



Locally Owned, Community Oriented

Vol. 14 No. 30  
April 23, 2015

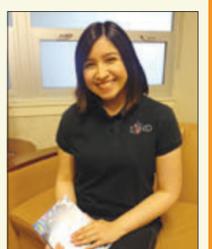
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Alameda Sun  
is a publication of  
Stellar Media Group, Inc.  
3215J Encinal Ave.  
Alameda, CA 94501  
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**Alameda Sun  
Almanac**

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|----------|-------|-------|
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## Taxpayers Foot Bill for New Coordinator

Hire mirrors position '100 Resilient Cities' grant would have funded

**Michele Ellson**  
*The Alamedan*

City officials are recommending the City Council approve a permanent civilian staffer to create and execute plans to help Alameda bounce back quickly from a range of disasters. This is the third position the city is creating to better prepare for disasters.

The proposal comes roughly a year after the city lost a lucrative grant that could have helped fund a chief resilience officer. That officer would have served as a high-level point person who would work with a broad array of stakeholders to identify and address resilience challenges.

Assistant City Manager Alex Nguyen denied the proposed disaster emergency services coordinator would carry out the same tasks as the chief resilience officer the city had hoped to fund with a Rockefeller Foundation grant the city won in December 2013 but lost a few months later.

"This is not an about face. It's the progression of how we need to form the core team at City Hall to get the job done," said Nguyen, who characterized the grant as an opportunity "that unfortunately did not work out."

City officials spurned the grant, which would have fully funded a similar position for two years, saying the job should go to a fire department manager instead of a civilian employee in the city manager's office. Executives with Rockefeller's 100 Resilient Cities initiative said they wanted their money to fund a staffer who could engage a broad cross-section of the community and come up with a comprehensive plan to help Alameda recover quickly from disaster.

Initiative executives also expressed concern that the city hadn't committed to retaining the position they offered to fund — a chief resilience officer — for more than the two years the nonprofit agreed to pay for it, emails obtained by *The Alamedan* through a public records request showed. And the city asked for far more money — \$647,171 originally, an amount that included \$200,000 to cover pension and health benefits and \$56,000 in

special pay — than at least one neighboring city, San Francisco, ultimately received.

City officials are now saying that the Council should hire a permanent civilian staffer to work out of the city manager's office who can work with city, business and community leaders to craft a resiliency plan, coordinate training and execute the plan if disaster strikes.

**"This is not an about face. It's the progression of how we need to form the core team at City Hall to get the job done."**

— Asst. City Manager  
**Alex Nguyen**

words: it cannot work if it's just a plan or a project; resiliency needs to be an ongoing program," Nguyen wrote in a report to the council.

If approved by the council, Nguyen said the new position would pay between \$64,000 and \$78,000 a year — a few thousand dollars more than the amount listed in a job ad for a community development and resiliency coordinator posted late last year. Nguyen also said the new emergency services coordinator would work with Jim Franz, who was recently named the city's resiliency coordinator, and Alameda Fire Department Capt. Sharon Oliver, the department's disaster preparedness coordinator.

The initiative's top executive, Michael Berkowitz, spelled out what it thought a chief resilience officer should do in this recent blog post.

Alameda was one of 33 cities around the globe and four in the Bay Area selected in December 2013 to join the inaugural class of the 100 Resilient Cities initiative, which has \$100 million to help 100 cities become better prepared to withstand shocks and stresses that include natural and economic disasters, food and water shortages, violence and even insufficient public transit.

But negotiations over who would fill the role fell apart the following March, when the city demanded the initiative approve a candidate with a public safety background — Deputy Chief Rick Zombeck — at an amount that was more than the initiative's

**BILL: Page 11**



Courtesy EBMUD

East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) Ranger Supervisor Mark Bolton examines Camanche Reservoir's dry lakebed. Camanche is EBMUD's largest Sierra reservoir and is currently at 27 percent of capacity.

## EBMUD Declares Stage 4 Drought

**Sun Staff Reports**

Dismal precipitation this past winter and a melted snowpack has pushed the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) board of directors to implement a series of actions to protect and stretch the East Bay's water supply.

The district's annual water supply and deficiency report confirms that projected water storage will

be at near-record lows without additional actions. Storage in all reservoirs combined is expected to stand at one-third of capacity by Oct. 1, the start of the water year.

The last time EBMUD saw lower storage numbers was in 1977. Reservoirs are currently about half full. Peak water use will occur in July, August and September, when many residential and irrigation custom-

ers double or triple their use.

"EBMUD staff for decades has planned for a worst-case scenario of a three-year severe drought. So far, our plans have worked," said EBMUD General Manager Alexander R. Coate. "We've managed through this drought with minimal impact to customers or the local economy. We can't know how dry next winter

**DROUGHT: Page 12**

## High Street Bridge Opens Ahead of Time

Night closures on Park Street Bridge to begin May 11

**Sun Staff Reports**

The Alameda County Public Works Agency announced that it has completed the rehabilitation and bridge deck repair work on the High Street Bridge 10 days earlier than scheduled. The bridge is now back to normal operation and open to traffic.

Construction work will begin on the Park Street Bridge on Monday, May 11. The bridge will close to all traffic, including bicyclists and pedestrians, from 8:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. through Friday, Aug. 14. The Coast Guard will communicate limitations to marine traffic in its weekly local notices to mariners.

## Water Use in Alameda

How city departments reduced use

**Eric J. Kos**

With East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) announcing stage 4 drought restrictions last week, the *Alameda Sun* will be looking into the impact of drought on the Island City. While completely surrounded by water, the city of Alameda and its residents and businesses rely on EBMUD for its drinking water supply.

In this, the first of a series of articles will discuss the city of Alameda and its various departments' water use. Among city departments, Public Works and Recreation and Parks are the two primary users of water due to irrigation needs.

"As one of the city's main operational water users, Public Works has taken the lead on reporting the city's municipal water use," stated Liz Acord, a management analyst for the city of Alameda Public Works Department. "In my role as management analyst, I work closely with Public Works staff, the Alameda Fire Department (AFD), Alameda Point, the Alameda Recreation and Parks Department (ARPD) and EBMUD to ensure the city is doing everything possible to reduce operational water use and be an active partner in addressing the drought."

Since February 2014 when the City Council mandated a 20 percent reduction, all departments have worked to meet or exceed that level. As of April 1, departments are aiming to comply with the state's mandatory 25 percent.

**Alameda Point**

Staff has been working with EBMUD to look at meter data, and have noted one landscape meter along Main Street shows 95 percent reduction as of late 2014. Common area landscape watering has been reduced and common-area landscaping or bathroom leaks identified and repaired.

Staff has sent letters and emails to tenants, encouraging them to reduce use, not water down surfaces, fix restroom leaks and turn off decorative fountains. Water conservation stickers have been provided to tenants and management offices.

Fire hydrant use has been restricted to emergency use only. Staff has also focused on key tenants to implement water reductions.

**Recreation and Parks**

ARPD "saves where they can." They let passive areas go dry but try to maintain a safe watering level at playing fields. Overall, the department has been irrigating 20 percent less based on the council's February 2014 mandate.

On sports fields, infield hand-watering has been restricted to two times a week, mowing passive areas reduced to two times a month versus weekly during mowing season.

Watering Main Street Linear Park Turf hardscapes and tennis courts has been stopped, and no washing of playgrounds and playground furniture (unless absolutely necessary) has taken place. Other measures to preserve the fields include: use of soil conditioners to help browning and installation of educational signage.

Over the next six months irrigation timers at Krusi and Lydecker parks will be replaced, turf in parks will be reduced where feasible and mulching increased.

**Fire Department**

AFD has worked to reduce scheduled washing of trucks from each Sunday to every other Sunday since the Council mandate in 2014. In addition, all staff and utility vehicles have been washed at a maintenance center with reclaimed water.

Firefighting drills have been run without the use of water unless necessary. All facilities with landscaping will water no more than twice a week with no watering at Station No. 3. All facilities have been inspected to ensure low-flow showerheads and faucets are in place.

AFD staff has also been reminded to conserve per department policy and signs.

**Public Works**

Since February 2014 Public Works has watered 20 percent less in public landscaped areas, reduced automated irrigation systems and complete preventative maintenance to ensure systems are operating properly.

Staff has also installed 1,500 cubic yards of mulch citywide and installed water-holding gel for existing young trees and newly planted trees.

Contact Eric J. Kos at [ekos@alamedasun.com](mailto:ekos@alamedasun.com).



Patricia Williamson

ACLCL learners await judging results at the 2015 Alameda County Science Fair.

## Local Charter School Students Shine in Science

**Sun Staff Reports**

Young scientists from the Nea and Alameda Community Learning Centers (ACLCL) entered a broad range of projects in the Alameda County Science and Engineering Fair held from March 20 to 22 at

the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton.

They entered 35 projects and 19 placed, including five first-place winners, one second-place winner and six third-place winners. Seven projects gained additional recogni-

tion, garnering 10 special awards.

"Science is very focal at both of our schools," said Patti Wilczek, executive director of Community Learning Center Schools, which oversees Nea and ACLCL.

**SCIENCE: Page 6**