to develop a neighborhood revitalization model but nonprofit, HomeStrong USA, has made a profound impact to acquire, rehabilitate and sell over 500 foreclosure properties to owner occupied and low to moderate income families. HomeStrong USA’s mission is to increase the vitality and stability of communities by promoting successful homeownership through education and counseling. I have now shifted my focus towards homeowner preservation and collaboratively developed a successful national pilot program that has acquired 287 loans in 40 states. Our objective is to restructure the distressed mortgages and make them truly sustainable to prevent foreclosures.

What were some unexpected surprises in your journey?

I am grateful to the USC Center for Economic Development because they created opportunities for me to present our policy ideas to conferences and it is a testament to the positive influence that our region can have.

Why did you focus your neighborhood revitalization efforts in the Inland Empire?

It was personal because I was born and raised here. The region has also been disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis so it has been a great opportunity to make a difference. I am proud that all of our national efforts originated locally hosted by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. In 2012, the Greenlining Institute invited me to share our project in individual meetings with key officials like Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke, FDIC Chairman Gruenberg and others. I had not originally planned to connect with any of these federal stakeholders so it was definitely serendipitous.

What advice do you have for people that are going through challenges with their mortgages?

Please contact your local HUD approved counseling agency for free access to information about your options and available government programs. You can visit www.MakingHomeAffordable.gov or also call 1-888-995-HOPE (4673). These are the best resources to avoid scams and get the most support for distressed borrowers.

Dr. Imran Farooq is a Partner at The Omnius Group, a Southern California based Economic Development firm that specializes in public-private partnerships. His project on revitalizing neighborhoods is the subject of a PBS documentary SOS: Sustaining Our Society. In 2013, Dr. Farooq was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to the California Workforce Investment Board and he is actively involved in the community serving in several local positions including: chair of the Western Region Committee for County of Riverside Workforce Investment Board, Board of Directors for Building Industry Association – Baldy View and Founding Board member of the Inland Empire chapter of the US Green Building Council. Dr. Farooq received his Bachelor’s Degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and his Master’s Degree and Doctorate in Policy, Planning and Development from the University of Southern California. Reach him at imran.f@omniusgrp.com

Dr. Imran Farooq, Partner, The Omnius Group on Neighborhood Sustainability

Inland Empire resident Dr. Imran Farooq witnessed the housing crisis and subsequent destruction of neighborhoods in his community and instead of just seeing bank-owned homes, foreclosure signs and blight he saw an opportunity to engage residents, community stakeholders and private investors. He partnered with then Assembly member Wilmer Amina Carter whose district included San Bernardino, Rialto, Colton, Fontana and Bloomington. She presented to him her vision to make the district she represented more sustainable, which was the spark that led to his idea and dissertation topic –Sustaining Our Society using private funds to acquire and remodel one foreclosed property, making it energy efficient, before selling it to a first time homeowner.

So what began as a model of neighborhood stabilization and revitalization, eventually evolved into a program that spans 40 states securing over 280 loans with the objective of homeowner preservation.