

Meet the new Chief Executive Officer

I interrupt this month's installment of "Managing Risk" to take the opportunity to introduce myself to the readers of *California Special Districts* magazine.

My name is Laura Gill, and I'm SDRMA's new Chief Executive Officer. I introduced myself to many of you at the SDRMA Safety Awards Breakfast session during the CSDA Conference in Indian Wells last month. (You might remember the "Cinderella" moment I had when I lost my shoe climbing the stairs to the stage!) I came away from the conference very impressed at the strength of the CSDA membership. You all are dedicated to your service and engaged in discussions about improving service delivery. And, frankly, you all seem to enjoy your work and each other! I am also excited to work with CSDA Chief Executive Officer Neil McCormick to make the partnership between our two organizations even stronger.

I have an extensive background and knowledge of local government operations through my 30 years of service to local governments, 15 of which have been in chief executive positions in California. Prior to my work at SDRMA, I served as the City Manager for the City of Elk Grove and the Chief Administrative Officer for El Dorado County. In these jurisdictions, I worked with special districts leaders to ensure that our citizens received excellent service while ensuring the efficient use of tax dollars. At the end of the day, our citizens don't really care which government is responsible for a particular service; they just want the service performed well. My



partnerships with special districts over the past 15 years showed me what great partners you are in providing core services to our constituents. I have come to appreciate the work that you do every day for your special districts, and my knowledge of your day-to-day activities will serve me well in supporting SDRMA's mission of "maximizing protection and minimizing risk" for our members.

I have been with SDRMA since mid-May, and I have come to know a staff that is entirely committed to providing excellent customer service to our members. We keep our membership in mind in every staff conversation and decision we make. I have also come to know a Board of

Directors that is keenly interested in the quality of services we provide, as well as the fiscal soundness of our programs. I am very lucky to begin my service to an organization with such strong fundamentals.

Over the next several months, you'll see more of our SDRMA staff within the special district community.

Right now, you see our risk management staff, led by Chief Risk Officer Dennis Timoney, out and about across the State. If they aren't helping a special district navigate a claim, they are working with a special district to identify and correct workplace issues before they turn into workers' compensation claims. If your special district suffers a loss due

to a wildfire or a flood, Dennis and his staff are there to start and complete the recovery process with you.

However, we want to interact with our members (and potential members) on a more routine basis. Former Congressman and New York City Mayor Ed Koch was known for asking his fellow citizens, “How’m I doing?” We want to know from you how are we doing for you.

To that end, you’ll soon be able to engage directly with our Member Services staff, led by Chief Member Services Officer Ellen Doughty, in various venues. Ellen will attend CSDA Affiliated Chapter meetings and industry-specific conferences. If she happens to be in your neighborhood, Ellen will schedule a meeting with you to see what SDRMA can do for you. In addition, I’ll be visiting some of you to become more acquainted and to get your feedback.

However, you don’t have to wait for us to make an appearance to let us know what you think. Please feel free to contact us by phone or by email if you have a question, a suggestion for improvement, or a suggested topic for our safety workshop.

Thank you to all of you that have welcomed me into the special district family! I look forward to meeting more of you in person. And, with that, our regularly scheduled column will appear next month.



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