



CALIFORNIA  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY,  
FRESNO

Melissa Lienau  
League of California Cities  
1400 K Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

March 16, 2012

Dear Ms. Lienau:

The City of Perris is applying for the League of California Cities' Helen Putnam Award in the category of Enhancing Public Trust, Ethics, and Community Involvement for its innovative Bilingual Public Education and Participation program which has greatly improved the lives of the residents of Enchanted Heights, a Disadvantaged Community located in portions of the City of Perris. I strongly support the City of Perris's Enchanted Heights Sewer Project and the success it has achieved that benefits the residents of the City of Perris.

For many years, the residents of Enchanted Heights have lived with contaminated run-off from failing septic systems. This situation represented a critical public health issue.

In 2011, the City of Perris partnered with two other local agencies; the County of Riverside and Eastern Municipal Water District to find a solution to this problem. The city and its partners applied for and received \$15 Million in grant funding to build a sanitary sewer system in the Enchanted Heights community. Once the funding was secured, the real work began.

The residents of Enchanted Heights are largely Spanish speaking immigrants from Mexico. The community of Enchanted Heights lies in two jurisdictions; one half is in the City of Perris and the other half is in the county of Riverside. As a condition of the grant, which would spare the residents of any costs associated with the building of the sewer project as well as the onsite connections, the residents would have to sign a Right of Entry form which would allow the construction contractor to enter the yards of the residents. The City was committed to treating the community as a whole unit and the Community Involvement program did not differentiate between the two jurisdictions.

Realizing that getting residents to sign anything is a challenge, which is even more so in a Disadvantaged Community which had cultural and language barriers. The City of Perris conducted a bilingual community involvement program. The program not only educated

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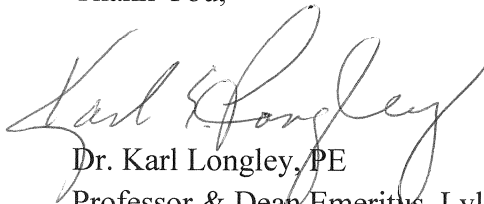


the residents as to the need for the project, but it also explained the Right of Entry process they were signing. Four formal community meetings were held at the local elementary school which was conducted in English and Spanish. Over two hundred residents attended the meetings to get more information on the sewer project. Always sensitive to community needs, bilingual notaries were provided so the residents would not have to pay any costs associated with notarizing the Right of Entry form. The success of the Community Involvement program is evident in the enthusiastic response to the project by the residents.

I truly believe that the Enchanted Height Sewer Project Outreach program is an exemplary model for other agencies because of its success in engaging Disadvantaged Community in a culturally appropriate manner which resulted in the desired outcome. Again, I applaud the City of Perris and its partners for an innovative job well done and I strongly recommend that they be awarded the League of California Cities' Helen Putnam Award in the category of Enhancing Public Trust, Ethics, and Community Involvement.

Please make this letter available to the individuals with the responsibility of determining the applicant awarded the League of California Cities' Helen Putnam Award in the category of Enhancing Public Trust, Ethics, and Community Involvement.

Thank You,



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