



Ventura County
Chapter of the
**California Special
Districts Association**
Building Community, Making Connections

Newsletter

October/November
2026

President's Message

2026 CSDA Conference: Learning, Connecting and a lot of Heat!

Dear VCSDA members,

What a week! VCSDA members joined special district leaders from throughout California at the 2026 CSDA Annual Conference in Palm Desert. With temperatures climbing above 110 degrees, we were especially thankful for the beautiful, and exceptionally well-air-conditioned, Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa!

The conference provided a great opportunity to learn, share ideas and connect with colleagues from across the state. The keynote speakers were highlights.

Ben Nemtin, co-founder of The Buried Life and a New York Times bestselling author, opened the conference with "Powered by Purpose." His inspiring story reminded us of the importance of finding purpose in our work and using it to accomplish meaningful goals. As a young adult he and his friends made a "bucket" list of 100 goals and began an adventure of working towards their accomplishment with enough success that he has written books and lectures about their journey. I enjoyed listening to his experiences. One goal was to play basketball with a U.S. president, and yes, they did.

Kyle Scheele, an innovation and leadership speaker and author, presented "Thinking Inside the Box: How Tough Times Fuel True Creativity and Innovation." His message encouraged us to look at limitations differently and find creative solutions to challenges. This was especially practical as we never have unlimited resources or freedom to accomplish projects for our districts. There are always limitations. Often the limitations can fuel creativity. I know COVID 19 forced many of us to rethink how to creatively continue operations with major limitations

One of the best parts of attending CSDA is spending time with our Ventura County colleagues. The conversations, shared experiences and friendships that develop at these conferences strengthen VCSDA and help us bring new ideas back to our communities.

Sincerely,

Nellie Cusworth

Nellie Cusworth, President
Ventura County Special Districts Association

VCSDA Spotlight

Awards and Celebrations from the CSDA Conference



Ralph Heim Exceptional Outreach & Advocacy Award
Charlotte Holifield, Calleguas Municipal Water District



Innovative Program/Project of the Year Award (Small District)
Camarillo Health Care District - Pedaling the Planet



District of Distinction
United Water Conservation District

