

**Outreach Communications Committee Meeting Notes**

**December 8, 2020**

**2:00 p.m-3:00 p.m.**

**Members present:**

**Chair Stacy Taylor, Mesa Water District**

**Vice-Chair Sonja Morgan, South Coast Water District**

**Jennifer Allen, Contra Costa Water District**

**Tiffany Baca, Municipal Water District of Orange County**

**Alicia Dunkin, Orange County Water Agency (for Gina Ayala)**

Lorraine Garcia, **XXXXXXXXXXXXXX**

**Jessica Jones, Poseidon Water**

**Mike Lee, San Diego County Water Authority**

**Amy Rocha, West Basin Municipal Water District**

Guest: Wendy Ridderbusch, Executive Director

Chair Stacy Taylor, Mesa Water District welcomed the committee at 2:05 p.m. on the Zoom platform.

**Virtual Townhall debrief –** It was a successful first foray into the online landscape. We had 75 people register and 55 folks logged on and stayed through the whole program. We held it live and the feedback was positive on that aspect of the event. Desal Bingo was a fun idea, but nobody ended up playing! Wendy did use the chat box feature, but nobody took the bait.

**CalDesal Virtual Annual Conference** -- Stacy briefly reviewed the draft agenda with the programs, Moderators, and panelists listed with the committee. Wendy gave some background on the development of the agenda. She discussed how differently various associations have tackled the challenge of putting an annual conference online. Some moved to the same time slot on five successive days, some moved to the same day and time for four weeks in a row. CalDesal wanted to capture the essence of a live, in-person conference by keeping it to two, half days in a row on February 10 and 11, 2021.

Wendy also talked about how the Conference Planning Committee

**Southwest Strategies (SWS) update --** Southwest Strategies’ **Hope Reilly** shared her screen so that the Committee could see screen shots of the website which is in development.

Jessica Jones, Website Subcommittee Chair kicked off the discussion reminding the larger committee that the Subcommittee had met four times throughout the design process, evaluating different stages of the design process starting with a basic outline and then lay out the wire frame pages, added the design themes.

Hope unveiled the design that was a result of that back and forth process with Southwest Strategies. First she discussed the homepage design:

* The page won’t be a sea of text, rather it will be a sea of relevant images and not as text heavy as the current site
* She shared that the header or hero image was still being decided and that there were two options that she would share with the committee to receive input. They are also willing to explore additional options if the committee deems it appropriate.
* SWS optimized the format so that it would look good on different platforms like iPhones and iPads in addition to the standard desktop. Because of that adaptation to multiple platforms, it may not look the best on each of those platforms singularly.
* They used best and current web design practices and moved away from the sliding, moving header. While this movement may be appealing to the eye, you don’t know which of the rotating messages your audience is receiving. Keeping it static streamlines the design.
* They want to feature the ”Desal Is” messaging brand identity so it is prominent on the page
* Then we will see “Latest News” from the News Center that will be built derived from media clips, op-eds, editorials, member press releases, submissions from members, feature an event, and any calls to action
* Other items: Join the Mailing List and Become a Member asks
* Overall design: Things will stack due to incorporating the mobile device experience, and it will all be very touch centric, deliver big image, big text experience that consumers are looking for.

Jessica asked Hope if she could up to the top of the page where the full bar menu is placed to talk about what will go in that space on each of the tabs.

Hope explained what will be on each of the five tabs:

* **About** – what is CalDesal? What is the mission and purpose of the organization? Who are the leaders of the organization, who are the members? How can you become a member and what are the member and associate benefits?
* **CalDesal issues** – streamlined and updated copy of what is on the current site. Want to update using maps. The four issues: Water supply challenges, seawater desal, brackish groundwater desal, and salinity management. A main intro page for all four, and then subpages for each issue.
* **News Center** – A combination of press releases, news clips, op-ed, editorials, member-submitted news. We will see the top few of each of those categories and then you can click through for more information. You will be able to submit your own agency’s news too. CalDesal events, member events, and calls for engagement.
* **Member Login** – will be overhauled. They plan to add more resources in that section. There will be a new password with a new system. You will login for the committee meeting materials and also eventually a suite of collateral material which will be available to CalDesal members and associates.

**Difficulty reading gray typeface** -- Stacy asked the group if they felt it was hard to read the faded, light gray typeface? She thought it didn’t really pop out there at the bottom center and left under the CalDesal logo.

Tiffany asked whether the purple box at the bottom really worked with the branded blue and yellow color scheme? She also suggested lightening the text and placing it on a different background like a blue, rather than the purple. The committee members agreed and thought that the typeface should be larger.

Roxanne pointed out that the logo needs to be larger, the font should be white if it will be against a colored background. She felt that “Join our newsletter to stay up to date” should be larger and it is way too small.

Sean agreed that either the color of the background box or the text should be changed to make it pop a little more.

After receiving initial feedback from the committee, Jessica moved on to see if there was input on the hero page from the committee. Jessica opened the chat feature and asked committee members to vote on which hero page they liked better. The majority preferred the wave, but there was discussion that the wave may be too seawater desal-specific, excluding brackish groundwater and salinity management.

Jessica noted that we could go back and find another image for the hero page. Sean noted that it is difficult to denote saltwater without photos of the ocean. Sean noted that he liked the photos arranged in a chronological manner that shows it from beginning to end product which is potable water.

Jessica announced that we would move forward with the wave as the initial hero image, but that we would assertively replace the stock images throughout the website with photos contributed by our members.

**Dropbox** – Wendy will open a dropbox to receive multiple photos and video clips. Wendy had CAMS the CalDesal admin folks set up the e-mail address content@caldesal.org which is being routed to Elizabeth and Hope from Southwest Strategies as well as Wendy from CalDesal.

**Website roll-out** -- Jessica talked about possibly giving a sneak peek for the membership of the website in its draft form either during the upcoming Virtual Townhall or sometime later in 2020. In addition to the normal press release, she asked the committee to engage in a brainstorm if they had any ideas of other types of actions that could be used to get the word out about CalDesal’s website:

* Utilizing social media using the member agency and company partners to share it with their folks and increase visibility
* Using all of the elements of the website to produce content so that you are constantly driving people back to your website again and again
* Reaching out to places like Maven’s Notebook, OCDC, ACWA, and agencies that send out big blasts
* Website scavenger hunt. You have images and make people go into the site to find it, offer prizes, etc. that make people check out your site
* **Subcommittee Report**
* **Social Media** – Chair Tiffany Baca reported out that the Subcommittee met and discussed rolling out a social media plan including a strategy, and smart goals. If each committee member just donated one single social media post CalDesal would have 12 weeks of content out of the gate. A post could be about a project or anything that would be important to members.

Tiffany asked Stacy if there was a design style brand guide. Stacy said she would circulate the design style guide to the committee. She also asked that when the content calendar is created by SWS that it be shared with the committee.

Stacy reminded the committee that CalDesal will be working on more evergreen type of content. SWS will be looking to pull content from the website. The next step after the soft launch of the website is to start building out the social media calendar with content from the website. We have asked member agencies to submit content at content@caldesal.org. The content CalDesal receives will serve a dual purpose for both the website and social media. Once we get rolling we can figure out a process for regular submissions. That would be a great item for the Subcommittee to tackle. Tiffany stated that building CalDesal’s followers is really important as you have to have people to share messages with.

**CalDesal constant contact news blast –** Wendy thanked the committee for offering helpful suggestions for improvement of the newsflash! It is getting better and she hopes the committee will read the most

Other items for discussion?

Next Outreach Communications Committee Meeting: **Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

**Adjourn --** Chair Taylor adjourned the meeting at 2:53 p.m.