Synergy: (sin’ar.je) n. 1. a combined and correlated force; 2. united for action.

Volume 11 Issue 1

Synergy:

Victory!
Jurupa Valley becomes a City!

Thanks to the help of 35 CCAEJ member volunteers the communities of Mira Loma, Glen Avon, Belltown, Rubidoux, Sunnyslope, Indian Hills and Pedley became its own city with an estimated population of nearly 90,000 and covering 43 square miles. This is a huge victory for our communities bringing important local decision making that directly affects our families closer to home. As Penny wrote in a letter to all the cityhood supporters:

“I just wanted to thank all of you for the hard work you each put in to making the City of Jurupa Valley a reality. I have never been as proud to be a “Jurupan” as I am today. The respect all the candidates showed for each other, the dignity with which you conducted yourselves, the cooperation among each of you, the common commitment to putting the Yes on Measure A first—were truly inspiring to us all. Throughout the campaign we connected with a lot of our residents, made a lot of new friends and reconnected with some old friends. Last night’s gathering felt like a united community. The voters have selected a great group to lead us forward and, I and CCAEJ, offer our support and commitment to working with you to ensure we have the best city possible. We are now one community—and need to ensure that ALL Jurupa residents are treated with the same respect and dignity demonstrated during the campaign. Thanks to all the candidates that stepped forward to offer their service—please stay involved. CCAEJ looks forward to working with you all. Now, let’s roll up our sleeves and make this great opportunity a reality. We are the City of Jurupa Valley!!”

Best wishes, Penny

Above: Volunteers pose for picture on the kick-off of our Local Voices, Local Votes - Local Control Campaign. More than 35 volunteers walked each Saturday for more than 2 months to get the word out on cityhood.

Below: The boundaries of the new City of Jurupa Valley. I-15 on the west; County line on the North; East at Riverside City/Santa Ana River; and south at the Santa Ana Rivers and Norco.
It is with great pleasure and pride that the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice and its Westside members share with you our latest report — *Pollution in San Bernardino*. The cover photo is of Maurissa, a spunky little three year old who lives on the Westside. Maurissa like most little girls, pulls a back pack behind her everywhere she goes. But instead of toys, books and stuffed animals, little Maurissa’s back pack carries the compressor for her nebulizer and her asthma medicine that she needs simply in order to take a breath. No child should have to live like this— and its all preventable.

*Pollution in San Bernardino* is a comprehensive guide that details the impact that Warren Buffet’s Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) intermodal rail yard has had on the health and human rights of residents of the Westside of the City of San Bernardino, California.

This guide provides the necessary information for both community members and decision makers, both government and industry leaders, to better understand the health threats facing San Bernardino residents and provides a blue print for taking informed action to remedy the situation.

The lived experiences of Westside residents are presented with equal weight as academic studies and research. Each of the community profiles humanizes the issues and illuminates the impact air pollution has had on the lives of real people. When read as a whole, *Pollution in San Bernardino* attests to a systemic problem—a problem that puts profits and commercial interests over the health, wellbeing, and lives of the predominantly Hispanic, working class families living near the BNSF rail yard. It is with this understanding that many individuals have come together to educate and mobilize their neighbors to hold BNSF— their most intrusive neighbor—accountable to all San Bernardino residents’ human rights.

The report is not just about the human tragedy but provides a model for taking action through a community-led, multi-agency Task Force that has combined it’s resources, ideas and efforts to make a change in this community.

We hope this report touches your heart, angers your spirit, and informs your view of how environmental justice situations can be addressed in a cooperative, holistic and respectful manner to save lives and rebuild community.
The Center For Community Action And Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) honored 57 community volunteers from San Bernardino And Riverside Counties at a Volunteer Recognition Dinner held on February 3, 2011 at the Ju-rupa Area Recreation And Parks District office. Each volunteer was presented with The Presidents Volunteer Service Awards in recognition of donating hundreds of hours of volunteer time in helping to make their communities better. Each participant received a letter from the president, a personalized award certificate, and a lapel pin in bronze, silver or gold.

Twenty nine community members received a bronze award by completing 100-249 hours of community service. Eleven residents have earned the silver award by completing between 250-499 hours of service. Eight children have earned the silver award by completing 75-99 hours. Jose Velasco and Maria Birrueta of San Bernardino; and Monica Gaytan, Donna Charpied, Nancy White and Brad Hancock of Riverside earned gold awards by donating more than 500 hours of volunteer time to their communities. David Negrete of San Bernardino earned a gold award for children with over 100 hours of volunteer time.

One Riverside resident, Jim Huber, has earned the call to service award for his lifetime volunteer work in donating more than 4600 hours of volunteer work as construction supervisor at the Glen Avon Heritage Park.

The President’s Council On Service And Civic Participation was established in 2003 to recognize the valuable contributions volunteers are making in our communities and encourage more people to serve. The council created the president’s volunteer service award program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service. Recognizing and honoring volunteers sets a standard for service, encourages a sustained commitment to civic participation, and inspires others to make service a central part of their lives. The president’s volunteer service award recognizes individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard – measured by the number of hours of service over a 12-month period or cumulative hours earned over the course of a lifetime. “CCAEJ is proud to be a certifying agency that tracks and certifies the hours volunteers donate in order to recognize and honor their work,” said Penny Newman Executive Director of CCAEJ. “It’s the least we can do for those that selflessly give so much of their time and effort in order to make our communities better for us all”.

**BRONZE (100-249 Hours)**
- Alicia Hernandez, SB (120)
- Charles Lanathoua Riv (110)
- Dayse Mendoza Riv (103)
- Dolores Martinez Riv (103)
- Erika Flores SB (101)
- Ernie Aceves SB (112)
- Estela Hernandez SB (112)
- Gene Proctor Riv (128)
- Graiciela Regalado SB (110)
- Jacinto Munoz Riv (102)
- Jenny Terrriquez Riv (103)
- Josefina Gonzalez SB (104)
- Josefinia Pelayo Riv (100)
- Juan Morales Riv. (123)
- Lorena Jimenez Riv. (104)
- Lorenzo Basilio Riv (104)

**SILVER (250-449 Hours)**
- Marcia Reyes SB (100)
- Marilyn Alcantar SB (102)
- Minerva Ortiz Riv (100)
- Norma Sierra SB (127)
- Rachel Estrada Riv. (141)
- Ruben Vasquez Riv. (108)
- Stella Portillo Riv. (111.5)
- Mego Gendreau Riv. (392)
- Rebecca Hernandez Riv (352)
- Rudi Flores SB (200)
- Cindy Lopez Elwell Riv (448)
- Deenaz Coachbuilder Riv (392)
- Renae Bryant Riv (448)
- Karen Bardford Riv (448)
- Teresa Flores Lopez SB (485)
- Wendy Eads Riv (290)
- Samuel Gordon-Intern
  - Kari VanDerGeest-Intern

**GOLD (500+ hours)**
- Jose Velasco SB (524)
- Maria Birrueta SB (519)
- Monica Gaytan Riv (532)
- Donna Charpied Riv (840)
- Nancy White SB (504)
- Brad Hancock Riv (572)

**CHILDREN**
- Araia Lee SB
- Daniel Jimenez Riv
- Fantasia Lopez Young Riv
- Ianna Vasquez Riv
- Janelle Guthrie SB
- Joselyn Vasquez Riv
- Karen Vasquez Riv

**LIFETIME-CALL TO SERVICE**
- Jim Huber Riv (4600)
THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (CCAEJ) has been awarded a $1 million grant to install high performance air filters at 4 schools and 1 community center near the San Bernardino BNSF railyard and the Mira Loma Union Pacific railyard.

Ms. Margaret Hawkins, CCAEJ Board President and Program Manager of the Master of Public Health Program at Claremont Graduate School, announced the award stating, “CCAEJ is proud to have this opportunity to be able to move forward in providing relief for more than 7,000 students and staff on the Westside of San Bernardino and Mira Loma from the heavy burden of pollution that engulfs them on a daily basis. We know this doesn’t solve the problem completely—only getting the railyards to clean up their emissions will do that—but it gives a reprieve for a significant portion of the day for these affected children.”

Penny Newman, Executive Director of CCAEJ, who will be overseeing the project, stated, “We are pleased to be partnering with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) in addressing this critical issue. AQMD will be providing technical support to us, based on their successful pilot program in Long Beach.” A second aspect of the grant program is to raise awareness to air pollution issues and assist schools in developing a school siting policy that recognizes impacts from diesel exhaust and traffic. The schools tentatively selected, but awaiting approval by the various school districts include Ramona Allessandro Elementary School, Arroyo Valley High School, Casa Ramona Academy, Jurupa Valley High School and the Ruben Campos Community Center.

The grant was made available as part of the settlement of fourteen class action lawsuits against Union Oil Company of California and Unocal Corporation (Unocal). Under the settlement, the parties agreed to distribute approximately $7 million through an open competitive Grants Program; funds would be directed to nonprofit organizations for projects to achieve vehicle emissions or fuel efficiency benefits for California consumers. Ten organizations were awarded grants for various projects for a three-year period, with CCAEJ receiving the largest grant amount. Contracts are currently being negotiated with work slated to begin by fall.

“STATE KNEW — DID NOTHING”

This headline in the Press Enterprise on August 18, 2011, was referring to the operation of a hazardous waste site in Mecca, but it could equally apply to the state’s response to the horrendous situation at California railyards. A 2005 Health Risk Assessment found that the BNSF railyard posed the highest cancer risk of all railyards in the state at a whopping 3,300 in a million. But despite this alarming health threat the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has done little to nothing to address the situation. Their response has been to propose a voluntary agreement with the railroads that will result in a mere 12% reduction by 2020. CCAEJ finds this unacceptable! If CARB won’t act, we will!

90-Day Notice of Intent to Initiate Action Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

California’s two major rail yard operators are illegally disposing hazardous waste thereby increasing the risk of serious health problems such as chronic respiratory disease and cancer in neighboring communities, according to a 90-day notice letter sent today by the Natural Resources Defense Council, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, and the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice. The letter sent June 21, 2011, contends that the rail yard operators are in violation of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) due to the high levels of particulate matter released by their diesel-based operations.

“People living near these rail yards are exposed to startling levels of pollution and carcinogens every day,” said David Pettit, NRDC senior attorney. “Poisoning people should not be a cost of doing business in California.” The two major rail road companies are the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Union Pacific Railway.
The goal of the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) is to develop indigenous leadership and build community capacity in those communities suffering the highest levels of pollution and exposure, suffer the greatest health impacts, and have the least access to social services, health care and healthy food. We do this by conducting leadership and skills trainings and providing opportunities for the affected residents' voice to be heard in the policy discussions.

Over the past few years CCAEJ has focused our efforts in the Mira Loma area and the Westside of the City of San Bernardino. Working with local residents, we developed a community-driven program ‘Inland Valley Environmental Justice Intervention and Revitalization Program’ that takes a holistic approach to solving the environmental health issues in these two communities. We began with a solid base of informed, involved and empowered residents to form Community Action Teams (CATs) in each community that direct the activities to be undertaken. Each CAT develop a Platform for Action, prioritizing community concerns, and identifying comprehensive solutions.

CCAEJ conducted several EJ Tours of the areas for agency personnel and officials to demonstrate the issues facing these communities. With the support and contacts of staff at Department of Toxic Substances Control we were able to garner commitments to participate from representatives from more than 14 agencies at the federal, state, regional and local levels. They are:

U.S. EPA
California Air Resources Board (CARB);
Department of Toxic Substances Control;
South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD)
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
State Attorney General’s Office;
The Delta Group - researchers from UC Davis

Public Health Department;
San Bernardino County CUPA;
California Conservation Corp;
Loma Linda University
University of California At Los Angeles (UCLA)
County District Attorney’s Office
City Officials

The Task Force meets bimonthly and combines the various agencies' access to information, contacts and resources to address the issues outlined by the residents. Our success in building the foundation for our program - raising awareness of pollution; forming a multiagency/residents Intervention Task Force; outlining a Platform for Action and identify resources to implement them have placed CCAEJ is the position to make significant advances in reducing exposure and pollution levels. Our engagement approach to bringing informed residents to the table with decision makers has resulted in positive partnerships to effectively address the critical issues facing our communities. The past year has proven to be extremely successful. As a result CCAEJ is in the position to undertake some extremely important projects over the next few years:

- Working in partnership with South Coast Air Quality Management District, CCAEJ has received a $1 million grant to install high performance air filtration units at 5 schools in highly polluted areas in Mira Loma and San Bernardino providing relief from the heavy burden of pollution for more than 7,000 students;
- We are partnering with Loma Linda University in conducting a comprehensive health study of 900 families living near the BNSF railyard in San Bernardino, a first to look at the impacts of railyards on health; and providing referrals for residents to local clinics for medical assistance.
Jurupa Residents Ready for Battle over High Voltage Power Lines

Jurupa Valley residents and City Council are angry over the proposal by the City of Riverside to run place 230 (kilovolt) power lines through the new City of Jurupa. Riverside and Southern California Edison want to build substations and transmission towers to add electrical capacity for Riverside residents. The new power lines would not power to residents of Jurupa Valley.

There is great concern about the health impacts from electromagnetic fields that emanate from the power In addition, the route along the Interstate 15 Corridor would impact development of the most desirable land the city’s future commercial development.

Public comment period is open through September 30, 2011. The public hearing is scheduled before the Riverside Planning Commission on Oct. 6. The Jurupa Valley City Council has voted to hire a consultant to review the massive environmental study report but wants local residents to join in providing input to the city’s official response. A workshop will be held on August 30 at Patriot High School.

Inland Valley Environmental Justice
Intervention and Revitalization Program

- Working with the City of San Bernardino to redesign a “traffic calming” project on 4th Street to include a vegetative barrier to absorb particulate pollution and reroute truck traffic away from residential neighborhoods;
- Working with CARB, local District Attorney’s office and Sheriff’s Department to install anti-idling signs and conduct trainings on Anti-idling laws for local law enforcement.
- Working with CARB to educate truckers and help them understand the new laws and how to be in compliance.
- Partnering with UCLA we are measuring particle pollution and identifying the individual chemical components that cause disease, translating the scientific information so that lay persons understand and decision makers use the information to inform their decisions;
- In Mira Loma we are working with the school district to plant trees and shrubs between the Union Pacific railyard and the high school as a vegetative barrier to absorb particles from that facility.

Each of these projects are the result of successfully bringing together trained, informed and involved affected residents to engage with agencies and officials in discussions of critical issues and solutions through our Intervention Task Force in a way that has engendered trust, respect and cooperation among the parties and develops public policies and programs to better serve these communities. We are developing a model for community engagement and demonstrating development of protective policies at the community level that as a pilot program for a state/federal policy.
Moving goods and products through southern California from the Ports of LA through the Inland Valleys and onto points throughout the nation has been viewed as the key to economic vitality for the southland. But we also know that the emissions from the ships, trains, trucks and planes necessary to transport the goods, are major sources of pollution.

According to Air Resources Board more than 5400 people die each year from PM 2.5 just in the South Coast Air District. The most recent data from South Coast AQMD indicates that while pollution levels overall in the basin have improved, Mira Loma and the surrounding area continue to be smothered in an unhealthful blanket of pollution. As the industry expands with more and more trucks and trains, the pollution will only increase. According to AQMD, even using the newest trucks and cleanest fuels the sheer increase in the number of trucks and trains will keep the pollution at their current deadly levels. The Health Risk Assessment (HRA) conducted by California Air Resources Board on railyards throughout California, found that the Mira Loma Union Pacific facility—by itself-- contributes an additional 1,250-in a million cancer risk to local Mira Loma residents.

Mira Loma Commerce Center
Despite these horrendous health impacts, on June 14, 2011, Riverside County proceeded to approve 24 more industrial buildings at the fence line of homes in Mira Loma Village and next to Country Village Senior Apartments and Homestead housing tract. CCAEJ was joined in opposing the project by South Coast Air Quality Management District (SC AQMD) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Riverside County’s outrageous disregard for the health and well being of our local residents have forced CCAEJ to file a lawsuit under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) challenging the decision. Since the formation of the City of Jurupa on July 1, CCAEJ legally must also name the city since the project is within its jurisdiction and if the County’s action is nullified, the City will be charged to review the projects and implement relief.


**Green Zones for Environmental and Economic Sustainability**

Communities of color, low-income and immigrant communities have long struggled with a toxics crisis that has been exacerbated by discriminatory land use practices that diminish health, safety and quality of life. Residential communities have been opened up for industrial development near new freeway development while truck routes are targeted to low-income communities.

For the past few years, CCAEJ has been part of The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), a statewide coalition comprised of six extraordinary base-building environmental justice organizations with strong community roots in critical urban and rural regions of California. The CEJA groups are: the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN); the Center for Community Action & Environmental Justice (CCAEJ); the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE); the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC); and People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights (PODER).

CEJA is advancing a new concept to address the ongoing environmental and economic inequities that exist in our communities. We define "Green Zones" as neighborhoods or clusters of neighborhoods currently suffering from environmental pollution, lack of economic opportunity and services and threatened by displacement and gentrification. This strategic approach strives to direct significant public investments to these areas to intervene to reduce the pollution levels, bring services and access to healthy food, recreational facilities and health facilities and stimulate private investment in new "green" technologies, jobs and industry development.

CEJA proposes that these communities be first in line for resources from state and federal levels, and implemented through programs that are truly community-led by community alliances with established and broad based memberships.

We’ve moved the initiative from vision to implementation through meetings with the State at the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and we just met with the new Secretary of Cal EPA on August 19, 2011. CCAEJ has met with the White House and presented a numerous national forums. With the recent focus on environmental Justice through the President's initiative where federal agencies (Dept. of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Dept. of Energy, etc.) have signed an MOU committed their agencies to addressing Environmental Justice, CCAEJ will be participating in a meeting with the federal Interagency Working Group sponsored by EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Our next meeting will take place at The White House at the end of September 2011.

---

**Want to Make a Difference in this World? Join CCAEJ!**

*We don’t just Talk — We Deliver!*

*Make Your Voice Heard!*

Become an Active Member and Supporter of CCAEJ

Sign up on the Envelope inserted inside —

Donate what you can—And Become a Part of the Solution

**All Residents Deserve Good Jobs, Clean Air, Safe Streets and Healthy Neighborhoods.**

CCAEJ—PO Box 33124, Jurupa Valley, CA 92519

951-360-8451  admin@ccaej.org  www.ccaej.org