

# URBAN WATER INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

Provide timely, compelling, and diverse discussion of water policy, economics and resource management.



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## Thank You - Lisa Ohlund



### The Nexus Of Excellence And Humility

Success in business or government is achieved by getting the right person in the right position at the right time.

Lisa Ohlund is that person. The recruitment and selection of Lisa Ohlund as General Manager of the East Orange County Water District (EOCWD) in 2008 transformed an embattled, low-profile water utility into an efficient, well-respected, transparent, and thriving multifaceted water utility.

Kudos to EOCWD Director Richard Bell for recognizing Lisa's incredible talent and making that initial call to recruit her - and kudos to Lisa for the courage to assume leadership of a district seen as a tempting acquisition target by OCLAFCO, IRWD, MWDOC, and the Cities of Orange and Tustin.

Lisa's collaborative working relationships with her Board, her Staff, fellow agencies, attorneys, and consultants; her open honest communications with the EOCWD citizens; and her management expertise ... (see page two for more)

## Happy Retirement - Jeff Kightlinger



### Competence And Vision

It was Benjamin Frankiin who said, "When the well's dry, we know the worth of water." Jeff Kightlinger has spent the majority of his career working to make sure that Southern California does not run out of water.

Jeff is the general manager and chief executive officer for The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and has decided it is time to retire.

The Metropolitan Water District is the largest municipal water provider in the nation delivering an average of over 2 billion gallons of water a day to 19 million customers across Southern California. Metropolitan serves one out of every two Californians in the six counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura. As general manager, he manages the District's \$1.8 billion annual budget and 1,800 employees to ensure the safe and reliable delivery of high-quality water every day throughout Southern California. ... (see page three for more)

## Job Well Done - Karl Seckel



### Godfather Of Water Reliability In Orange County

The Orange County water supply system is complex and ever-changing. For the last forty years one man has been the lynchpin to keeping the water flowing - Karl Seckel!

Karl W. Seckel, P.E. has spent 43 years dedicated to the supply of water to the people of Orange County.

It has been a career of service, dedication, and excellence. His body of work is embedded in Orange County's delivery systems and institutions.

He is the only person to have worked on the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and transfer to Metropolitan ... (see page four for more)

## Lisa Ohlund (continued)



(from page one) ... are best demonstrated by OCLAFCO awarding EOCWD the retail wastewater service for the Tustin area. This was arguably the biggest political/institutional upset in Southern California water history.

Lisa was raised in a Marine Corps family and remains staunchly and openly patriotic. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Texas. She began her water career pursuing and managing grants for the Encina Wastewater Authority.

At Encina she gained expertise working with engineers, operators, contractors, and her mentor, General Manager Rick Graff. She then began consulting in financial, administrative, and operations issues. One of her major clients was the Aliso Wastewater Management Agency and the Southeast Regional Reclamation Authority (AWMA/SERRA). AMWA/SERRA valued her service so much that they recruited her to be the Assistant General Manager.

She then returned to consulting, with clients throughout Southern California ranging from West Basin MWD and Orange County

Sanitation District to the Cities of Newport Beach and Rialto and Joshua Basin Water District. During this part of her career, she developed a reputation for strategic thinking, organizational efficiency, operational excellence, and a compassionate, caring management style.

Her tenure at EOCWD showed that a leader can be sweet and tough, efficient and compassionate, effective and understanding. Lisa's strong ethics and open, caring approach to all enabled her to achieve outstanding results at EOCWD, while maintaining the respect and affection of all she came into contact with.

Mrs. Ohlund served as the first female chairperson of the Urban Water Institute, leading the UWI through a difficult period and transforming it into a more collaborative, vibrant organization.

Lisa's biggest fans are her husband Bob, sons Matt and Gunnar, and, frankly, anyone who has had the pleasure of meeting her.

Lisa Ohlund will remain active in the water industry as a consultant and as a Board Member of UWI.

*Written By Kevin Hunt, Co-Founder, Former Chair And Member Of UWI Board Of Directors*

### FROM HER FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES

*"Never before, and probably never again, will I meet someone with a bigger heart for water and the people of water than Lisa. She is passionately in love with her work and her colleagues. Unbridled enthusiasm, wit, and a brilliant mind, Lisa's day-to-day work will be missed, but I know she'll hang in with us, at least for awhile, for some more fun in the future. God bless and God speed, Lisa! Oh yeah, and Go Aztecs!"* **Greg Quist, Past Chair, UWI**

*"A notable politician (I won't say who in these politically charged times) once said that "cheerful persistence" is a quality common to all great leaders. Lisa's positive energy radiates through all she comes in contact with and her tireless dedication to task is an inspiration."* **Sean Fitzgerald, UWI Board Of Directors**

*"Lisa has been instrumental in the success of the UWI having served as Chair during a key transition period for the Institute. Her leadership and style brought a refreshing openness to our Board Meetings and Conferences. Her financial insights have also been extremely beneficial in keeping us on track."* **Steve Bucknam, Past Chair, UWI**

*"A person who has brought grace, style and smarts to waterworld. She is always engaged and engaging. I will always remember her tribute to Jack Foley that was delivered at a small luncheon before his passing. Very moving and inspirational."* **Dick Ackerman, UWI Board Of Directors**

## Jeff Kightlinger (continued)



(from page one) ... Kightlinger was appointed general manager in February 2006 and has been guiding the agency through some difficult times, from record setting droughts to dramatic changes in the regulatory arena. Jeff has been a calm, competent leader that has steered the agency to a better future.

Jeff often says that we must look out 50 to 100 years when planning for water resources and infrastructure. Further, he describes water as ground zero for climate change given more volatility in the water cycle such as drought, wider swings in precipitation levels, and greater variability in runoff.

Jeff's legacy of enhanced relationships with MET-member agencies, has been a cornerstone of his success in managing dialogues to develop solutions that benefit the entire MWD region. His openness and commitment to seeing all water resources as part of the supply opportunities are important to the regional portfolio is leading MWD to develop a paramount recycled water program in concert with Los Angeles agencies. The award-winning conservation and local assistance programs have forged valuable partnerships, maximized limited

supplies during good times and challenging low supply times.

Jeff has been honored numerous times as one of the top 100 most influential water leaders in the state of California. His calm, sophisticated, and open style can be observed at conferences, meetings, and other events where he always makes himself available and approachable. He has been a trusted advisor to many elected officials from within the District to Sacramento and Washington DC. The water industry will lose a passionate and skilled advocate for all that is water when Jeff retires. He will be greatly missed and will be honored as a true statesman and leader.

Kightlinger has an undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a law degree from Santa Clara University. He serves on a number of boards including the Coro Foundation, the USC Price School of Public Policy, the UCLA Sustainability Advisory Board, the Climate Action Reserve, the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy, the Los Angeles Economic Development Council and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, among others.

Written By John Rossi, Current Chair, UWI

### FROM HIS FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES

*"A little known fact that when Jeff started out he was a junior associate attorney when he worked at the Knapp, Marsh firm during the mid-1980's doing solid waste and wastewater legal work for the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. Our managers at the time knew even then he was going to have a great career."* **Ray Tremblay, UWI Board Of Directors**

*"Jeff's leadership, quiet confidence, and quest for collaboration helped guide MET through an era of massive change and challenges. If only we San Diegans could behave ourselves a little better, his life - and the fortunes of MET - could have been further enhanced and brightened. We still have not figured out we live at the end of a water cul-de-sac and MET lives at our closest intersection. Love thy neighbor as you love yourself. Thank you Jeff for your calm hand on the helm, and ensuring - despite our differences - a reliable, quality, and cost-effective supply of water for the people and the economy of ALL of semi-arid Southern California! May mercy and goodness follow you all the days of your life!"* **Greg Quist, Past Chair, UWI**

*"A steady hand through times of perpetual change, Jeff's understated style of leadership kept Met focused on the big picture throughout his tenure. A gracious leader who will be missed in the water community."* **Sean Fitzgerald, UWI Board Of Directors**

*"Jeff's leadership at MET will be sorely missed with his retirement. He has been a great supporter of our UWI programs and events during his tenure."* **Steve Bucknam, Past Chair, UWI**

*"A strong, measured leader who is able to handle all situations in a logical and forceful manner. He has done more for California water than almost everyone else in the State. That includes elected and non-elected folks. He is a real gentleman with a good sense of humor. Go Bears!"* **Dick Ackerman, UWI Board of Directors**

## Karl Seckel (continued)



(from page one) ... of the Allen-McCulloch Pipeline, the 35 mile long main supply of Orange County's water system.

Karl is considered the "godfather of water reliability" in Orange County. His cooperative style and attention to detail were integral to the consolidation of MWDOC and Coastal MWD.

He provided leadership for the MWDOC / OCWD / IRWD groundwater emergency supply and the Doheny ocean desalination work.

Karl also contributed to the growth and success of Water Emergency Response Organization of Orange County (WEROC), a unique organization dedicated to the cooperative response to water emergencies.

Karl graduated from the University of Maryland with a Masters in Water Resources in 1977 and began his career at Boyle Engineering Corporation.

In 1983, he went to MWDOC, where he served for 37 years. In his entire career, he only had 3 bosses (Kevin Hunt twice, Stan Sprague, and Robert Hunter). His career reflected engineering expertise,

thoroughness, and professional integrity.

Karl has 2 children, Mark R. Seckel and Dr. Natalie Seckel, DVM and is married to Nickolette Ford. An avid athlete, he participated in golf, basketball, tennis, soccer, softball, and beer pong throughout his career.

Karl, all who know you say, "Forget about WEROC - we think YOU ROCK!"

Enjoy the next phase of your career. Karl can be reached at (714) 423-3361.

Written By Kevin Hunt, Co-Founder, Former Chair And Member Of UWI Board Of Directors

### FROM HIS FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES

*"Always prepared with an unrivaled depth of knowledge, Karl's loyalty and dedication are too rare these days. He has been a model of effective staff work for decades and leaves a lasting legacy at MWDOC. But it is his infectious smile and good-hearted nature that truly set him apart."* **Sean Fitzgerald, UWI Board Of Directors**

*"I have known Karl for over forty years and worked with him when I was in Orange County at Newport Beach and later at Santa Ana, a fellow MET Agency. His professionalism, loyalty and expertise in water resources has helped MWDOC to become the outstanding organization it is today."* **Steve Bucknam, Past Chair, UWI**

*"One of the most knowledgeable persons on Orange County water and water in general that we have. His relationship and respect with OC water works has served him and waterworld well. His tenure at MWDOC will probably not be replicated anytime soon. If you have any question about water issues in Orange County, Karl gets the call."* **Dick Ackerman, UWI Board Of Directors**

*Congratulations Retirees.*