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County of Sacramento

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Sacramento County Earns Three National Awards for Innovative, Cost-Saving Programs

2011 National Association of Counties Achievement Awards

SACRAMENTO, CA – Sacramento County has been recognized by the National Association of Counties (NACo) for three innovative programs or projects that better serve residents and save money. The winning programs are the Abandoned Well Program, Violation of Probation In-Lieu Night Court, and the Facility Consolidation Project. On Tuesday, August 23 at 9:45 a.m., the Board of Supervisors will present NACo Achievement Award certificates to representatives of the projects. The presentation will be held at 700 H Street, first floor.

“On behalf of Sacramento County, we are honored to receive these awards. NACo’s recognition formally acknowledges the value of our innovative and cost-saving programs, but more importantly, the extraordinary work of our dedicated staff,” said Roberta MacGlashan, Chair of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

In November 2009, the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department (EMD) implemented the **Abandoned Well Program** to identify and properly close dangerous abandoned, unused or inoperable water wells. These wells can be conduits for pollutants to reach groundwater, and many older, hand dug wells and open casings pose a physical falling-in hazard for animals and humans. With extensive outreach, EMD field staff identified more than 400 abandoned wells in the County. EMD staff developed field and office protocols; procedures and training; an abandoned well database management system; and ongoing oversight of abandoned well inactivation, destruction, and restoration. The program was funded with proceeds from a settlement the California Attorney General reached with Shell Oil Company for underground storage tank violations around the state.

The Sacramento County **Violation of Probation In Lieu Night Court (VOP Court)**, implemented in January 2008, is a unique, innovative, efficient, cost-effective and just way of relieving congested court calendars and reducing main jail overcrowding, while holding probationers accountable for their criminal conduct. It takes cases where a defendant is already on felony probation for a prior non-violent, non-serious offense and effectively resolves the case through a violation of probation instead of filing new charges. The VOP Court establishes meaningful punishment for probation violators while rewarding those who do not re-offend. Over a two year period, VOP Court saved the County and the Superior Court \$12.6 million. VOP Court partners include the District Attorney, Public Defender, Conflict Criminal Defender, Probation, Sheriff and Superior Court.

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In FY 2009-10, the County's Department of Human Assistance (DHA) saw a 56% reduction in its County General fund allocation from the prior year. DHA needed to make swift reductions in order to close this budget gap and generate the most savings possible. DHA developed and implemented the **Facility Consolidation Project**, and within an 18-month span, closed or consolidated 10 facilities, thereby generating a \$2.4 million reduction in annual lease payments and operating costs.

The 2011 NACo Achievement Awards winners were honored during the NACo's 76th Annual Conference and Exposition in Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon. This year's winners represent 29 states and 97 counties. See all 2011 Achievement Awards winners: www.naco.org/programs/recognition/Pages/2011AchievementAwards.aspx.

The NACo Achievement Award program is a non-competitive program that recognizes counties for improving the management of county government services. Since the program's inception in 1970, the NACo Achievement Award program has honored thousands of county government initiatives that have improved service delivery, achieved greater cost efficiency, provided finer customer service, and helped to develop a better-trained work force.

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