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Southern California REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK



Faces of SoCalREN: Energy Champion Edition!

This month, we are excited to recognize two Energy Champions from our network and hear about their experience working with SoCalREN Public Agency Programs.

Featuring:



Benjamin Lucha
Environmental & Technology
Manager
City of Palmdale



Antonia Castro-Graham
Deputy City
Manager
City of Fullerton

What is your role at your Public Agency?

- **Ben:** I oversee our Environmental & Technology Division. We oversee energy and energy efficiency projects, solid waste diversion, 5G roll-out, and smart cities initiatives in addition to several other things.
- **Antonia:** I am the Deputy City Manager and have been in local government for nearly twenty years. I am also an Adjunct Instructor at Cal State University Fullerton and Irvine Valley College teaching courses on sustainability and local government.

What do you like best about working with SoCalREN?

- **Ben:** All of the help we get! I have worked with several SoCalREN employees and thoroughly enjoyed working with all of them. They truly have helped us with successfully implementing several exciting projects!
- **Antonia:** [SoCalREN has] excellent staff willing to assist with whatever a city needs.

What is one of your favorite projects you've worked on so far?

- **Ben:** It is tough to say, we have accomplished so much! However, in working with SoCalREN, I definitely am proud of a project we worked on where we were able to perform a comprehensive energy efficiency project. It involved retrofitting 500 safety lights, installing variable frequency drives at six pools (one which was going to be reopened and another at a City waterpark), and completely retrofitting four City facilities (library, two rec centers, and City Hall). The anticipated savings were 1.3 million kWh and [over] \$150,000 [in annual cost savings]!
- **Antonia:** In Huntington Beach, where I was prior to the City of Fullerton, I oversaw the acquisition and retrofit of 11,000 streetlights and Lauren Seymour and Shawn Thompson from the SoCalREN team were an asset. I am currently working on a holistic energy action plan for the City of Fullerton - including a renewables plan.

Interested in hearing more about Ben & Antonia’s experience? Join SoCalREN Public Agency Programs as we get a chance to chat with both of them this Wednesday, 6/3, for our next Conversations with SoCalREN webinar, “Our Energy Champions: Stories from the Field” at 11 AM.

We will chat with Ben and Antonia to get the inside scoop on how roles and priorities at their agencies have shifted due to COVID-19, the barriers local governments currently face, and discuss the potential solutions needed to ensure that energy efficiency and other sustainability projects continue to move forward for the benefit of their communities. Register today!

[Register for the Webinar](#)

3 Funding and Incentive Opportunities for Public Agencies



With COVID-19 related budget impacts on everyone’s mind, it has become even more essential to find and take advantage of every financial incentive available for your energy efficiency project. Below are three financing options that SoCalREN can help your agency secure.

(SCE) incentives for completed projects. To receive the kicker, incentive applications must be **submitted and approved by the end of 2020**. The **SCE kicker is based on the LGP tier** an agency has achieved (see below). Your SoCalREN Project Manager can work with you to ensure your application is submitted and approved before this opportunity expires.

- Value Tier - additional \$0.03 per kWh saved
- Silver Tier - additional \$0.06 per kWh saved
- Gold Tier - additional \$0.09 per kWh saved
- Platinum Tier - additional \$0.12 per kWh saved

2. Energy Conservation Assistance Act – Low-Interest Loans

The California Energy Commission (CEC) is offering 1% interest loans for energy efficiency and energy generation projects for public agencies! For more information, [visit the CEC website](#). Loan details:

- 1% interest
- Maximum loan is \$3 million
- Eligible projects include: lighting system upgrades, pumps/motors, streetlights/LED traffic signals, energy management systems, building insulation, energy generation, HVAC equipment, water and wastewater treatment and load-shifting projects
- Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis
- Loan must be repaid from energy savings within a max of 20 years

3. 179(D) Tax Credit

The Federal Tax Code, Section 179(D), was recently reinstated after a 2-year lapse in availability. [Section 179\(D\)](#) allows facility owners to claim a tax deduction for projects with demonstrable energy efficiency improvements. Tax credit details:

- Up to 100% of project cost eligible for the credit
- For a tax deduction of \$1.80 per square foot, the recipient must demonstrate a 50% or more overall reduction in energy use as a result of interior lighting, building envelope, or heating, cooling, ventilation, or hot water system installations
- A partial tax credit of \$0.60 per square foot is available for buildings that partially meet specific target levels ([Visit the webpage](#) for a full breakdown of these target levels)
- Retroactive availability for projects completed from 2018-2020; retrofits must be installed by December 31st, 2020

Your SoCalREN Project Manager is ready to support all funding and incentive opportunities to ensure your projects have the capital needed to move projects forward and provide shared benefits to your communities. If you have any questions about these updates, please contact your Project Manager or email us at info@socalren.org and stay tuned for more financing opportunities!

Remote Audits are Available!



Remote audits are now available! SoCalREN [resumed in-field activities](#) on May 18th, such as site audits, on-site benchmarking, and post-installation, opening the door for projects to move one step closer to completion. To ensure SoCalREN continues to support all agencies, we have also created a remote audit option.

Your Project Manager will help you evaluate if your site is eligible for remote audit service by collecting information about your site through plans, equipment inventory, and energy management systems. Our team will also share details about what remote audit support will look like to ensure compliance with your agency's established safety protocols.

Your SoCalREN Project Manager is ready to support all necessary activities to ensure your projects are moving forward. If you have any questions about this update, please contact your Project Manager or email us at info@socalren.org.

Upcoming Happenings

**Tune in for our upcoming
“Conversations with SoCalREN”
webinars!**

We have an exciting lineup of conversation topics for this month, click below to register for any of the topics!

- June 3rd - Our Energy Champions: Stories from the Field - [Register](#)
- June 17th - It's a Virtual World: Remote Audit Services - [Register](#)
- June 24th - Improving Schools During Closure: Upgrades for our Students, Teachers, and Communities - [Register](#)

**Conversations
with SoCalREN**



Energy Efficiency TwitterChat with



Tune in Monday, June 29th at 12:00 PM on Twitter for an Energy Efficiency TwitterChat hosted by [San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments](#)! We will be joining other public agencies to share energy efficiency recommendations for residents and cities to save energy and money. Hope to see you there! #SGVEnergyWise

Follow us at [@_SoCalREN](#) so you don't miss the TwitterChat!

Recent Happenings

New Network Toolkit Resources Added!

Have you checked out our [Network Toolkit](#) lately? We're regularly adding and updating our resources to serve as your one-stop-shop for all public agency resources. This past month, we added all **Conversations with SoCalREN webinar recordings** and **multifamily communication resources for public agencies**.

Are you having trouble accessing your toolkit? Contact tchamberlin@energycoalition.org for support, or if you're not an enrolled agency, register at socialren.org/join.



Welcome to our Network! The Newest SoCalREN Public Agency Enrollments

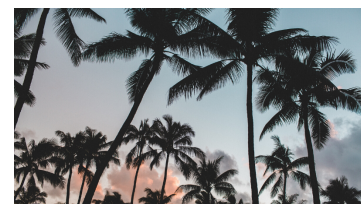
We are excited to welcome the newest SoCalREN Agencies: **City of Pico Rivera** and **City of Industry**!

Each new enrollment is unique and adds to the diverse portfolio of public agencies that SoCalREN serves. Stay tuned as we welcome more public agencies in the near future! Interested in joining us? Click [here](#) to get started!

The Latest on SoCalREN Public Agency Activities

These agencies have been making moves on their sustainability projects during this time - and we are proud to celebrate their recent achievements:

- **Comparative Energy Analysis (CEA) completed:** City of South Pasadena, Newport-Mesa Unified, City of Fullerton, City of Santa Ana
- **Green Button data completed:** City of Lindsay, City of Culver City, Alhambra Unified School District
- **Construction initiated:** City of Palmdale
- **IOU IR deadline extension approved:** City of Camarillo, City of Santa Ana, City of Santa Monica,



- **100 virtual inspection completed:** City of Santa Ana, Inland Empire Utilities Agency

Do you have a **virtual event** you'd like to share with the SoCalREN community? Contact us at info@socalren.org to be included in our next newsletter.

Join the SoCalREN Public Agency Programs' network and receive our toolkit, which includes access to our resource library, tips to get started on energy efficiency projects, and an exclusive member web badge.



Join the Network



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