



### In this Issue:

- Introducing Western Riverside's very own local government podcast
- Automation in the Subregion: Robots and machines are taking away jobs. Is yours next?
- Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Monitoring at the RCHCA Reserves
- BEYOND Project Spotlight: Economic Development Norco
- WREP Cities Recognized with Cool Planet Awards
- WCE Releases its Draft Implementation Plan for Public Comment
- TUMF Program Announcements: Interactive Web Map & New Groundbreaking Video
- Public Service Fellow Feature: State Water Project Tour
- Executive Director's Column: Why do a COGcast, really?

## Introducing Western Riverside's Very Own Local Government Podcast

The Western Riverside Council of Governments is excited to announce the launch of our very own podcast called...wait for it... the **WRCOGcast**. WRCOGcast will feature a weekly release of 20ish-minute episodes on a variety of topics and issues relevant to the Western Riverside subregion. We will explore agencies, issues, and programs in the area, in an effort to inform, discover, and learn more about the wide range of projects and people who are working to improve the quality of life in this fast-growing subregion. These are exciting times for Western Riverside County and we want you to be up-to-date on how our government and private sector partners are working to address issues you think about every day, as well as vital issues that perhaps you don't think about at all.



### **Episode 1: So...what is WRCOG?**

The opening episode of WRCOGcast will feature WRCOG's Executive Director, Rick Bishop, who will talk about councils of government in general, sharing how WRCOG fills a unique niche in our regional governance structure. Click on any of the links below to hear about how WRCOG works with member jurisdictions to address issues of regional importance.

WRCOGcast is accessible on SoundCloud, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and PodBean. Click [here](#) to access it! Stay tuned as the WRCOGcast will soon be available on Apple Podcasts!

Have an idea for a future WRCOGcast? Contact staff and submit your idea!

[Contact Staff](#)

# Automation in the Subregion: Robots and machines are taking away jobs. Is yours next?

Automation is expected to play a growing role in the future economy of Western Riverside County and elsewhere. According to some researchers, we are on the verge of another transformative change that could potentially affect our economy by improving efficiencies at the expense of the human workforce. The Institute of Spatial Economic Analysis (ISEA) at the University of Redlands School of Business conducted in-depth research on the types of jobs that may be at risk with the continued advancement of automation in Western Riverside County. Industries projected to be the most impacted by the rise of automation include retail, hospitality, logistics, and transportation—sectors accounting for the majority of jobs in the subregion.



WRCOG recently conducted a workshop for our member agencies with staff from ISEA to provide an in-depth discussion on the potential effects of automation in the subregion, the types of resources that jurisdictions can leverage to better prepare for automation, and actions jurisdictions can take to transform as these shifts occur. WRCOG is planning to hold more in-depth sessions as part of the 2019 Future of Cities Conference. The date and time of the Conference will be determined shortly, stay tuned for the save-the-date!

[Contact Staff](#)

## Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Monitoring at the RCHCA Reserves

Every three years, the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency monitors the status and trends of Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR). Recently, staff monitored SKR at the Potrero Reserve located south of Beaumont, which features a broad valley with grassland habitat and loamy soils, ideally suited for SKR occupation. Currently, the Reserve is not actively managed for SKR. However RCHCA staff are working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to gain approval to begin actively managing for SKR soon.



SKR monitoring is a multi-day process that requires RCHCA permitted biologists, trapping equipment and a hefty supply of coffee, as SKR are nocturnal animals and therefore require monitoring to occur at night. RCHCA staff monitored the SKR at the Potrero Reserve for three nights, tracking and tagging the number of SKR caught in traps. At the end of their survey, the results registered an "average presence" of SKR. These results are consistent for an area with high SKR potential, but lacking proper habitat management. These monitoring sessions are crucial to assess the health of the reserve, while also providing a real time

Contact Staff

## BEYOND Project Spotlight: Economic Development in Norco



Using BEYOND funds, the City of Norco's Two-Pronged Economic Development Marketing Strategy project aims to develop Norco as a premier business development location, increase tourism and establish Norco as an exciting western-themed weekend getaway for visitors. Some of the major project components included an update to the City's Economic Development website, increasing promotion of tourism and travel, and multiple appearances at trade shows for retail, hospitality, and restaurant industries. Another major effort is an enhancement to the City's "Film Norco" Program, which is designed to attract movie and television shoots to the City based on its western imagery and charm.

Contact Staff

## WREP Cities Recognized with Cool Planet Awards

The Cities of Corona and Murrieta have been recognized by both Southern California Edison (SCE) and The Climate Registry at the 2018 Cool Planet Awards for their exemplary efforts in the field of energy efficiency. The 2018 Cool Planet Award Ceremony honors SCE business customers who implement energy efficiency projects, participate in demand response programs, and establish environmental and greenhouse gas emissions management systems. Due to their energy efficient projects, the Cities of Corona and Murrieta cumulatively saved over 2 million kWh to date, which equates to over 230 homes' electricity use for one year!

Way to "WREP" your savings Corona and Murrieta!



City of Corona, Southern California Edison (SCE), and Climate Registry Staff



WRCOG, Southern California Edison (SCE), and Climate Registry Staff

[Contact Staff](#)

## WCE Releases its Draft Implementation Plan for Public Comment



The Western Community Energy (WCE) Board of Directors has released its Draft Implementation Plan (Plan) for public review and comment. WCE, a joint powers authority consisting of the Cities of Canyon Lake, Eastvale, Hemet, Jurupa Valley, Norco, Perris, and Wildomar, was formed for the purpose of developing a **Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)** Program to purchase energy on behalf of residents and businesses in these communities. Established by state law, CCA is an energy supply model that works in partnership with the region's existing utility, in our case Southern California Edison (SCE), which continues to deliver power, maintain the grid, and provide consolidated billing and other customer services. The benefits of CCAs are extensive and include competitive—often significantly lower—electricity rates, consumer choice, and local control.

The Plan is to be adopted at a Public Hearing scheduled for December 12, 2018, at WRCOG's office and will be submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for certification. Once certified, WCE will continue its efforts to begin servicing customers in April 2020. Electronic copies of the Plan can be found [here](#).

[Submit Public Comment](#)

## TUMF Program Announcements: Interactive Web Map & New Groundbreaking Video

WRCOG has developed an interactive web map, which will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to determine whether facilities they are constructing are eligible for TUMF funding. The web map contains various filters for stakeholders to utilize which can break down the TUMF Network by project type (e.g. interchanges, bridges, railroad grade

separations). It is anticipated that the web map will be available for stakeholder use in December 2018.

In the meantime, checkout the latest TUMF groundbreaking video of the Scott Road Interchange Project in Murrieta!



[Contact Staff](#)

## Public Service Fellow Feature: Fellow Tours State Water Project

This past month Alma Ramirez, a Round III WRCOG Fellow serving at Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), had the opportunity to take part in the State Water Project Tour hosted by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD).



Ms. Ramirez experienced firsthand the history behind the State Water Project by visiting the Oroville Dam, which provides drinking and irrigation water to Central and Southern California, and the Banks Pumping Plant, which is the starting point for the California Aqueduct. According to Ms. Ramirez, "the Fellowship Program has paved the way for my career in public service. I have gotten the chance to grow my network and learn about water policy on a broader spectrum through opportunities that do not come across very often."

[Contact Staff](#)

## Executive Director's Report: Why do a COGcast, really?

One significant challenge all government agencies face is how best to communicate with members of the public. Traditionally, agencies use

forums like public meetings and newsletters to distribute information to their constituents and other interested parties. News outlets, like television stations and newspapers, can serve as a vehicle to share messages. It may be surprising to some, but there was actually a time when there was someone on the news who simply read the news to us, and we believed what they said.



However, the way in which people exchange information is drastically changing. Traditional newspapers have seen plummeting readership. [Daily circulation for newspapers is now less](#) than what it was in the 1940s. Nearly 2/3 of Americans report that they [regularly get their news from social media](#). And the amount of information one can access on a daily basis between the television, websites, and mobile devices can be overwhelming.

With the dominance of social media as a form of communication, the public sector has an important opportunity to utilize these tools in ways that inform and engage residents and businesses. Research suggests that local governments can achieve multiple advantages by employing social media in their resident communications, outreach, and participatory engagement strategies. Residents who engage online with government agencies demonstrate higher rates of civic engagement and participation in local community affairs. A 2014 study concluded that the use of social media for civic engagement increases public trust in institutions.

But too often local governments fail to use social media properly, engaging with the public as if a neighbor instead of an agency. We tell followers where we are instead of what we do. Ditto with tweeting. But honestly, how much informing can you really accomplish, or trust can you build among constituents with a 280 character limit? For WRCOG, we struggle with this constantly. Yes, like other public institutions, we produce reports, and summaries of the reports, and even summaries of the summaries (the tweets).

Beginning today we are excited to introduce our newest communication tool, the WRCOGcast. The inspiration behind WRCOGcast is simple; just 15 years after their introduction, podcasts have become part of the daily listening habits of more than 25 percent of Americans. In 2017 alone, monthly podcast listenership grew 24 percent among a core audience of 18- to 54-year olds. We want to be part of that listenership.

Our foremost goal of WRCOGcast is simple: we want to share stories and information about agencies and people who are working hard to make a difference in our communities. Our weekly WRCOGcast release will cover a broad spectrum of topics, projects, and issues. We want WRCOGcast to be a place where the general public can be informed – through weekly 20-minute episodes – on a variety of issues ranging from traffic to economy, from education to public health, from homelessness to housing, and all things in between and beyond.

Today, we debut our Agency's first WRCOGcast episode, which provides an overview of what councils of government are and how they fit in regional government landscape. And we plan to inform you with several other WRCOGcasts planned that will explore the many individual programs that WRCOG has developed and administers on behalf of its member organizations.

But we don't want to just inform; we want to listen and become informed as well. WRCOGcast will move way beyond the bounds of WRCOG, giving listeners opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the many regional issues that confront us and the people – both in the public and private sectors - who are working on your

behalf to improve the quality of life in your communities.

[Click here to listen to our inaugural podcast on SoundCloud!](#)

*Rick Bishop*

[Contact Rick](#)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



[CLICK HERE](#)

