



COUNTY OF LAKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
CAROL J. HUCHINGSON

THE CAO NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017

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*"Assistance comes with
guidelines for being
empowered."*

--Crystal Markytan

Crystal Markytan: Empowering Service

Twenty-two years ago, Crystal Markytan took a job that turned out to be a vocation. Master's degree in Psychology in hand, she went to work for Social Services in rural, impoverished Del Norte County.

"I didn't even know what I was really applying for, but it turned out to be a really good fit."

Markytan quickly climbed the ladder, from direct service, to supervision, to management. Desire to contribute motivated her ascent. In April, she became Lake County's Director of Social Services.

As an administrator and leader, Markytan is driven by the question, "How can I support the work that's being done and ensure we're also working within the regulations?"

"I have done direct services, and I have worked with families. That's really where the work happens. [Administrators] support the work in the background."

Director Markytan speaks with clarity and well-rounded insight, earned through dedicated service in areas like Child Welfare, Adult Protection, In-Home Supportive Services, Family Daycare Licensing, and the Public Guardian program.

That broad base has underscored the importance of communication. "It is at the heart of everything we do. At all levels within the department and also externally." Often, "There are areas in which Social Services bear responsibility. There are also limitations. There are eligibility considerations. Moving forward, my vision is to strongly support staff in continuing their work while providing community education around mandates and services."

Over the course of her career, Markytan has demonstrated a commitment to supporting staff. She has partnered with Universities and statewide organizations to ensure all employees have the opportunity to become true professionals. Markytan has seen great value in helping those with strong local ties, as "They are invested in the wellbeing of their community."

That commitment to development and empowerment has likewise always extended to the populations Markytan's programs have served: "There are a lot of people that need assistance, and that assistance comes with guidelines for being empowered, being able to support yourself. People are going to do best when they are strong on their own." (*cont. pg. 3*)

Debris Insurance Collection Begins in July

In summer and fall 2015, survivors of the Rocky, Jerusalem, and Valley Wildfires authorized the County or its designee, CalRecycle, to enter their properties and remove wildfire generated debris that presented a health and safety hazard to the general public. The County's Public Works tree removal program and the State of California-sponsored CalRecycle program completed burn debris clearance on nearly 1700 properties. CalRecycle, alone, assisted with more than 1250 properties.

Debris was cleared in exchange for the promise to pay whatever amount was ultimately reimbursed under the property owner's insurance policy.

The County has recently accelerated efforts to collect insurance money from Valley Fire victims, to reimburse the State. Packets will be issued with all information needed for individuals served by CalRecycle to pay their personal obligation.

After a long wait, we realize this is an unwelcome task and a bitter reminder of the losses Valley Fire survivors have endured. However, cooperation is essential for the County to discharge its obligations to the State, a critical step in the County's ongoing recovery from disaster.

If you have any questions, call 707-263-2580.

*A critical step in the
County's ongoing
recovery*



Tip from the Fire Safe Council

How can you learn to defend your property against the threat of wildfire? Download CALFIRE's app! See the flyer attached to this newsletter.

Huchingson Receives Phoenix Award

The County Administrative Office is pleased to share that our executive, Carol J. Huchingson, has been named one of four 2017 Phoenix Award Winners by the United States Small Business Administration, for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official.

Selections were made from a nationwide field of candidates. CAO Huchingson recently traveled to Washington, DC, to accept her award.

"This well-deserved recognition is a strong national endorsement of our CAO's ability to appropriately direct the time and attention of those under her watch, even under the most challenging of circumstances. That is something all County residents can celebrate," says Lake County Board of Supervisors Chair, Jeff Smith.

Huchingson shares, "This work has brought me many blessings beyond what I was able to accomplish for our survivors and the County as a whole."

The work continues, and Huchingson deeply appreciates the contributions so many have made toward Lake County's recovery. "Whatever challenges may arise, Lake is a County that will overcome. I saw it as we responded to wildfire. I saw the strength of our community and the generosity of our people. We can and we will weather any storm."



Wildfires still impacting County tax revenues

Many in our community have lost a great deal as a result of the wildfires of 2015 and 2016. In different ways, we continue to work daily to fully recover. Local tourism has taken a significant hit, and many businesses have suffered.

The County of Lake depends upon Property Taxes, for example, as a driver of much of the work we do to serve the community. Millions in expected revenues have already been lost, straining the County's response to an increased need for repair of County roads, for example, in the wake of disaster. Costs are up, just as revenues are down, and full return to normal tax revenue levels will take years.

In Fiscal Year 2017-18, the County, alone, expects at least \$800,000 in total fire-related lost tax revenues. The Cities of Lakeport and Clearlake have also been impacted.

In the face of limited resources, creative efforts to rebuild are ongoing. Department heads have been encouraged to rethink the way we deliver County services, and important progress is being made.

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Markytan, Social Services Director, cont.

Director Markytan further shares, "The department mission statement clearly articulates both what we do and how it should be done. 'With Efficiency, Integrity and Compassion, Our Mission is to: Promote Social and Economic Self-Reliance; and Protect Those Who Are at Risk.' My immediate area of focus is in refining our budget to reflect changing fiscal realities while maintaining a high level of efficiency and integrity in the provision of services."

Since arriving in April, Markytan has developed a passion for Lake County. "There's so much variety here. Every day when I drive to work, I think, 'Wow, this is just beautiful.'"

She has also been impressed by the support she has received thus far, including the "Exceedingly unique and fantastic opportunity to be oriented into the job for two weeks" with the outgoing DSS Director.

Markytan and her husband have three adult children, including two daughters with families of their own. The Markytans recently bought a house in Lake County, and their two dogs are settling in; the house is becoming a home. "I have been so welcomed in Lake County, from staff to community partners. I'm so lucky!"

Lake County is fortunate that the flier Crystal Markytan took on a job twenty-two years ago started a path that prepared her to lead our Department of Social Services into a promising future.

We are pleased that Director Markytan is here to listen, to serve and to empower.



CAO's Notes on this Newsletter

Lake County has faced many challenges, of late, and challenges have brought opportunity to get creative, dig deeper, and do some exceptional work.

I asked my staff to prepare this newsletter because it is imperative that we all work together to solve the problems we face. It is not enough to name the problems; we must persist in battling them, for the good of all.

Responsible budgets are critical to the work we do, and recent days have brought a lot of focus to the difficulties we face. However, while money is scarce in our County, we cannot, we must not spend all of our energy confirming that money is scarce.

How can we multiply the resources we have? How can we be the richest County, regardless of our economic status? Each of you, County staff and community members alike, plays a role. Thanks for working with me.

–Carol J. Huchingson, County Administrative Officer

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Musings of a Public Servant

*By Greg Giusti, Director/Advisor
University of California Cooperative Extension Lake and Mendocino
Counties*

When asked to write for this newsletter my first thought was “Why Me”? As my retirement date looms after nearly 40 years of public service I’m reflecting on the thousands of honorable and noble people, in both the public and private sector, I have met who work every day to make California and our communities a better place.

As a researcher, educator and administrator I have interacted with people and the challenges they face in their professional and personal lives. As we all know, sometimes the two are intertwined and cannot be separated yet we are expected to meet the demands of our collective obligations. The realities of budgets, personnel management, and public expectations can sometimes overshadow the positive aspects of public service making the day(s) seem endless and overwhelming. However, the effectiveness of local government and those dedicated to its success is often best witnessed in the darkest times following fires, floods and other community disasters. These are times when people get out of their “agency culture” or “silos” and work for the common good of the whole. These times can be truly inspiring and rewarding.

Local government works best when it’s collaborative and transparent. That’s not to say that agencies need to “hold hands and sing kumbaya,” but it’s obvious that the citizenry appreciates agencies who respect each other while professionally sharing their differences. I think we all know and agree that the key to successful governance is trust between agencies and the publics we serve. This trust must be based on *confident wisdom* that portrays a sound basis and knowledge of the matter at hand, but does not come across as arrogant, conceited or self-important.

As my career takes on a new course, when I reflect on the years and wonder if I’d do it again I can only say....In a heartbeat!

