

**October 3, 2015**

**TO:** APA California Chapter Board

**FROM:** Section Directors

**RE:** Section Directors Reports

**Central Coast Section**

The annual Sierra Retreat at Sequoia Lake was canceled this year due to a devastating fire in the area.  However the Summer and Fall were eventful.  A new quarterly lunch series was established with the Fresno State University Office of Community & Economic Development and held on Campus in August with a lively discussion by one of the professors about the economic benefit of city parks.  A similar lunch was also held in Visalia where attendees heard the latest about the water situation in Central California from the Latino Water Coalition.  More lunches are planned for this fall.

Section Awards were given out earlier this year for excellence and innovation in planning to Inyo County, Mono County and the City of Merced.  Congrats to our three award recipients this year.

This fall, the Section will be involved at the AEP Eastern Slope Conference in Mammoth, the Fall Policy Conference in Yosemite and be holding a Holiday Mixer at the Fresno Christmas Tree Lane.

A new website has been created for the Section and is expected to be live by the end of the year.

**Northern Section**

Welcome to Oakland and the Northern Section! The Northern Section is the host section of this year’s APA California Annual Conference. The theme of this year’s conference is “Rooted in AuthentiCITY”. On behalf of the Northern Section, thank you for joining us! We sincerely hope you enjoy the conference.

The Northern Section of APA California extends along the coast from Monterey Bay to the Oregon border and includes the highly populated nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The section is comprised of 1,600 APA members from throughout the Section.  APA California-Northern promotes and provides to our members no or low-cost educational events, social functions and other activities that: Provide an arena for communication and exchange of information; Raise member awareness and involvement in APA affairs; Increase public awareness of the importance of planning; Encourage professionalism in the conduct of its members; and Foster a sense of community among the members.

Here’s a snapshot of our Section activities in 2015:

Communications

The Northern Section utilizes a variety of methods to communicate with our membership and share information. A central focus of our communication is our newsletter, the Northern News. The Section also sends out timely information via email twice per month though our “eNews”. We also continue to increase our social media presence by way of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

eNews

* The Communications Director disturbed a total of 25 issues of the Northern Section’s eNews email distribution.
  + A special 2015 APA California Chapter Oakland Conference section is now part of the eNews designed to provide news and opportunities for participation.

Northern News

* Our Section newsletter, the Northern News, is published online 10 times per year.
* Average of 11,000 words and 24 images per issue in 2013 versus 13,000 words and 30 images per issue in 2015. The October 2015 conference-centric edition is the largest Northern News ever, at 35 pages. According to Constant Contact, the number of opens has increased over 20% from the previous issue.
* Using Constant Contact email to notify nearly 4,000 people when the News is online as a virtual magazine and a readable/downloadable PDF.
* Started a new feature, “My Oakland,” interviewing and highlighting members that live in Oakland.

AICP Training

* Held Spring and Fall 2015 AICP Exam Preparation workshop series at San Jose State University and other central Bay Area locations.
* All of the Spring workshop candidates that attended the sessions passed the exam.

International Planning

The Northern Section’s planner collaboration and exchange agreement with Sao Paulo has been officially signed, sealed and delivered. This effort builds upon Section sponsored planning tours, providing additional opportunities for professionals and students to participate in planning activities abroad. Signatories to the agreement are representatives of the municipality of São Paulo, SP Urbanismo (a state-owned enterprise, under São Paulo City Government), Mackenzie Architecture College. Also signing the official documents were Hing Wong, APA California Chapter President Hing Wong and Andrea Ouse, California Northern Section Director.

Following recent SKYPE conference calls, the draft work plan has been refocused to initially exchange information about two items. 1. Land use and transportation modeling techniques - including visual simulations. 2. Innovative urban development financing techniques such as the purchase of air and development rights.

Next steps are to extend the collaboration to include one or more universities located in the Northern Section’s boundaries (or nearby with existing ties to Sao Paulo) and to involve applicable faculty, students and professionals in the study. A representative from Sao Paulo has also been invited to participate in a panel featuring the Section’s international activities at the upcoming APA conference in October.

An APA Chapter Presidents Council mini-grant was also approved to help launch the initial pilot project - and to prepare a tool kit for other interested planning chapters.

Young Planners Group

The Young Planners Group (YPG) continues to be an active part of the Northern Section. The group held numerous events for emerging planning professionals with nine different partner committees or organizations. These events included educational opportunities, a career fair, volunteer shoreline cleanup and happy hour mixers that provided valuable networking opportunities. The YPG maintains regular contact with the emerging planners via email and regular Facebook postings. The latest event was planned in collaboration with the Bay Area Planning Directors Association (BAPDA), held on September 16th, focusing on emerging planning professionals meeting public sector Planning Directors.

Awards Banquet

Northern Section handed out its annual Planning Awards on May 15 at Scott’s Seafood in Jack London Square, Oakland. Seven Awards of Merit and seven Awards of Excellence were given out to recognize significant planning efforts. Guests of this exciting annual event enjoyed an evening of cocktails, dinner and awards ceremony.

Diversity

* Primary activities were focused on planning the Conference Diversity Summit

Historian

* Successfully led with the Section Director and a subcommittee of the board that submitted one Planner Emeritus Network (PEN) Honor Award Nominations from the Northern Section to be honored by the PEN Board at the 2015 APA Chapter Conference.
* Regularly maintained and updated the Section Archives page of the Northern Section website: <http://norcalapa.org/about/archives/>.

2015 APA California Northern Section Board Retreat

In January 2015, the Board and interested members gathered in Berkeley to set forth the goals and actions of the board for the coming year. As a summary of the break-out sessions focusing on particular topic areas, the following goals were prepared and approved by the Board:

SUMMARY OF BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

BOARD OPERATIONS

Goal #1: Board Resources

Goal #2: Streamline Board Reports (Admin Director/Executive Board)

Goal #3: Executive Board Redux (Elected Positions)

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

Goal 1: Membership Drive (for 2016)

Goal 2: Translating Value (Workgroup)

Goal 3: Simplify Joining (Workgroup)

Goal 4: General Membership Audiences

COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Focus Area 1: Announcements – How, when, who is responsible

Focus Area 2: Clarifying Roles and responsibilities.

Focus Area 3: Social Media

**Orange Section**

The Orange Section continues to focus on being a resource to and providing professional development opportunities for our section members at all points in their careers. We strive to create a professional and social network environment among students, young professionals, and established planners by exploring different specializations and participating in local and regional activities related to planning.

Here are some of the highlights of 2015:

The Orange section continues to expand our outreach to graduate students in the University of California, Irvine Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program. Our board includes two students and one professor affiliated with the UCI MURP program who help us liaison between students and professional planners. In late September, members of our APA board made a presentation at the UCI MURP Orientation. We continue to financially assist students attend both local, regional, and State APA events.

In October, we are launching the Orange County Young Planners Group (YPG) Mentorship Program. We are in the process of matching YPG members (“Protégés”) with experienced planners (“Mentors”). National APA reached out to our YPG board for input into the new YPG Guidebook 2.0.

We have partnered with Caltrans District 12 to provide opportunities for APA Orange section members and Caltrans planners to provide free training opportunities. Through this partnership, one APA member was able to attend the one-week Caltrans Transportation Planning Field Academy in Oakland at no cost. In September, seven APA members attended a two-day Caltrans training session on Community Involvement and Communications in Planning at no cost. The Orange Section has underwritten the costs for three Caltrans planners to attend our lunch programs.

Our monthly lunch programs are a highlight of our section. Planners can get 1.5 credits at most of our programs on a variety of timely issues at a reasonable price of $15 to $20. Some of our monthly programs are noted below.

* ABC’s of Form-Based Codes. In this intensive one-day class planners learned the basics of form-based codes (FBCs): the need for zoning reform; the required and optional components of FBCs; their legal basis; and the process for developing a local code including FBCs for transit-oriented development.
* Architecture 101: Providing the development process from the perspective of architects. A panel of architects discussed development trends, best practices that have streamlined the development process; and what happens behind the scenes before and after a project is submitted to a city.
* The Brave New World of Wireless Regulations for Planners: This session addressed the challenges planners face in the existing regulatory environment as well as what would happen if AB 57 becomes law.
* Carol Barrett presented “Don’t Let the Headline be About You: Avoiding Conflicts of Interest on the Job.” Proceeds from this ethics training session went to the California Planning Foundation.
* An Economic Development Toolbox for a Redevelopment World: This program addressed tools for economic development and prospects for public-private partnerships in a post development environment. The speakers also discussed how to integrate these principals into general plans and specific plan documents.

Our second annual AICP Information Session and Social Mixer was a great success. About 30 planners attended this free event to find out how to become a certified planner. The session provided insight on completing the application as well study tips from members who recently took and passed the AICP test in the prior year.

We also held several social events. These included the Laguna Beach First Thursday Art Walk, as well as our annual Angels Game with AEP.

This summer, the APA Orange Section, the Planning Directors of Orange County (PDAOC), and Orange Empire Chapter of International Code Council (ICC) held its annual Bob Goldin/Bob Storchhiem Memorial Golf Tournament. All proceeds go to fund local engineering and planning scholarships. Over $9,700 will be used to fund scholarships for students enrolled in local universities majoring in urban planning and related fields.

Additional funds were raised at our Awards Program. All money raised through our silent action goes to the Bob Goldin Scholarship fund and to the California Planning Foundation, the latter as the Orange section’s auction donation at the State Conference. Two of our submittals will be recognized at the State APA Conference and have been submitted for consideration at the 2016 national APA Conference.

We will round out the year by participating in the PDAOC Planning Officials Forum, the State Conference in Oakland, our lunch program in November, and our holiday party in December

**Sac Valley Section**

SVS APA is having a very productive year. We are finishing up our May – October Speaker Series, a collaboration with other state and regional agencies and land use, environmental, and real estate professional organizations, with a theme of “Back to the Future.” Other significant programming included our Section Awards Ceremony in January, a CM credit ethics session in March with a diversity focus, a co-sponsored event in April with ULI discussing Building Healthy Places initiatives, a summer social mixer with AEP and FMA in July, and in September we hosted a family friendly event about bats.

Our 5th Annual August Student Scholarship Fundraiser was a huge success and honored our 2014 Legacy Award recipient, Curtis Alling, AICP. We exceed our goal of raising $2,000 for student scholarships, and as a result, we were able to donate a portion of the proceeds to CPF above and beyond our normal contribution. Our Section sponsorships were up this year as well, with nearly 15 planning firms.

We are pleased to announce that our Section established four Divisions in the Cascade, North Valley, Sacramento, and Sierra regions with Division Director Leadership who are bringing programs to our members in the areas outside of the City/County of Sacramento. In August and September the Sierra Division and North Valley Division hosted their very first technical session and networking events. We also have a new Planning Commission Representative that is planning a Planning Commissioner Training Workshop for spring 2016.

For students, emerging, and young planners, our YPG group is very active with monthly activities, including “planners pint nights” with establish planning professional speakers, a Sacramento Regional Transit Light Rail pub crawl to historic Old Town Folsom, a bike tour of Chico, networking events with other land use organizations, and participation with an exciting Tactical Urbanism Portal Project in downtown Sacramento. The award-winning PLAN Sac Valley Mentoring Program ended a successful year in June, and we are currently in the process of selecting the Class of 2015-2016 with an unprecedented number of applicants. We also held an AICP exam preparation workshop in February and September.

On a somber note, we were very saddened in April by the passing of our esteemed Professional Development Officer, Scot Mende, AICP. To honor Scot’s memory and his dedication to the planning profession we established the Scot Mende Memorial Fund, and with generous donations in support of this fund, we’ve collected over $6,000 to support the Section’s mentoring, leadership, training, and professional development programs.

Lastly, we continue to send out a monthly Section e-newsletter, which has a new design and layout this year. Looking ahead, we are planning several activities for “October is Community Planning Month.” Overall, the Sacramento Valley Section is very pleased to provide robust programs and services to our APA members!

**San Diego Section**

The San Diego section has had a very busy and fun 2015. Here are some highlights:

The Section’s awards event was held at the Prado in Balboa Park, one of the inaugural Great Places in California. Awards were presented in twelve categories and a number of those will be recognized at the APA California conference in Oakland. Also recognized was Supervisor Greg Cox, a 2015 National APA award winner.

There have been a number of excellent programs offered in 2015 including sessions on renewable energy, foodsheds and bioregionalism, Border transportation and Balboa Park assets and history. Upcoming in October, the Section will host an evening with Gil Penalosa, an international leader and advocate for the creation of great public spaces.

Also, this year’s AICP training resulted in San Diego having seven new Certified Planners. And, the Young Planners Group has completed another excellent Mentorship Program. Last, but not least, the Section held several Planners Night Out events that were wildly successful!