

EMPLOYEE FOCUS

February 2021

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A Publication of the Employee Communication Committee
Susan Rasmussen, Editor



Employee of the Month
January 2021
Sierra Mors

It is hard to believe that Sierra has been an employee at the District for less than 3 years. In that short time she has managed to become an indispensable part of the Laboratory. It would simply not be possible for the Lab to get all of its work done without Sierra. Her output and skill is that of an employee with much more experience. Sierra mastered all of the wet chemistry tests the Lab performs in record time. She has produced SOP's for many of these tests and is trusted to train new employees in them since she understands the tests so well.

Sierra has begun using the more sophisticated instruments in the Lab. The Lab is confident that once these tests are mastered, Sierra will take a key role in developing and updating methods with the same determination she has shown for the rest of her work. Sierra has a keen eye for Quality Control rules in the Laboratory and is a careful reader of regulations and methods and has an easy time seeing how these regulations play out in our actual procedures. Sierra is never phased by hard assignments or inclement weather. Flagpole Tank had a problem last November which meant that crews from many departments had to work outside late into the snowy November evenings. Sierra was in work-heaven and was walking from street-to-street well into darkness knocking on doors and collecting samples even as the snow came down. She volunteered to do so for two nights in a row and handled the customer service aspects of this major emergency like a seasoned pro.

Sierra is great at training new staff. She sticks to procedure and is not reluctant to ask questions or clarifications. Sierra always works to the highest standard keeping an eye for every detail. She is trusted to validate data and correct the work of other Techs. Sierra is very resourceful and can be given assignments which require her to fill in many of the details. Sierra will get it done. She is efficient when working alone, which is a very prized quality. Sierra tries to get as much accomplished each day as possible. She does not suffer from the illusion that once what has been assigned is finished, one can rest easy.

All of us in the Lab feel so lucky to work with Sierra. She handles all assignments old or new, unique or repetitive, odious or delightful with complete joy at the opportunity. It is clear that Sierra sees her job not as a set of activities, but rather as a mission. We are happy that the future of the Lab will be shaped by someone as hard working, bright, and personable as Sierra.

HAPPY PRESIDENTS' DAY

"Let him who looks for a monument to Washington look around the United States. Your freedom, your independence, your national power, your prosperity, and your prodigious growth are a monument to him."

~Louis Kossuth



HR Happenings

by Liz Kauffman

URW I/II

We posted this position back in February when Barrett Burghard transferred over to the Inspections Department. When COVID-19 hit, we ended up closing the opportunity due to the uncertainty of the future. We were given the green light to re-post this position on 10/21. The position closed on 11/19. Due to unforeseen circumstances, this recruitment has been put on hold.

Water Reuse Worker I/II

Two employee transfers from Diamond Valley Ranch created these vacancies. Interviews were held in mid-January and two candidates are in the pre-employment process.

Pump Station Operator

We posted this position due to the promotion of Mike Chieffo to Pump Station Lead. A candidate is currently in the pre-employment process.

Pumps Lead Person

Mike Chieffo was selected to fill this role. Congratulations Mike!

Lab Tech I/II

Due to Michal's departure from the lab, we posted this opportunity. Current Lab Assistant, Kevin Uribe-Herrera, was selected to fill this role. We are really excited to bring Kevin on in this permanent role. Congrats Kevin!

Accounting Supervisor

Goodbye tension, hello pension! Theresa Sherman has officially submitted her retirement notice. She will be parting ways next spring. Interviews were held on 1/26 – more to come!

HR Analyst/Coordinator

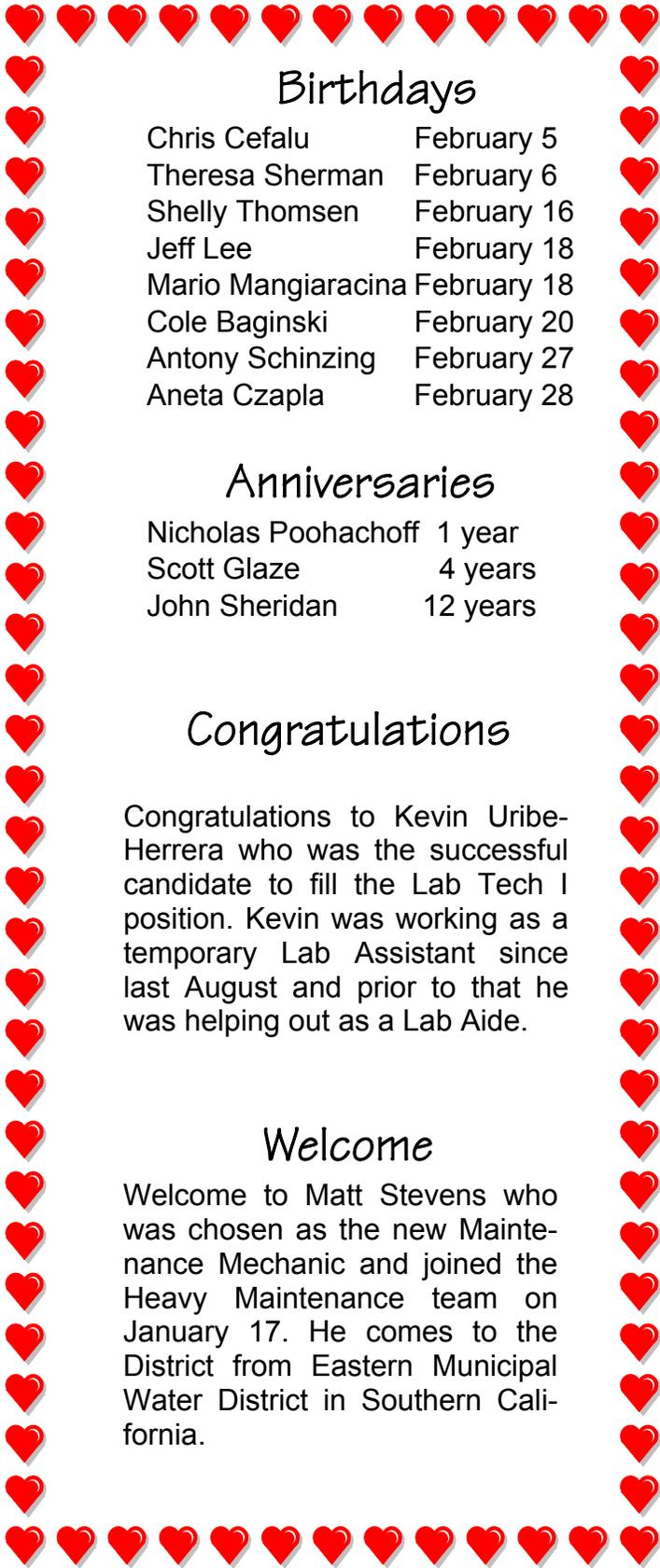
The most exciting news of all (I may be biased) is that HR is looking for someone to join the District's HR team. Fifty-five applications were received by the deadline. We are currently screening apps and planning to schedule interviews in February.

Open Enrollment for Deferred Comp

During February you can make changes that will become effective with the first pay day in March 3/9/21. Please get your elections form to HR by February 26th. The Deferred Comp Election Change forms are in the folder under FORMS. You can also contact HR to obtain a form. Completed forms should be submitted to HR. Additionally, employees can enroll in Deferred Comp after six months of employment. Reach out if you want to start saving for your retirement!

Employee Assistance Program

Don't forget all employees and their dependents are eligible to use this program. Being mindful of your mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak is important. If you need to get a grasp on your anxiety or need to find ways to connect during this time, the EAP could help. You can call 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-800-242-6220 or visit members.mhn.com and use the company code STPUD.



Birthdays

Chris Cefalu February 5
Theresa Sherman February 6
Shelly Thomsen February 16
Jeff Lee February 18
Mario Mangiaracina February 18
Cole Baginski February 20
Antony Schinzing February 27
Aneta Czaplá February 28

Anniversaries

Nicholas Poohachoff 1 year
Scott Glaze 4 years
John Sheridan 12 years

Congratulations

Congratulations to Kevin Uribe-Herrera who was the successful candidate to fill the Lab Tech I position. Kevin was working as a temporary Lab Assistant since last August and prior to that he was helping out as a Lab Aide.

Welcome

Welcome to Matt Stevens who was chosen as the new Maintenance Mechanic and joined the Heavy Maintenance team on January 17. He comes to the District from Eastern Municipal Water District in Southern California.

Groundhog Day has a connection to the weather, as around this time farmers needed to determine when to plant their crops. They tried to forecast whether there would be an early spring or a lingering winter.

For centuries, farmers in France and England looked to a bear; in German, they kept their eye on the badger. In the 1800s, German immigrants to Pennsylvania brought the tradition with them. Finding no badgers there, they adopted the groundhog to fit the lore. Pennsylvania's Punxsutawney Phil has announced spring's arrival since 1887. Other groundhogs also have carried on the tradition, including Ontario's Warton Willie.

Though we recognize that animal behavior isn't the only way to judge planting dates, the tradition continues, often with a wink and a smile.

So, will the groundhog see his shadow? It depends on whether February 2 is sunny or cloudy!

Dates and Events

- 2/2 — Groundhog Day
- 2/4 — Board of Directors Meeting
- 2/14 — Valentine's Day
- 2/15— Presidents' Day Holiday
- 2/18 — Board of Directors Meeting

February is National Heart Month!!

Guidelines for Virtual Meetings

Look at the camera, not the screen, when talking

Video conference systems let you look at people while looking directly into the camera. Do your best to position your video camera with this in mind. If your screen shows you a preview of your image, try to position the camera and window so it looks like you are looking yourself in the eye.

Avoid multitasking and stay focused

Even if you are a master multitasker, anything you do that is not related to the meeting itself will prevent you from fully participating and absorbing the content. With an online meeting, even a very small amount of distraction can make you look like you are not paying any attention at all.

Get the technology right

Reboot your computer ahead of time. When using a laptop that you have not turned on in a while, turn it on ahead of time and reboot it sometime before the meeting so that it can be updated if needed.

Connect 10 to 15 minutes early. If there are any issues, you want to make sure you know about them ahead of time.

Shut down other programs you don't need. This will lessen the chance of your computer crashing and increase the resources available for doing the video conference.

Use a UPS. You do not want to get knocked offline if the power blips off and back on. If your computer is on battery backup, but your cable modem is not, you still have a weak link if the power goes out.

Clean, distraction-free background

Be very aware of what is in the background behind you or on your desk in front of you. Be very careful about having people walk behind you.

Pay attention to sound

If possible use a good headset. If that is not an option, do your best to make sure you are not going to be adding a lot of noise to the meeting. If you call in via your phone and are joining the webinar using your computer, mute the sound on your computer. Only one (1) device should be connecting to audio. Mute your phone when you are not talking. You may need to turn off your fan, close a window, or whatever else you have to do to keep your environment quiet. The sound that you have learned to ignore may be very distracting for someone else.

Don't forget to SMILE

