



August 2012

Carpinteria Valley Water District

# H<sub>2</sub>KNOW

## Customer Service with a Smile: Sarah Strassburg

Field Customer Service Representative Sarah Strassburg always seems to have a smile on her face! Her warm and caring nature along with her professionalism and knowledge work hand in hand to ease customer concerns when a major leak occurs during the middle of the night or is undetected until an unusually high water bill arrives.

Sarah's job duties also include marking water lines for construction projects, investigating, documenting and repairing leaks whether they are gasket leaks, main breaks, or irrigation, meter maintenance as well as serving on a 24/7 on-call rotation schedule with other certified field crew. Below is a recent interview Rhonda Gutierrez, Engineering Technician, conducted with Sarah to get a better understanding of her job:

*Rhonda:* What is involved in marking a water line and why is it important to do so?

**Sarah:** I mark water lines after receiving notification of a project through Underground Service Alert (USA). I mark the location of the water line with blue paint. It is critical to mark the water line so that the contractor does not rupture the line while digging. In order to create a positive working relationship with the contractor, I will also go out and do a "meet & greet".

*Rhonda:* What type of meter maintenance do you perform?

**Sarah:** I repair gasket leaks, remove dirt from the meter boxes and cut back foliage so that the meters can be easily read. I also replace cracked meter box lids and boxes.

*Rhonda:* Are there any "dangers" associated with meter maintenance?

**Sarah:** Well, I was recently attacked by a swarm of bees as I lifted a meter box lid. I received seven bee stings. And there are typically spiders in the box so I always make sure to swipe the area with a meter stick taking down spider webs and making sure the coast is clear – one time I did come across a gopher snake in a meter box. I called for someone to come and remove it.

*Rhonda:* What are your duties when you are on-call?

**Sarah:** When I am on-call, I respond to any and all call-outs, some of which may include leaks or water outage. I also check the District well sites and take samples as needed.

*Rhonda:* What steps do you take when you investigate the source of an unusually high water bill or perform a water check up?

**Sarah:** The first thing I do is to put myself in the customer's shoes. I listen and I try to put them at ease because I understand how frustrating it can be. I mark the meter for movement, walk the property looking for wet spots and trouble-shoot the faucets and valves to isolate the location of the problem such as low pressure or a leak outside or inside of the building.

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Carpinteria Valley Water District!  
If you see or cause a  
sheared fire hydrant,  
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Pictured above is Field Customer Service Representative, Sarah Strassburg

**The District will be closed**

**Monday, September 3rd**

**in observance of the Labor Day Holiday.**

**In case of an emergency, call (805) 684-2816.**