Buckman Direct Diversion Project

A joint regional project of the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County to build a reliable and sustainable water supply.

Date: **December 6, 2012**

To: **Buckman Direct Diversion Board**

From: **Erika Schwender, CEP, Acting BDD Facilities Manager** ES

Re: **Discussion of possible recruitment of Public Information / Public Outreach Specialist**

Item and Issue:

Request discussion of potential activities addressed by a Public Information / Public Outreach Specialist and approval to recruit a fulltime Public Information Specialist.

Background and Discussion:

In response to the discussion and requests made during the BDD Board meeting on November 1, 2012, BDD staff met with Board Member Bokum and Commissioner Mayfield to further discuss responsibilities and tasks the BDD Board may like to see addressed by a Public Information / Public Outreach Specialist.

During this discussion it became clear that both BDD Board members, Board Member Bokum and Commissioner Mayfield, would like to see more proactive media and public information as well as public outreach activities and are, therefore, strongly in support of establishing a fulltime BDD Public Information / Outreach Specialist position. Based on the above mentioned discussion and review of similar positions currently in place with Santa Fe County, City of Santa Fe, and Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utilities Authority, we would like to suggest that the following responsibilities should be included in this position's job description :

Public Information:

- Develop and maintain resources and contact files of persons, organizations, and agencies pertinent to information exchange
- Develop and implement media and community communication strategies, policies and procedures
- Serve as spokesperson by developing, producing, and delivering presentations,

press releases, speeches, and participating in meetings with the general public, agencies, and media
- Bridge technical, political, regulatory, and community groups by interacting in person and providing appropriate information
- Regularly author and submit written material to print media
- Provide customer service by responding to public information requests
- Coordinate with all partners on press releases and special events
- Develop calendar of public information events and activities and share this information with all BDD partners
- Strategic messaging of at times controversial information

BDD Website:

- Review and manage the BDD's website
- Post monthly BDD Board Meeting agendas and meeting minutes on website
- Coordinate with City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County Water Utility Division staff regarding operations, water deliveries, closures, special occurrences, etc. and post pertinent information on BDD website
- Coordinate with operations and regulatory compliance staff and post monitoring and compliance data on website

Emergency response:

- Develop and implement protocols and procedures for informing the public during emergencies or other unusual events.
- Determine line of command for press releases and other public announcements.

Public Outreach:

- Develop articles for print media and presentations for public outreach events, and tours
- Collaborate with schools, colleges, pueblos, and other organizations on developing and implementing water related public education programs
- Develop outreach program with schools, colleges, universities, pueblos and other organizations to promote career opportunities in the water treatment field
- Lead BDD tours
- Coordinate with BDD staff and the NM Wildlife Federation on the river mitigation and park development efforts and develop public information and outreach materials for these projects
- Possibly develop and implement effective and strategic use of social media to strengthen public outreach and information exchange

BDD staff would like to propose the following minimum qualification, essential skills, and experience requirements for this position:

- BA or BS in Communication, Public Relations, Journalism, or a closely related field

AND

- 4 years of experience in public relations or journalism
- Knowledge of and skills / experience in:
    - Principals of public and business administration
    - Principals and techniques of public information / relations programs
    - Principals of public event planning and implementation
    - Public speaking and presentations
    - Methods and techniques broadcast and print production
    - Writing press releases
    - Dealing with idiosyncratic or disgruntled people as well as adverse and conflicting situations
    - Interpretation and comprehension of complex, technical, and scientific information
    - Effective time management
    - Effective and concise communication skills, oral and in writing
    - Principals of English grammar, spelling, punctuation, writing and editing
    - Digital software including Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Illustrator, Photo Shop, WordPress, and other field related applications
- Experience in water treatment and / or public utilities preferred

Financial Implications:

As mentioned during the BDD Board meeting on November 1, 2012, Santa Fe County, the City of Santa Fe, and Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utilities Authority developed and / or employ a Public Relations Officer or similar position. Salary ranges for those positions are as follows:

Organization	Hourly range	Hourly range including taxes and benefits
Santa Fe County	$21.69 to $32.53	$29.28 to $43.92
City of Santa Fe	$22.46 to $40.67	$30.32 to $$54.90
Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utilities Authority		

The three positions currently in place at Santa Fe County, City of Santa Fe, and Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utilities Authority are Sr. Staff level positions and include supervisory and management responsibilities, which would not necessarily apply to the proposed BDD Public Information / Public Outreach Specialist position.

Expenses for a BDD Public Information / Public Outreach Specialist were not included in the FY2012-13 budget but have been incorporated in the proposed FY2013-14 budget.

Recommendation:

BDD staff requests discussion and approval to hire a fulltime Public Information Specialist. Furthermore, BDD staff would like to request direction on when to proceed with this recruitment and, if necessary, approval to make an adjustment to the FY2012/13 budget.