



Presented by your 2020-2021 San Diego Section Officers

Section Director: Diane Vermeulen

Section President: Oscar Cortes

President Elect: Frank Contreras

VP Supervisory: Abu-Bakr Al-Jafri

VP Rank & File: William Vivar

VP At Large: Ben Neill

Secretary: Alex Balce

Treasurer: Farah Kushkaki

Upcoming Events

- March 5, 2021 – PECG Corporate Meeting
- March 16, 2021 – San Diego Science & Engineering Fair

Reward yourself by recruiting a new PECG Member!

- Recruitment Tools:
<http://pecg.org/recruitment-tools/>
- To join:
<http://pecg.org/join-pecg/>
- Rewards:
\$50 per rank and file employee
\$200 per supervisor/manager

San Diego Section PECG Officer Meeting

Wednesday, January 13, 2021



San Diego Section PECG Officers held a Webex meeting to discuss topics that included the current budget, San Diego Section Committee responsibilities, the next General Meeting for all SD PECG members, the next VP At Large Meeting, the next Corporate Meeting on March 5th, and the next VP Supervisory Meeting. Upcoming events discussed included the San Diego County Engineering Council Event, Legislative Day in Sacramento, and Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair (virtual platform “zFair”).

Don't forget to use your \$50 holiday gift card from the PECG Board of Directors!



happy
HOLIDAYS
FROM THE PECG BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

Every Active PECG Member to Receive a \$50 Gift Card from PECG

2020 hasn't gone the way any of us anticipated. Some of PECG's best-laid plans for the year were cancelled or postponed indefinitely. One bright spot to come out of all this is that we realized modest budget savings for the year. This month, the PECG Board of Directors made the unanimous decision to take advantage of this one-time savings by providing a holiday gift to our members and to thank you for your membership.

On December 17, every active PECG member was sent an email from noreply@tangocard.com to the email address we have on file. The email includes a Tango Card reward link and the instructions for redeeming your \$50 gift card. This \$50 reward link can be used at a wide variety of online retailers, restaurant delivery services, and virtual entertainment options.

If you did not see the email from noreply@tangocard.com in your inbox, please check your spam or junk folder. Again, the email was sent on December 17. If you conclude that you did not receive your gift card email, please contact PECG by sending an email to pecg@pecg.org.

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year from PECG!

PECG Informer

The Governor releases proposed 2021-2022 State Budget that suggests restoration of Unit 9 pay, end to PLP 2020 by the start of July 1, 2021.

January 8, 2021

On January 8, Governor Gavin Newsom kicked off the annual State Budget debate with the introduction of his proposed 2021-22 spending plan for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2021. To fully understand the Governor's spending proposal for next year, it is important to remember what happened just over six months ago when the Legislature approved the current 2020-21 State Budget. At that time, millions of Californians were thrown out of work by the pandemic, and it was assumed the State had entered a prolonged COVID-19 recession. State economists forecast an immediate \$54 billion budget deficit and budget deficits for years to come. To close the predicted deficit, the Governor and Legislature quickly agreed upon a bare-bones budget that made across-the-board cuts to State spending, including reductions in State employee compensation. Well, the budget writers were wrong. California's economy and State budget revenues did not collapse. Middle and high-income wage earners continued to work from home – and pay taxes just as they always have. As the stock market soared, the wealthy collected, and then paid taxes on, billions of dollars in capital gains. The result: State revenues over the last year have come in at the levels that were predicted prior to the pandemic. Which brings us to the Governor's 2021-22 State Budget proposal. The plan proposes total spending next year of just over \$227 billion, with \$164.5 billion in General Fund expenditures. With revenue coming in at far greater levels than projected, the 2021-22 budget anticipates a \$15 billion

PECG International

Tuesday, January 26th, 2021

San Diego Section PECG President Oscar Cortes participated on a webinar hosted by the International Sustainable Resilience Center (ISRC) with the topic Public-Private Partnership: A plan for Sustainable National Economic Recovery in the USA. The webinar stressed the importance of a comprehensive sustainable infrastructure plan for the new federal administration opportunities and challenges for a path for bridging the infrastructure funding gaps.

Public-Private Partnerships: A Plan for Sustainable National Economic Recovery in the USA

Webinar hosted by the International Sustainable Resilience Center, Inc (ISRC)
www.isrc-ppp.org

Unique insights from three leading PPP experts

David Baxter
Senior PPP Advisor
ISRC

Seth Miller Gabriel
Director, Valuation & Business Analytics, BDO USA

Oscar Cortés
VP, International Relations
FEMCIC

Toot Our Horn

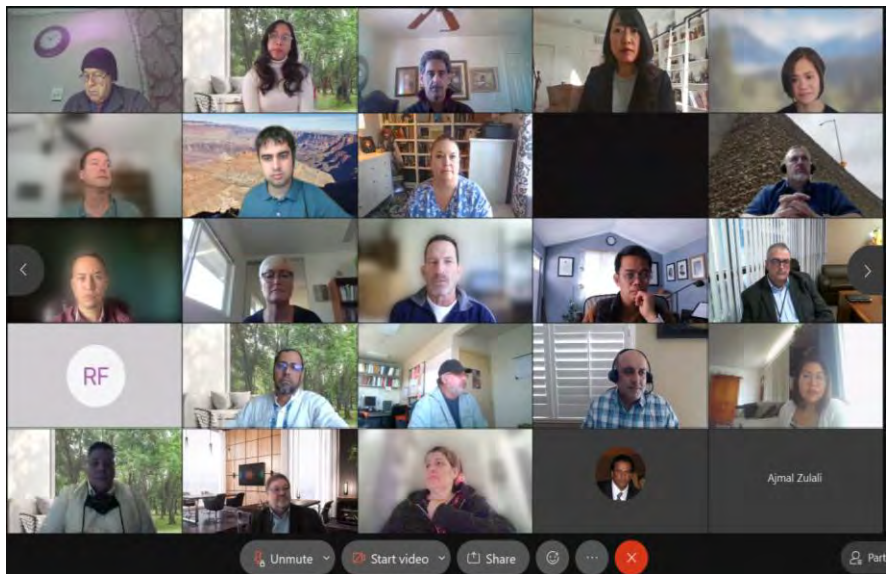
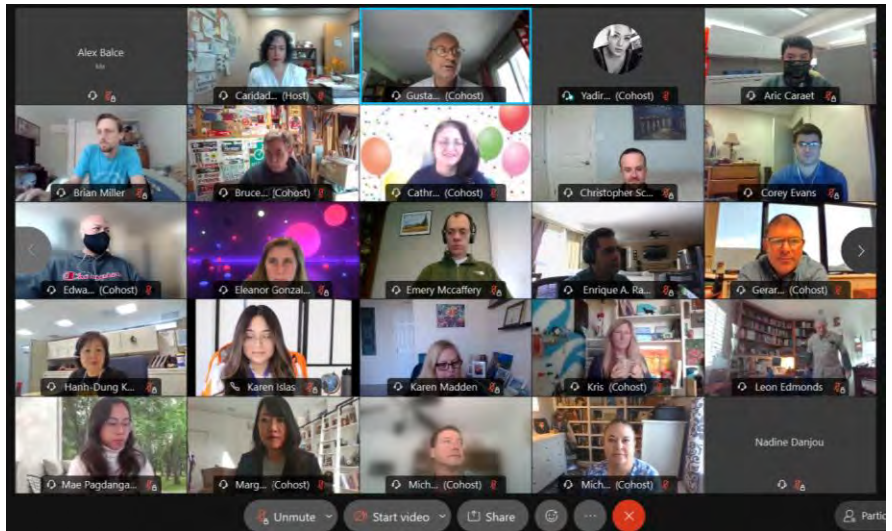
Wednesday, February 17th, 2021



Caltrans District 11 held another successful virtual Toot Our Horn Tuesdays (but held on Wednesday) via Webex online meeting with over 250 employees. The celebration recognized our excellent Caltrans District 11 employees in San Diego, welcomed new employees, and recognized colleagues' milestones. Other acknowledgements included promotions, staff who accepted out-of-class assignments, those who obtained a Professional Engineering license, and retirements.

one-time surplus and reserves of \$22 billion. By comparison, the current 2020-21 State Budget authorized just \$202 billion in total spending, with \$133 billion in General Fund expenditures. Most importantly for PECG members, given the State's improved fiscal condition, the budget indicates the resources may be available to end the Personal Leave Program 2020 (PLP 2020) and restore Unit 9 salaries to their previous levels on July 1, 2021. As you know, under the PLP 2020 program, since July 1, 2020, Unit 9 employees have received 16 hours of PLP 2020 leave each month as compensation for a reduction in take-home pay. Undoing the PLP 2020 program and restoring Unit 9 employee salaries will be done through the collective bargaining process this spring according to the budget summary – after the release of the May Budget Revision, which will include an update on the State's fiscal condition. Also of note, the budget includes an additional \$616 million in one-time funding to retroactively pay the 2020-21 retiree health care costs for State employees. As you know, Unit 9 employees had their prefunding retiree health care 2% payroll deduction suspended as part of PECG's 2020-22 Memorandum of Understanding. Paying the funding lost by the suspension of the payroll deduction will allow the State to maintain 2046 as the target date to turn over employee retiree health payments to the retiree health care trust managed by CalPERS. It is important to remember that for now, the plan to end the PLP 2020 program and the other proposals described in the accompanying article are just that – proposals. The budget must go through review and ultimately be approved by the State Legislature over the next six months.

To read more: <http://pecg.org/wp-content/uploads/PECG-Informer-January-2021.pdf>



➤ **Welcome New Employees**

- Manuel Gonzalez, AGPA (PPM)
- Holly Isaac, OT (Mtnce Engr)
- Michael Mascarenhas, TE (Design)
- Mae Pagdanganan, AGPA (Admin)
- Stephen Welborn, IO (Admin)
- Amiel-Tracy Toledo, AGPA (PPM)
- Abraham Fong, LA (Design)
- Ernesto Fuentes, Mechanic (Equip)

➤ **Reached Milestones**

- Ary Jaff, TE (Design) – 25 years
- Marco Limon, TE (Engr) – 25 years
- Roy Breedlove, SSMI (Constr) – 25 years
- Daniel Schmidt, CMAS (Mtnce) – 25 years

In The News

California's high-speed rail delays are 'beyond comprehension'

January 13th, 2021

LOS ANGELES - A letter from a major contractor blames the State for delays in building California's bullet train, contradicting claims that the line's construction pace is on target and warning the project could miss a key 2022 federal deadline.

The 36-page letter obtained by the Los Angeles Times alleges the high-speed rail project faces problems including continuing delays in obtaining land for the line and the SState's failure to finalize deals with outside parties such as utilities and freight railroads.

The delays will result in stalled work and layoffs, construction giant Tutor Perini says in the letter.

As of mid-November, construction crews could not build on more than 500 parcels in the Fresno area because the California High Speed Rail Authority still lacks proper documentation, according to the Jan. 4 letter. The company has completed all the work that could be done efficiently and as a result is now operating at other sites at a slower pace, the Times reported.

"It is beyond comprehension that as of this day, more than two thousand and six hundred calendar days after (official approval to start construction) that the authority has not obtained all of the right of way ..." wrote Tutor Perini Vice President of Operations Ghassan Ariqat to Garth Fernandez, the contracting chief at the state rail authority.

The conditions described by the letter jeopardize the project's long-range goals, because it is already struggling to complete even a portion of its original vision of a Los Angeles-to-San Francisco bullet train, the newspaper said. The letter indicates that delays and cost overruns are poised to grow worse.

Rail authority Chief Executive Brian Kelly

➤ Recent Promotions

Manuel Rivas, Proj. Mgr. (Central Corridors)
Mathew Voss, Sr. Env Plan (Environmental)
Maria Ibarra, SSMI (Admin)
Keri Conlin, SSMI (N. Coast Corridor)
Christopher Frederickson, CHML (Mtnce)
Robert Mercado, CHML (Landscape)
Rafael Reyes, Sr. TE (Planning)
Leonard Dinges, CMS (Mtnce)
Emi Ito, Sr. TE (Design)
Michael Hank, DDC (Surveys)
Richard Davidson, Supv (Mtnce)
Philip Kolen, Supv (Mtnce)
Daniel Appleby, Supv (Mtnce)
Casey Drown, Lead (Mtnce)
Mario Escobar, Supv (Mtnce)

➤ Accepted Out-of-Class Assignments

Diane Vermeulen, Sr. TE (Environmental)
Sam Amen, Acting DDC (Engr)
Travis Valles, Mgr II (W. Region)
Diana Espina, SSMI (Admin)
Ashley Collins, SSA (Constr)
Margie Perez, Supv TE (Constr)
Kevin Maxwell, Sr. TS (Surveys)
Patrick Purvis, Sr. Ts (ROW Engr)
Laura Hill, AGPA (Env)

➤ New Professional Engineers

Annabel Valencia (Structures)
Benjamin Haney (Mtnce Engr)
Ryan Fallica (Traffic Safety & Ops)
Nicholas Ventrilla (South County Trade Corr)

➤ Retirements

Tom Collins, Structures (22 years)
Carlos Cortez, Design (32 years)
Ron Caraet, Engr (32 years)
Laurie Espinoza, D8/D9 (30 years)
Khalil Ashtari, Traffic Engr (23 years)
Jorge Castellanos, Constr (21 years)
Chuck Anders, ROW Engr (30 years)
Rob McMillan, ROW Engr (30 years)

said in a statement to the Times that the letter "attempts to set out why project challenges are everybody else's fault." "As we do with all contractor claims, our commercial and legal teams will evaluate the letter and provide a full response, including an articulation of where the contractor's claims are mistaken or otherwise in error," Kelly wrote. Kelly said the authority has worked with Tutor Perini over the last 18 months to achieve a number of benchmarks, including having an average of 344 workers on job sites as of the end of October and completing 92% of the design work for the Fresno segment. The Times said President-elect Joe Biden can relieve some of the pressure the Trump administration placed on the project, such as amending the 2022 deadline for building structures. And Biden could release \$927 million in grant money that President Donald Trump terminated.

To read more Associated Press:
<https://www.ktvu.com/news/californias-high-speed-rail-delays-are-beyond-comprehension>

California Oil, Gas Drilling Hits Historic Lows in 2020
 January 25th, 2021

New oil and natural gas drilling hit historic lows in California last year while a renewed emphasis on abandoned wells turned up a record high number of permanently sealed wells, the state Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) reported Wednesday. The severe downturn in permitting and new drilling can be seen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, "but global commodity prices, our state's economy and local judicial decisions in Kern County have all contributed to the decline," said CalGEM spokesperson Don Drysdale. Production data for the last two years showed in-state production met only about 32% of demand, according to the

Leon Edmonds, Engr (59 years)



California Independent Petroleum Association (CIPA).

"Despite a dip in demand in 2020, imports still made up approximately 68% of total oil consumed in California, continuing Californians' dependence on foreign regimes who don't mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions, don't follow California's safety and environmental standards, and don't share Californians' values," said CIPA CEO Rock Zierman. New wells spud in 2020 declined year/year by 87% with 138 last year, compared with 1,032 in 2019, CalGEM reported. Oil extraction hit its lowest level in history last year, down 68% from the peak in 1985.

California contributes only 4% of the nation's oil production and it's likely to continue to drop from the list of top producing states, as has been the case over the past few decades, Drysdale said. Last year's drilling permit total was down 23% from 2019, and permits for hydraulic fracturing were at their lowest level in history at only 83. The average since 2016 had been 220/year. CalGEM also denied 57 fracturing permits, another state record.

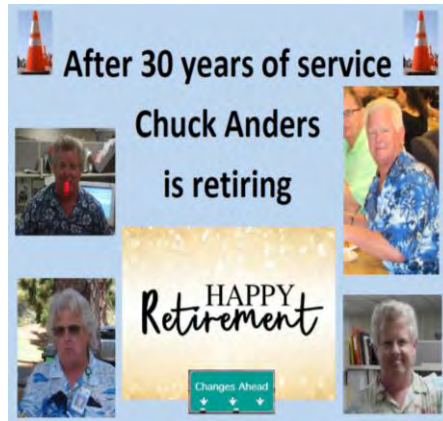
In contrast, a record high was recorded for abandoned/idle wells with 3,238 two-year permits issued to permanently seal them in 2020, CalGEM said. More than half of the permits, or 1,730 oil and gas wells, were for plugging and abandonment in 2020.

"This outpaced the number of new drilling permits issued by 65%," Drysdale said.

"New state policies, combined with increased enforcement, are driving the increase in oil and gas operators permanently removing wells from operation."

CalGEM last year was criticized for not accelerating efforts to close an estimated 30,000 idle wells.

"CalGEM continues to implement state laws and regulations as mandated, prioritizing public health and safety, and relying on science and sound engineering practices in its regulatory



San Diego County Engr Council

February 22nd - 27th, 2021

The San Diego County Engineering Council (SDCEC) hosted an Engineers Week Festival (#EFEST21) and all events were virtual and free of charge. The event was geared towards existing and aspiring San Diego Engineers. The Festival lineup through the week:

efforts regardless of the direction of our economy and what the future holds," Drysdale said.

To read more Shale Daily:

<https://www.naturalgasintel.com/california-oil-gas-drilling-hits-historic-lows-in-2020/>

California state worker retirements jumped 15% in year of pay cuts, coronavirus

February 17th, 2021

State employee retirements increased 15% last year in California amid pay cuts and changes to working conditions brought on by the coronavirus, according to California Public Employees' Retirement System data.

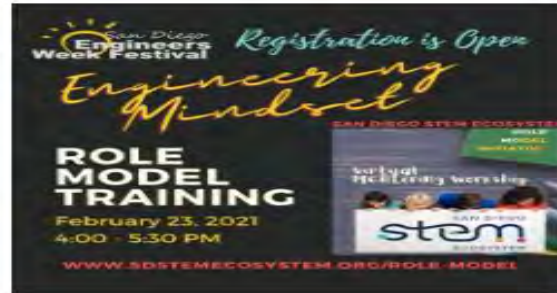
While state workers headed for the exits, retirements among local government employees — who generally avoided pay cuts and even received scheduled raises last year — decreased 7% compared to 2019, according to preliminary figures from CalPERS.

Gov. Gavin Newsom and the California State Legislature imposed pay cuts on state workers starting in July. Most employees took a base pay cut of 9.23% under union-negotiated agreements. Most employees receive two days off per month in exchange for the reduction in pay, and the State softened the blow by suspending the contributions employees normally make to their retirement health care. "No one likes to take a pay cut, so it's understandable that some employees would choose to retire rather than accept less money for their work," said Ted Toppin, executive director of the Professional Engineers in California Government.

Retirements were up 25% among the approximately 11,000 employees PEGG represents, Toppin said.

"They're losing a huge asset," he said. "The State needs engineers and related professionals to deliver infrastructure projects. And when folks retire, that's not

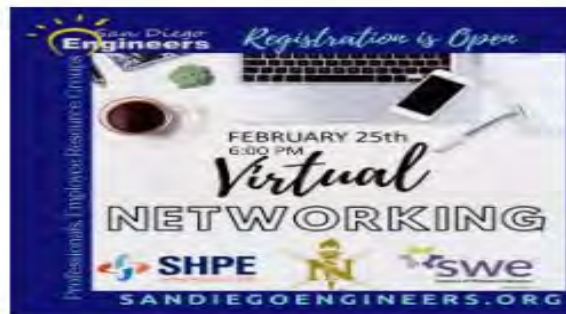
Tue Feb 23 4 pm



Wed Feb 24 5 pm



Thur Feb 25 6 pm



Fri Feb 26 6 pm



accessible to them.”

The pay cut agreements, negotiated when the State was projecting a \$54 billion budget deficit, also delayed the raises many employees were scheduled to receive last year and this year.

The budget projections turned out to be wrong, and the State is now anticipating a surplus for the year ahead. Newsom’s administration has said that while the future remains uncertain, the State might restore workers’ pay in July.

Local governments tended to take a wait-and-see approach to employee pay last year, and now, like the State, they are in a better position than expected, said Steve Crouch, a recently retired labor leader who represented maintenance and HVAC employees in both state and local government.

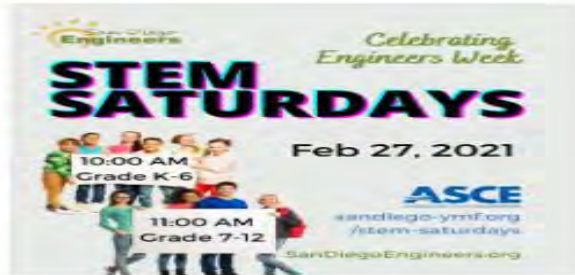
“They didn’t see the tsunami that they expected to see with respect to a decline in revenues,” Crouch said.

State employees’ pensions are calculated based primarily on their highest pay in-state service combined with their age and years of service. Those earning the highest pay of their careers as they approach retirement stand to increase their pensions by continuing to work and increase their pay. Without a raise on the horizon, there’s less incentive to stay. Working during the coronavirus added another variable to retirement decisions last year, particularly since retirement-age people are more vulnerable to COVID-19 than younger people.

Burnout and fatigue rose among state and local employees around the country last year, affecting 47% of them by October, up from 27% in May, according to a national survey conducted by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for State and Local Government Excellence.

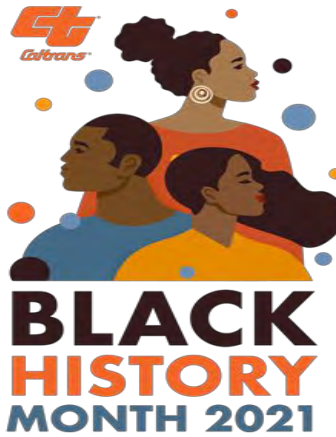
The changes drove teachers to early retirement last year too. The California State Teachers Retirement System reported a 26% increase in the second half of 2020 compared to the same period a year earlier, and many told the system in a survey that they were leaving early for

Sat Feb 27 STEM



Black History Month

February 22nd - 26th, 2021



Caltrans celebrated the Black History Month by recognizing the immense contributions that African Americans have made to the history of our Country, California and Caltrans.

Through the week of celebration, the Equal Employment

Opportunity (EEO) Program organized and coordinated events:

- **February 22nd** [Exploring California’s Heartland](#)

African Americans in California's Heartland explores the history of African Americans in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada from the Gold Rush through the 1950s.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/viewfinder-african-americans-in-californias-heartland/>

- **February 23rd** [Guest Speaker: April Sims](#)



April Sims was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO by its affiliated unions in December 2018, beginning her four-year term on Jan. 5, 2019. She

is the first woman of color and the first black person

reasons related to the pandemic. At CalPERS, a wave of retirements among baby boomers contributed to the year-over-year increase, spokeswoman Amy Morgan said

“We anticipate overall that the number of retirements will continue to increase over the next 5 to 10 years as more baby boomers leave the workforce. This has been predicted and considered as part of our funding of the system,” Morgan said in an email.

CalPERS reported the most retirements for December, when it processed 3,315 of them — a 17% increase from the prior year. State employees tend to retire at highest numbers at the end of calendar and fiscal years.

To read more Sacramento Bee:
<https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/the-state-worker/article249216935.html>

PECG Member Involvement

If you are interested in volunteering on any one of these San Diego Section Committees, please email our Section Past Director, Cristina Nunez at: cristina.nunez@dot.ca.gov

- Events Planning Committee
- Health & Safety Comment
- Membership Committee
- Nominations & Election Committee
- Policy & Bylaws Committee
- Political Involvement Committee
- Retirement Committee
- Scholarship & Student Monitoring Committee
- Public Outreach Committee
- Science Fair Committee Events Committee
- CHEERS Committee

to be elected as a WSLC executive officer.
https://youtu.be/nBrgb_flgwE

• **February 24th** [Wednesday's Ways](#)

Sign up to receive news from a Black organization:

<https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/news-articles/20-african-american-organizations-you-need-know>

Engage in healthy conversations about Black History on social media:

<https://blog.planoly.com/4-social-media-activism-tips>

Read a biography of an influential Black figure:

<https://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/10-black-authors-to-read/>

Explore Black Music:

<https://music.si.edu/spotlight/african-american-music>

• **February 24th** [A Look At Delta Sigma Theta](#)

Delta Sigma Theta was founded in 1913 by 22 phenomenal trendsetters who saw no limit to their vision for sisterhood, scholarship and service. Delta's Founders stepped out on faith to march with the suffragettes and took a stand for social justice as their first public act. Since then, more than 300,000 women have joined the organization. The Sorority has over 900 collegiate and alumnae chapters located in the United States, the Arabian Gulf, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Germany, Jamaica, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Virgin Islands. For additional information on Delta Sigma Theta, including on how to contribute, please visit their website at

<https://www.deltasigmatheta.org/>

• **February 25th** [Jordan Casteel Museum Tour](#)

This virtual museum tour reads much like a visual diary of the many people she's crossed paths with over the years. Focusing solely on people of color, the Denver-born artist has documented everyone from musicians performing in the streets of her Harlem neighborhood to students she taught at Rutgers University-Newark, where she is an assistant professor in the arts department.

<http://www.jordancasteel.com/>

• **February 26th** [Reflection by Alice Tyree](#)

- Grievance Committee
- STEM Committee

QUICK LINKS

- Visit San Diego Section
sandiegopecg.org
- Follow us on Twitter
[Twitter.com/pecg_sandiego](https://twitter.com/pecg_sandiego)
- Health Plan Premiums 2021
<http://pecg.org/members/resources/health-plan-premiums/>
- New MOU: 2020-2022
<http://pecg.org/new-pecg-mou/>
- PEGC Informer
pecg.org/communications/informer/
- Weekly Update
<http://pecg.org/communications/weekly-update/>



Improve your public speaking and enhance your leadership skills!

Try us out for free and join us in our virtual weekly meeting via Cisco Webex.

To get more information and to be included in our invitation list, contact our Toastmaster CalState-1733 Vice-President of Membership, Victor Cardenas at victor.cardenas@dot.ca.gov or Cathryne Bruce-Johnson, President at cathryne.bruce-johnson@dot.ca.gov.



On February 5th, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom issued a proclamation declaring February 2021 as Black History Month.

Caltrans has been proud to participate in this year's events.

As we conclude this year's celebration, we would like to

take a moment to reflect and

remind all that while Black History Month is celebrated in February, the immense contributions that African Americans have made to the history of our country, California, and Caltrans are with us year-round. History is more than a series of events, but the story of many individuals. At Caltrans we strive to highlight the voices of all employees. Leading us today is our own Alice Tyree from District 7. To view, press CTRL + Click to follow link: [District 7's Alice Tyree personal thoughts and reflections of Black History Month.](#)

Greater SD Science & Engineering Fair



Call for Judges

2021 Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair!

It's that time of year again and we are looking for volunteer judges for The Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair, which will be held on the virtual platform zFair on March 16, 2021. PEGC is a major sponsor of the event and is looking for volunteer judges for this year's fair. Volunteer judges will evaluate projects and select the top three projects which each will be awarded a PEGC sponsored scholarship.

If you are interested in being a judge for this year's fair please call PEGC Science & Engineering Fair Chair, Diane Vermeulen at (619) 540-8618 or e-mail her at diane.vermeulen@dot.ca.gov to sign up.

The deadline to sign up to judge at this year's fair is Friday, February 26th or until all 20

spots are filled.

Lunch vouchers will be provided by the San Diego Section Judges.

Online judging will begin one day prior with interviews occurring on March 16th.

Please Contact Diane Vermeulen by phone or email to join in the fun!

**Science Fair Chair Diane Vermeulen (619) 540-8618
diane.vermeulen@dot.ca.gov**