

Official Newsletter
of the
California Surf Lifesaving
Association

The CALSURF

Volume 14 No. 2

2000 to 2009

A LOOK BACK



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On the Cover: (L to R) Top row - LG for Louisiana; Dukes Fundraiser; Signing articles of inc.; 2nd row - Big Wed. Surf 05 San Diego;



Big Wed. Surf 05 Cabrillo; JG Poster by Sophia Vincent; 3rd row - Project Ecuador; Regionals 07; Bottom row - Be Seen Be Safe Poster by Melissa Murphy; 1st Annual Bobby Award; Ray Bray Memorial

INSIDE CAL SURF

Presidents Message	Page 3
Editorial - A Look Back	Page 5
California Adopts Job Title Model	Page 8

2010 CALENDAR

- 4/15 - CSLSA Spring Meeting, San Clemente
- 4/29 - USLA Spring Meeting, Galveston
- 7/13 - Cal State Games, Coronado
- 7/23 - J.G. Regionals, San Diego
- 7/24 - Lifeguard Regionals, San Diego
- 7/30 - Santa Barbara Fiesta
- 7/31 - Taplin Relays, Redondo
- 8/5 - 8/7 - USLA Nationals, Huntington State
- 10/14 - CSLSA Fall Meeting, Encinitas

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Certification – Bill Richardson
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Exchange – Jon Mitchell
Special Awards – Bill Richardson
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Membership – Charlotte Graham
Newsletter – Richard Godino
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Website – Bob Moore
Ways and Means – Rob Williams

CAL SURF MAGAZINE

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ARTICLES NEEDED!

Agency Profiles / How to Articles
California Lifeguard History
Junior Lifeguard Stories / Unusual Rescues

Submit online to newsletter@cslsa.org

The CSLSA is a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of California. Its principle goals are water safety, education, and the promotion of professional lifeguarding standards. These goals are accomplished through beach safety presentations to school groups, educational exchange programs with members of the International Lifesaving Federation and participation in regional and national competitions.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MIKE BEUERLEIN

Spring has sprung, and like the swallows of San Juan Capistrano, throngs of visitors are returning to California's shores to seek refuge from the heat, trusting professional lifeguards to protect their safety. What is different this year is that government agencies continue to struggle as a result of our depressed economy. Budgets have been slashed, towers have been closed, tryouts have been canceled, hiring has been frozen, pay has been cut, personnel have been furloughed and positions have been eliminated. And yet, the permanent lifeguards who remain, are welcoming those seasonal lifeguards who are allowed to return, to once again, do more with less, and accept the challenge to fulfill our public safety mission.

So fight on we will. Why? Because that's what we do. We are part of a noble profession and families depend on us to use our unique skills and resourcefulness to educate, prevent and rescue. The California Surf Lifesaving Association is dedicated to promoting professional lifesaving standards and beach safety awareness. Your CSLSA Executive Board is committed to our mission and representing our members to the United States Lifesaving Association.

Since the last edition of the *Cal Surf News*, the CSLSA Executive Board attended the Fall 2009 USLA Meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia. For years, one of USLA's major goals has been to raise funds to hire an Executive Director to manage USLA's daily operations. While CSLSA agrees that USLA needs additional revenue streams, CSLSA objected to a proposed consulting agreement that cost \$40,000 up front with no guaranteed return. After voting on the matter, USLA ultimately signed a consulting agreement with *Isaac Sports Group* to market USLA. CSLSA can only hope that ISG will be successful in acquiring sponsorship. Fund raising for the 2010 Nationals will be the first litmus test.

CSLSA continues to work with the USLA to find a way to affiliate with the United States Olympic Committee without drastically changing the struc-

ture of our organization. If this affiliation comes to fruition, many regions hope that they will not have to change their bylaws.

The 2010-11 CSLSA Executive Board has already met three times this year and continues to work hard on behalf of our members. Thanks to outgoing Executive Board Members Alex Peabody and Jon Mitchell for their excellent service in furtherance of CSLSA's mission. We are grateful that both gentlemen intend to stay actively involved in the future.

Please join me in welcoming our two newest Executive Board Members, Jay Butki and Bill Humphreys. Both are uniquely qualified with nearly 20 years of heavy CSLSA involvement in important committees, Public Education and Competition. They are both very deserving and will continue to represent our members well.

"And yet, the permanent lifeguards who remain are welcoming those seasonal guards allowed to return, to once again do more with less, and accept the challenge to fulfill our public safety mission."

CSLSA Committee Chairs remain unchanged for the 2010-11 term with the following exceptions: Rich Hidalgo will chair the Certification Committee, Mike Silvestri will chair the Training Committee and Chris Pierce will co-chair the Public Education Committee with Bill Humphreys. 2010-11 USLA Certification Officers from the Southwest Region are Rich Hidalgo, Bill Richardson, Rick Gould, Larry Giles and Carl Drake.

In January, I was honored to present USLA Lifetime Member Reenie Boyer with a CSLSA Award of Appreciation at her retirement dinner for her 26 years of dedicated service to the City of Newport Beach. We are glad that Reenie has agreed to continue serving as a member of the CSLSA Executive Board and Chair of both the CSLSA and USLA Junior Lifeguard Committees.

[**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**, from page 3] The CSLSA extends its heartfelt condolences to Charlotte Graham and her family for the loss of her mother. CSLSA made a donation in the amount of \$100.00 to the United States Lifesaving Foundation in the name of Charlotte M. Graham, in memory of her mother Ritva Smits Van Oyen.

Dr. Victor Zavala-Hamz, PhD. President of the *Asociacion Mexican de Salvavidas, A.C.* (AMS), has asked that USLA and CSLSA direct all ideas and plans to assist lifesaving in Mexico through the AMS for coordination, consistency and to avoid duplication of efforts.

CSLSA's \$1,100 donation to the 2010 Wieland Shield Competition Team seems to have been a worthwhile investment. Congratulations to the CSLSA competitors for the most successful performance in years. Competitors are eager to return to San Diego for Regionals this summer. Jeff Hatfield and his team will be supported, as usual, by Scott Hubbell, Jay Butki and the rest of the CSLSA Executive Board.

The 2010 Nationals are on the calendar for August 5th through 7th at Huntington State Beach. As always, the CSLSA Executive Board continues to work toward changing the process so USLA accepts responsibility for hosting its own national competition. Rumor has it that LACOLA is exploring the possibility of hosting at Venice Beach in 2012. Those fortunate enough to make the Rescue 2010 team will be representing us in Alexandria, Egypt in October.

I would like to express CSLSA's sincere gratitude to both Steve and Linda Reuter for helping to promote our non-profit corporation once again at the *Action Sports Retail Show* in San Diego. We appreciate them arranging booth space, at no cost, for CSLSA. Steve's great idea to network with the surf industry will hopefully pay dividends for CSLSA in the future.

Like USLA, CSLA continues to look for revenue streams. We have been approached with some exciting opportunities from *Tidelines* personal calendars and *Rock Bottom Brewery*. Both organizations are willing to help fund various projects. In addition to CSLSA's ongoing projects, we are currently soliciting help in developing a promotional and beach safety brochure.

CSLSA has been asked to sign an **Organizational Endorsement Form** for the *California State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010*. CSLSA has sought legal opinions from our pro bono legal advisors to determine if such an endorsement would compromise our 501(c)3 status in any way. We will also solicit the opinions of our members on this matter.

CSLSA is excited to be back in San Clemente for the Spring 2010 Board of Meeting. Thanks to Chief Bill Humphreys and crew for once again volunteering to host our members. At the end of April, the CSLSA Executive Board will be in the Lone Star State representing our members at the USLA Meeting in Galveston, Texas.

Let's hope, that in 2010, our agencies are properly staffed with the lifeguards and resources they need to continue our outstanding safety record of protecting the families that place their lives in our hands.

"We are part of a noble profession and families depend on us to use our unique skills and resourcefulness to educate, prevent and rescue"



*Lifeguard Tower - Coronado Beach
Photo courtesy Rich Hidalgo*



A LOOK BACK

RICHARD GODINO

During the past ten years, we lifeguards of California have witnessed significant success, gut-wrenching sadness, and clever innovation.

We have seen great strides in professionalism and awesome displays of physical prowess applied to rescues and competition. But perhaps the most poignant event of the decade affected everyone, lifeguard or not, and had an impact that was felt around the world.

Like everyone I watched the devastating scenes of the attack on the Twin Towers, and their eventual collapse. I was awestruck, and angered, by the gall of the perpetrators, and amazed by the courage and selflessness of the FDNY and others who struggled to save a few lives in that disaster at risk of their own. A few hours into that worst day of the decade, the TV media was showing scenes of reaction to the destruction from around the world. Everyone seemed to share similar feelings, whether here in Southern California or in South America, Europe or Australia. Then a satellite link came up from Budapest, Hungary. As the camera panned along the street and the reporter continued to babble, it stopped when it came to a sight that I still vividly recall. There, in front of a fire station, firefighters had pulled their rigs out to the curb. And in front of the rigs stood all the members of that station, standing at attention, saluting a flag at half staff. As a lifeguard, that scene is blazed into my memory. That picture of a salute to fallen public safety personnel in New York from comrades 5,000 miles away, depicted, to me, the special bond of kinship among those whose profession it is to risk their lives so that others may survive.

Public Safety Brethren

We are part of that kin bond. Although we don't often run into burning buildings, we put our lives on the line plenty. We deal with medical emergencies, make cliff rescues, fight boat fires and make recoveries like our fire fighter brethren. And we know there are few people who make a living charging into 12 foot surf, in winter, with just trunks, fins and a rescue can. And most important, there are not many public safety employees who have the opportunity, much less whose primary responsibility is to do our most important job, prevent accidents.

To that end we have a remarkable record. Since 2000, over 1.6 billion people have visited our beaches and lakes, while only about 500 thousand had to be rescued; .0005 % of the total attendance. That's more than pretty good.

There are over 2000 lifeguards serving the public in California. Nearly 1300 are members of our organization, the California Surf Lifesaving Association. Over the last ten years, eight California guards have distinguished themselves by placing their lives on the line, usually in horrific conditions (high surf, debris, cold water, dark of night). These individuals received the highest award from our national organization, the United States Lifesaving Association Medal of Valor, for skill and courage in extreme rescue situations:

- 2003 – Billy Larson – Pismo Beach
- Rich Grigovoli – Cal State
- Jeff Fesler – Port San Luis
- Tim Borland – Port San Luis
- 2005 - Mike Bartlett – Huntington City
- Brit Horn – Cal State
- 2006 - Joel Gitelson – L.A. County
- Eric Coats – Cal State

Helping Others Around the World

During this time as well, California lifeguards distinguished themselves by helping others around the world. Usually at their own expense and with donated equipment, these dedicated guards traveled to popular as well as little known areas to train local volunteers, and do a little lifeguarding as well, to keep beachgoers safe. The CSLSA has played a pivotal role, through Board of Directors meetings and this magazine, getting the word out about these opportunities to help others.

Lifeguards from our beaches volunteered their time, talents and equipment to help train lifeguards on the Mexican Pacific coast from Baja south as part of the efforts of Club Tortuga, spearheaded by former US-LA President and Los Angeles County lifeguard chief, **Bob Burnside**. A notable highlight was when a Junior Lifeguard



[A LOOK BACK, from page 5]

program was started in Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca sent several JG's to Huntington and Laguna Beach in 2002. The program was expanded as the Baja California Project by Imperial Beach lifeguard Richard Hidalgo. In 2005, lifeguards from seven agencies (Huntington Beach, Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, Del Mar, San Diego, Cal State and Imperial Beach) succeeded in getting sponsorship from Reef, Sticky Bumps and California Sea Grant to send lifeguards and equipment to Las Playas de Tijuana, Rosarito, Ensenada, La Fonda and La Mision.

During the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans, lifeguards from the Lifeguard Swiftwater Rescue Specialist team of the San Diego Fire Rescue Task Force 8 were dispatched to Louisiana to assist with rescues and recoveries in that hard hit city. They spent 18 days there, rescuing thousands (over 400 on their first day there) and recovering the bodies of many. The experience was so poignant to lifeguard Jim Birdsell, that he enlisted the aid of the organization Kids Around the World and fellow lifeguards and firefighters to raise 35K in donations by traveling from



Dana Point to La Jolla by dory, outrigger canoe and stand-up paddle board. Using those funds, he, along with members of his church, the Shoreline Church in San Clemente, traveled to Andrew Jackson Elementary School in New Orleans and built a new playground to replace the one destroyed by the storm.

In 2006, while on a surf trip to Ecuador, Long Beach lifeguards Paul Dunning and John Pierce, encountered large surf and huge carefree crowds along the coastline west of Guayaquil during Carnival. Looking for lifeguards, they found only a few altruistic volunteers, ill-equipped and with little knowledge of lifeguarding techniques. They promptly jumped in to help and decided there was more to do. So began Project Ecuador. Through their efforts, lifeguards from California volunteered time and donated equipment to help during



Carnival since then, culminating in a record 26 lifeguards from six agencies (Long Beach, L.A. City, L.A. County, San Clem-

ente, Santa Barbara and Cal State) traveling to the Ecuadorian coastline in 2009 to help out during the week of Carnival. Paul and John have also managed to get the government down there to financially support a lifeguard service along their coast.

Got Fun?

Though the image of a lifeguard as the fit, sun-bronzed caretaker of the care-free beachgoer is quaint,



there is truth to the physical fitness of most lifesaving professionals. The working environment requires that lifeguards be ready to run and swim long distances, use specialty equipment and be ready for any adversity they may encounter while making a rescue. To that end, we get paid to work out daily and are expected to be ready for action on a moment's notice. To make it fun and enhance camaraderie, lifeguards have long enjoyed friendly competition with other lifeguards.

For many years now, our regional and national organizations have hosted lifesaving competitions. During this decade our region hosted three National Championships – at San Diego in 2000, Huntington State in 2006 and L.A. County (Manhattan Beach) in 2008. Although Regional competitions have been hosted in the northern part of our region, in the last ten years, they have been hosted exclusively in Southern California: from Imperial Beach in the south to L.A. County's Zuma Beach in the north.

While most of us attend these contests and happily compete and enjoy the day, a core group of lifeguards works hard to organize, set up, officiate, seek sponsorship and tabulate results. We must recognize the efforts of this group, especially the host agencies, and current and past Executive Board members Rob McGowan, Jay Butki, Charlotte Graham, Mike Beuerlein, Mike Bartlett, Bill Richardson, Bob Moore, the ever-present Gordon Gray and sponsor extraordinaire Scott Hubbell.



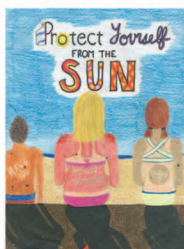
[A LOOK BACK, from page 6]

Regardless of the many obstacles along the way, their hard work makes all of these events run seamlessly, unnoticed by the general competitor.

Got Fun ? Part 2 - Junior Lifeguards

Before many of us got to have fun as lifeguards we had great fun, and learned a lot, as *Junior Lifeguards*. Here in California, we have one of the largest and most successful junior lifeguard programs in the nation. At the end of the decade, California junior lifeguards numbered nearly 7,000. As anyone who has attended a regional competition will attest, it is a scene of controlled chaos. With venues for each age group running simultaneously, most of us are amazed that the event is so successful; and, I might add fun and safe.

This, as with the seniors, is due to a dedicated crew of host lifeguards, instructors and others, all led by our own Reenie Boyer. Under her devoted leadership, the California programs thrive. The training and competition portions are bookends for scholarships, poster contests, public education opportunities and camaraderie. This program is truly the gem of the nation



Innovators

From the beginning, our region has been the source of lifeguarding innovations. We all know that the national organization's birthplace was on the shores of California. California lifeguards, at the request of L.A. County Lifeguard Chief Bud Stevenson and led by Bob Burnside, convened a meeting at Santa Monica Lifeguard Headquarters in 1963 for the purpose of creating a lifesaving association dedicated to promoting the professionalism of lifeguards. In attendance, in addition to Burnside, were representatives from Huntington City, Los Angeles City, Santa Monica, Seal Beach and Long Beach, among them legendary lifeguards and future World Lifesaving Presidents Vince Morehouse and Max Bowman, future USLA President Don Rohrer and long time Association Sergeant-at-arms, Tim Dorsey. From that epic meeting were the seeds of the national organization sown. First called the Surf Lifesaving Association of America (after similar named Australian associations), it became the National Surf Lifesaving Association of America and then finally,

in 1979, the **United States Lifesaving Association**, representing all professional open water lifeguards in this country.

Starting in 1969, a unique partnership between professional lifesavers in California and New Zealand, the **Lifeguard Exchange Program**, was formed. Since then lifeguards from both countries have "switched places" as it were, during hemispheric summers. Exchange lifeguards visit various beaches, work a bit, learn a bit, and "socialize" a lot. After the program was re-vamped and formalized by A. J. Summers of Seal Beach during the nineties, Chris Graham of Mission Viejo assumed leadership of the Exchange after A.J.'S untimely death in a traffic accident. After Chris stepped down in 2007, past Exchange recipient Jon Mitchell from Newport took the reins and continued to end of the decade.

In 2000, Michael Clegg became the first graduate of the **Lifeguard Associate of Arts Degree** at Miramar College. The curriculum, spearheaded by Lt. Nick Lerma of San Diego, was the first in the nation. Since then a similar program has started in Orange County and may expand to other areas in the future.

Passings

Unfortunately, during this decade we have witnessed the passing of some dear members of our family:

- Capt. Dwight Crum (LACo) - 2000
- Capt. Gardner Stevens (Del Mar) - 2002
- Sgt Wayne Auer (San Diego) - 2005
- JG Instructor Ray Bray (HB) - 2006
- Sean Murphy (Lake Mission Viejo) - 2006

They will be missed, but remembered fondly.

Where to Now?

WHERE TO NOW?

Part of the challenge of the new decade will be to continue historic successes like the junior guard programs and lifeguard exchange, but also to invigorate new pursuits of the "aughts" like the lifeguard degree program and standardization of titles and training. But, undoubtedly, the start of the new decade will most likely be dominated by budget concerns as the economy tries to recover. It is likely that some tests will be curtailed, equipment purchas-

[A LOOK BACK, from page 7] es delayed and off season work for recurrents limited. Expect to see more veterans in towers and probably some unauthorized, and unacknowledged overtime. What you won't see is any lifeguard not being a lifeguard. Even if there is only one guard on a beach normally staffed by three, you can bet that guard will be humpin' every second to keep people safe. Because that is what you do when you put on the trunks; what we in this profession have done for most of the last century, since the word "lifesaver" evolved to become the profession self-described by its name – LIFEGUARD. I am reminded of a message in a recent email from Bob Burnside, that we all should

heed: "Go save a bunch of lives. And enjoy being what we all have and are – LIFEGUARDS for LIFE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since becoming editor of the Cal Surf in 2005 I have had the good fortune to be assisted in this endeavor by many: Much thanks to Eric Sandy for giving me the opportunity; Mike Bartlett for the guidance and support; Rich Hidalgo for stepping in with some new ideas when it was most needed; Rob McGowan for giving me his two good "writes" each year; Jim Birdsell, Art Verge, Don Mellon, Cris Dobrielski and Bridget Srodon and others for the articles over the years and to all the photograpic submissions and especially Kat Pritchard for the some of the best photos the mag has seen.

CALIFORNIA ADOPTS JOB TITLE MODEL

MIKE BARTLETT

Do all lifeguards wear red, uniform swimsuits? No, some wear blue.

Are all lifeguard vehicles the same color? Certainly, they're not. In fact, in California, lifeguard vehicles are yellow in LA County, red in Huntington Beach and Long Beach, white across the State Beaches and San Clemente, and orange in San Diego. Not only is this visually confusing for the public but even more so when comparing their rescue equipment inside.

Job titles are no different!

In California for example, job titles and command structures like uniforms and vehicles vary greatly from one agency to the next. A "Lifeguard III" position in Huntington Beach is a 1500-hour, supervisory position held by a recurrent lifeguard. In the State Parks, a "Lifeguard III" is the highest ranking, permanent supervisor. In Newport Beach, a "Lifeguard Officer" is a full-time, non-supervisory, entry-level position. In LA County, there are "Lifeguard Specialists" who are entry-level, permanent lifeguards. Long Beach has "Marine Safety Officers" who fill the entry-level, permanent positions while Huntington Beach has "Marine Safety Officer I and II" positions. Some agencies use police titles such as "Sergeants" and "Lieutenants" while others use fire titles like "Battalion Chief". Clearly, there is a need for consistency

and uniformity in many areas of our profession, however standardizing job titles and command structures may be the logical first step toward standardization at the permanent lifeguard ranks.

Research Project Introduction

The lifeguard job title project was undertaken by the California Surf Lifesaving Association (CSLSA), which represents the Southwest Region of the United States Lifesaving Association, due to the vast difference found in job titles within agencies in California – even amongst neighboring agencies. The goal of this project was to assist the region in improving professionalism via a more consistent job title structure, which will benefit the public and agencies as they work together.

The project was not an easy task and was only completed through participation and cooperation of all agencies within the region. Many compromises were reached, but through a spirit of cooperation and a strong desire to take a step forward towards increasing professionalism within the region, the project was completed. The ad-hoc committee was comprised of representatives from many agencies, CSLSA board members, and the Orange County Lifeguard Chief's Association. The committee was chaired by Bill Humphreys, Chief for San Clemente Lifeguards, and co-chaired by Scott Davey, Los Angeles County Section Chief (now retired).

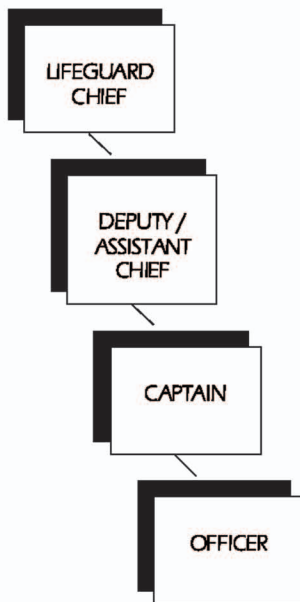
After more than two years of research and committee

[JOB TITLES, from page 8] meetings, the CSLSA Board of Directors adopted a recommended job title model for agencies at the Fall Regional Conference held in San Diego in October 2009.

Although the job title model is encouraged, it is important to note that it is only recommended for the Southwest Region of the United States Lifesaving Association. It will be up to each agency within the Southwest Region to determine if the structure is a benefit to them and to work on their own implementation. Having a recommended model within the region certainly can assist departments who elect to pursue this goal.

Adopted Job Title Model

The CSLSA adopted model is a basic command structure standardizing job titles for permanent, full-time positions. At the top of the command structure is “Chief”, followed by “Deputy Chief”, “Captain” and then “Officer” at the entry level for permanent lifeguard positions. The command structure can be used for both large and small agencies by adding additional titles at any level and/or expanding the titles to include “Assistants”, etc. Once the positions in the models have been filled, agencies with more than four job classifications may add additional titles as necessary like “Lieutenant” or “Sergeant” under the rank of “Captain”.



Benefits

There are substantial benefits for lifeguard agencies within the region to have similar titles and organiza-

tional structures – both for the agencies and the public we serve.

“Benefits of similar titles and organizational structures are two-fold,” said Humphreys, CSLSA Executive Delegate. “First, providing job title consistency between agencies is one step toward enhancing the profession by providing policy makers and the public with a structure that is recognized regionally, and is consistent with other public safety agencies. Second, consistent job titles enhances the profession internally by providing various agencies with a much clearer picture of general job duties and the capabilities of neighboring agencies they will be working with. This is very similar to what takes place within other public safety professions. For example, if a police “Sergeant” from one agency shows up to assist at a neighboring agency, both agencies have a general idea of what role this person typically works in. Although the Incident Command System (ICS) does not use titles, this is still an important benefit for many joint operations when the ICS is not implemented. This is something that has been occasionally lacking in our region.” How will this impact shape the profession in terms of public perceptions?

“You don’t have to look too far to see why this improvement could have a tremendous, long-term impact in shaping lifeguard organizational structures,” said Mike Beuerlein, CSLSA President.

In California (and elsewhere), many lifeguard agencies work hand-in-hand with their public safety counterparts in police and fire departments. However, police and fire departments are often viewed as public safety professionals.

“While lifeguards often have a stigma attached as being more recreational,” explained Humphreys, “this stigma has far greater impacts than simply hurting our egos. As funding becomes tighter and tighter, lifesaving needs to be funded and treated with the same regard as other public safety professions – for without proper funding, the job of preventing injury and saving lives is much more difficult.”

While this stigma exists, police and fire departments are recognized as the primary public safety components in local governments; they certainly cannot be blamed. In fact, they should be commended for the outstanding job they’ve done promoting their missions and service. Part of this perception may be largely attributed to the fact that the police and fire organizations have done an amazing job communicating their public safety missions, certifying their train-

[JOB TITLES, from page 9]ing and educational programs, and standardizing most areas in the way they do business. A lion-share of this work has been accomplished by POST (Peace Officers Standards and Training) which dictates a large component of job skills and training standards for police officers. The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) serves a similar function for the fire profession.

“One of our goals, therefore, is to assist lifeguards to reach this same level of professionalism (compared with police and fire), with consistency in job titles being a small part of reaching this goal,” said Humphreys.

Implementation

Creating a recommended model is only one part of the process. Implementation is an entirely different phase. How can agencies or regions use this model to change their organizational structures and titles to meet the adopted model in California? This was a question that Humphreys asked committee members to elaborate on.

“The lifeguard job title model was developed with a goal of creating a model that agencies can strive for as they seek job title changes in the future,” explained Humphreys. “It will be up to each agency to determine if they choose to work toward implementing job titles that are consistent with other similarly structured lifesaving agencies. There are many ways individual agencies can approach implementation. For example, an ideal time to submit a title change request is during a classification study. Likewise, most agencies have a procedure in place for submission of job description modifications. In this instance, an agency may choose to submit a title change using this process, leaving the remainder of the job description untouched. Other opportunities arise when there are vacancies and recruitment in progress. Most agencies allow an opportunity to modify job descriptions and titles at the beginning of this process. Finally, a simple request through the appropriate channels can be made at any time, using this model as support for the request, as well as examples from existing agencies that have this structure already in place.”

When asked if this model is designed as a national recommendation, Humphreys stated: “Not necessarily. This model was developed and adopted to address regional issues. But, the model could be applied nationally, although alternative models may need to be developed to meet specific local needs. This is only one small piece of an overall goal of enhancing the

professional image and service of lifesaving agencies. Other pieces are the further development and refinement of standardized training and practices, and State and National certification programs; etc.”

Conclusion

The CSLSA recognizes that not all agencies within the Southwest Region will be able to implement the model immediately. Some agencies such as those working under Fire Departments for example, may have outside constraints preventing implementation of the model. With that in mind, the CSLSA is recommending that agencies in the region adopt the model as a step toward increasing standardization.

“Having a recommended template in place, can assist in improving consistency between agencies, help define command structures, and provide much needed support for many departments when approaching decision makers,” added Beuerlein.

There is still much to be done in terms of overall standardization of our profession not just coordinating the color of our uniforms and vehicles. The job title model clearly puts us all one step closer toward our mutual goal of finding ways to better protect and serve those in need.



“Love this job!” Photo courtesy Mike Bartlett