

# Ripples from J.P.I.A.

Employee Training and Development Newsletter of ACWA/JPIA ~ Volume 2, Issue 3

## Tap the Treasure Trove of Knowledge

Did you know there is buried treasure at your district? No, it's not a reference to the new Pirates of the Caribbean movie, but the trove of information in your organization just waiting to be discovered.

Over the next ten years, water districts will lose a large portion of employees to retirement. There is a lot of institutional knowledge buried in the minds of those employees, and it will go undiscovered – like treasure buried in the sand by pirates – unless each and every district begins a process to discover it. This is knowledge that is not written down, not part of the official policy or procedures manual of the district; it is knowledge gained from experience and interaction – called tacit knowledge.

Every employee retains tacit knowledge once they are on board for a while, such as ways to adjust and adapt methods to get the job done, tasks completed but not necessarily part of the job description, tasks done so irregularly that nothing is written down about them. But now, our attention must be focused on the tacit



knowledge of those who will be exiting the workforce in the coming years.

The water industry will have a lot of retirees in the next five to ten years – that is not news to anyone – but what is your organization doing about it? Here

are some ideas to help you to capture that knowledge before it becomes buried treasure, never to be found:

- *Encourage storytelling* – if individuals are made to feel valued for their wisdom and experience, they are more willing to train others and impart job knowledge gained from years on the job. It is also a less intimidating way of uncovering the information. Pick a job or responsibility and ask him or her to tell you all about his or her experience with it.



- *Conduct interviews* – have several staff members join the interview and ask questions of the seasoned employee which they find critical to get their own job done. This could be departments that interact with this position, junior staff or supervisors. Conduct the interview on the job site, (it may be valuable to actually see the employee perform certain tasks) or in a more formal setting.

- *Record audio* – supply the seasoned employee with a recording device that he or she can speak into as tasks are completed. Ask that he or she simply talks through what is done throughout the day, in a narrative format. There are very small devices that can be carried like a pen in a shirt pocket and then the recording downloaded easily to a computer (Lifescape™ is an example). We even had a district video record a retiring employee, several months prior to his departure.

- *Facilitate training* – encourage the employee to be part of training classes in their area of experience and expertise. Honor them for their time on the job by involving them in how future employees are trained.

- *Set up mentoring relationships* – sometimes one-on-one knowledge sharing is the most comfortable for

individuals. One must make a concerted effort to ensure that the mentor and mentee are a good match and one that will encourage a positive, productive relationship.

Water industry workplaces will look and operate much differently ten years from now. Help prepare your district for the exodus of senior employees and discover that buried treasure of job wisdom today. Then you can avoid being set adrift in the sea of the unknown, lacking important know-how, and at the mercy of pirates – arrr.

## Set Sail for Learning

**Annual Training Conference  
Radisson Newport Beach at  
Orange County Airport**

August 9 & 10, 2011

**Cost: \$75 per day**

(includes breakfast, lunch, snacks, and all materials) – *what a steal!*

**Room Cost: \$84 per night**

(available 3 days prior and 2 days after) – *what a deal!*

*Now you can register  
and pay on-line!*

[www.acwajpia.com/training](http://www.acwajpia.com/training)

Look for *Ripples from JPIA* in January, March, May, July, September and November each year. Please feel free to forward this publication to fellow colleagues whom you feel could benefit from the information. We are happy to add any names to our distribution list.

## View Webinars You Missed

Viewing recorded JPIA webinars has become very popular among our membership. Since the first of the year, over 100 people have viewed the sessions. Do you have a class that you need to complete your Professional Development Program? Check the website for the following recordings, and you just might have a solution:

- Managing the Aging Workforce
- Cal/OSHA Inspections
- Hiring Practices
- Job Descriptions
- New Employee Orientation
- Preventing Heat Stress
- Return to Work
- Risk Transfer
- Stress Management
- Understanding Your IIPP

The training department strives to meet the professional development needs of our membership in a variety of ways. Enjoy your viewing!

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## Free Access to Hundreds of On-line Classes...and More

JPIA has partnered with TargetSafety, a national online safety training organization, to provide our members with training resources that meet the latest in best practice industry standards. You probably know that TargetSafety provides a training course menu of over 600 workplace safety topics. These courses can be assigned by employee and/or department and include a certificate of completion. But you may not know that you can also track your tailgate training, employee certifications and more! Join us to learn how you can utilize this free resource better.

**FREE** Webinar with Target Safety  
Thursday, July 21, 2011  
9:00 AM to 9:30 AM

Join at - <http://preventionlink.na4.acrobat.com/kelly>  
Dial in (712) 432-0900 ||| Access code - 749935

## Important Dates

**June 22 & 23; 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Cal/OSHA 10 Hr Construction Safety Training**  
Bella Vista Water District (Shasta County)

**July 12 & 13; 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Cal/OSHA 10 Hr Construction Safety Training**  
Kern County Water District

**July 20; 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
**Human Resources Group** (all are welcome)  
JPIA Office, Roseville

**August 9 & 10**  
**Southern California Annual Training Conference,**  
Radisson Newport Beach at Orange County Airport  
***Now you can register and pay on-line!***

**September 27 & 28 (revised dates)**  
**Northern California Semi-Annual**  
**Training Conference,**  
JPIA Office, Roseville  
*Mark your calendar - registration coming soon!*

**Check the JPIA website for details.**

## Upcoming JPIA Webinars

**Join us for any and all of these webinars – right at your desk. Most can be applied to your PDP certification.**

**July 15 – Personal Protective Equipment**

**August 18 – Workers' Compensation Basics**

**September 7 – One-on-One with Cal/OSHA**

**September 15 – Workplace Violence**

**October 20 – Hazard Identification**

**Join us for all of these live, interactive training courses. Check our website for updates and to register.**

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**What Have You Learned Today?**