



ALLIANCE UPDATE

FALL 2017



Roseville Public CD is the 2017 R.W. Thomas Cemetery of the Year

Roseville Public Cemetery has been honored as the 2017 R.W. Thomas Cemetery of the Year. The award was presented during the 2017 PCA Annual Meeting. District Superintendent Kelly Ehrman and Trustee Joseph Almeida accepted the award.

Roseville Public Cemetery District was formed in 1939 to operate two cemeteries, the Roseville Cemetery on Berry Street, and the Union Cemetery on the corner of Watt and PFE Road. The first burial at the site of the Roseville Cemetery was Rachel E. Berry, who died on November 12, 1864 at the age of 37; she was the wife of Roseville's first Justice of the Peace John H. Berry. The district continues to operate these same two locations; the district administration office is located at the Roseville Cemetery.

The district is governed by a five



Attractive features such as the Garden Niche, (left) and a natural pond with waterfall and island highlight the grounds of Roseville Public Cemetery District

-member board of trustees, Steven Howe serves as Chairperson and Beth Gould is Vice-Chair. Members Norman Fratis, David Uribe and Joseph Almeida complete the board. The district is currently staffed with 8 full time employees and one part-time. Kelly Ehrman is the district Superintendent and Tanja Pomeroy is the Assistant Superintendent.

Roseville Public Cemetery District has numerous interment options and price points to serve

the residents of one of California's fastest growing regions. The district provided 190 interments over the most recent year, 33% of which were cremations.

The district has been an active supporter of the Public Cemetery Alliance. The district hosted an Equipment Show and Training Day that attracted over 100 participants. The district has committed to continued support by co-sponsoring the 2018 equipment Show.

Sutter's Mary Shaw Receives 2017 President's Award

The President's award is given to an individual or group that exhibit exceptional service and support of the PCA's membership and programs. This award was first presented to Pat Teague in 2006 for her dedication and support to the PCA in her role as Secretary, Pat will be retiring in January of this year. Other recipients include Golden State Risk Management Authority, Mel Lewis of Cordeiro Vault, Ray Young, Manager of Fair Oaks CD, Cheryl Smith of Oroville CD, Bob Hunt of Hunt Jeppson & Griffin, John Anderson of Madera CD, Arnie Brinton, Cottonwood CD, Brian Connealy, Asco Pacific Supply, Art Leonard, Manager Orland CD and last Years' award went to the Fair Oaks CD.

This years' candidate joined the public cemetery family in the early 90's. The District located in



Mary Shaw (left) accepts 2017 award From PCA President Cheryl Smith

a rural town, performs over 300 burials a year. The loyalty and dedication of this individual is remarkable, not only to her District but also to the PCA and the CAPC. She has led Office Manager sessions at both the PCA and CAPC – in fact she will be to facilitating the CAPCs Managers session in October.

Her career at the Sutter Cemetery District has also had some trying times, most recently with

the passing of her manager Leonard Pelfrey. Mary Shaw accepted her increased responsibilities very graciously and now is the Co-Manager of the Sutter Cemetery District along side Darrin Dollins.

The district staff members and trustees praised Mary for her "loyalty and 100% support to her staff and District." That statement captures Mary's leadership style and character.

Prior to joining Sutter's team, Mary worked for the telephone company and a hospital. She is married to Ronnie, they have two children and 4 grandchildren. Her go-to vacation spot is Fort Bragg where she and her family love to go camping.

The PCA Board of Directors thanks Mary Shaw for supporting and promoting the Public Cemetery Alliance and the California Public Cemetery Industry.

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The PCA is now headquartered at the Oroville Cemetery District.

Please note the new address:

Public Cemetery Alliance
5646 Lincoln Blvd.
Oroville, CA 95966
(530) 533-2920

Nancy and James Cartia v. Winton Cemetery District & Gateway Memorial Inc.

By Mark R. Velasquez, Esq. Hunt Jeppson & Griffin, LLP



Mark Velasquez, Esq.

“...after 10 days of trial, a Merced County jury voted unanimously that the Winton Cemetery District was not liable..”



A Veteran's niche stands tall over the grounds at Winton Cemetery District.

On August 31, 2015, while James and Nancy Cartia were visiting the gravesite of James Cartia's deceased wife and daughter at the Winton Cemetery, James Cartia tripped on some grass and fell into his wife and daughter's headstone knocking it over and onto Nancy Cartia. The headstone was installed in 1990 by Mae's Memorial Co., and had been secured with glue. The headstone had never been re-glued, and there had never been any complaints or reports of it being loose before the accident.

Nancy Cartia suffered multiple fractures to her right leg, damage to the cartilage in her right knee, and a fractured right wrist. She had complications while in the hospital, and needed approximately five surgeries to repair her leg and wrist. While in the hospital, Nancy suffered hospital psychosis, and contracted several infections. Nancy claimed to need a total knee replacement in the near future, and assistance for the rest of her life due to reduced mobility and pain in her leg.

The Cartias sued Gateway Memorial Inc. for negligence, and sued the Winton Cemetery District on the theory of Dangerous Condition of Public Property, pursuant to Government Code section 835. As against Winton Cemetery District, Plaintiffs alleged the headstone was dangerous because they believe the glue had failed before the accident, and that the cemetery had a unreasonable inspection system. Gateway Memorial Inc. was dismissed from the lawsuit before trial. The Cartias initially demanded \$25 million, but in settlement discussions indicated they would accept \$2.4 million. At trial, they asked the jury for \$10 million for Nancy Cartia, and \$1 million for James Cartia. The lawsuit itself lasted one year and four months, and cost approximately \$500,000 to

defend, and required every employee and three trustees to testify at depositions and trial.

On September 1, 2017, after 10 days of trial, a Merced County jury voted unanimously that the Winton Cemetery District was not liable, because the Cartias' headstone was not in a dangerous condition at the time of the accident.

Why This Case Was Important- First, winning the case continues to show that it is difficult to prove that a headstone is a dangerous condition. Second, winning the case makes it easier to get a dismissal or settle these types of cases in the future. Had the jury found that the headstone was a dangerous condition then it would have encouraged anyone injured by a headstone to pursue a lawsuit and seek a lot of money. It would also have made it harder to defend and settle these types of cases, and it would have most likely increased insurance rates for all public cemeteries.

What The Case Does Not Stand For: First, it is important to know that the case is not legal precedent. Only cases from the Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court can be used as precedent in future cases. Second, the case does not stand for the proposition that all headstones are not a dangerous condition. Whether or not a particular headstone is a dangerous condition depends upon the facts of each case. For example, in this case the District re-glued all of the headstones that it found or were reported loose immediately. Would the

case have turned out differently had the cemetery knew that the headstone was loose, but didn't do anything about it? In this case the District had conducted a physical inspection of every headstone two months before the accident. Would the case have turned out differently had they never done an inspection? In this case Plaintiff's own glue expert testified in his deposition that the glue was actually working at the time of the accident? Would the case have turned out differently had their glue expert testified that the glue had failed years before the accident?

Lawyers will often say that different facts make for a different case. While the jury agreed in this case that a headstone, even if unsecured, was not a dangerous condition another jury with a different set of facts might find otherwise. Therefore, it is helpful to review your District's policies and procedures as it relates to the law of Dangerous Condition of Public property. I will be presenting a review of the law of Dangerous Conditions of Public Property at the next convention.

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Top-Notch Training, Historic Tour, Great Facilities and Bowling Highlight 2017 PCA Annual Meeting



Special District Consultant Brent Ives Delivers Keynote Training

The PCA annual meeting promised education, fellowship and fun, and the event truly delivered on that promise. Attendees were treated to optional a pair of prevent choices; an informative update of California's drought, or bowling at the site's state-of-the-art bowling center. So, from the start, the event truly had something for everyone.

The event formally kicked off with a vendor reception sponsored by Golden State Risk Management Authority (GSRMA) featuring delicious hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar. The reception provided an informal atmosphere to visit with the vendors and discuss their prod-

ucts and services. The PCA vendors provide vital support to PCA's mission. While the direct financial support they provide through dues and conference fees are important, the contributions of their time and expertise is of much greater value.

Special district governance expert Brent Ives presented a multi-session training titled "10 Step Process for Achieving Best Governance Principles and Practices for your Cemetery District". Despite the descriptive title suggestion, Brent's training was valuable to everyone in attendance, not just trustees. Brent shared the lessons he learned on-the-ground as a Councilman and Mayor of Tracy, CA and through his experiences consulting public agencies. Brent has a degree in Organizational Behavior, so based on his formal education and work experience, he is able to analyze situations and present solutions in ways that are practical and well researched.

His talk did not shy away from the political aspects of organizations, but reminded attendees that governance is political. The goal is to function with an atmosphere of respect and effectiveness within the politics that

are inherent of organizations.

After the morning training, many attendees took advantage of a guided tour of the nearby Columbia Cemetery District and the town of Columbia which is a California State Park frozen in the gold rush era.

After touring the Cemetery, Old Schoolhouse and Town, the group, seeking a true gold rush era experience, gathered at the St. Charles Saloon. The establishment combines the best of the past and present. The atmosphere and furnishings are authentic 1880's, fortunately, the refrigeration and plumbing are 21st century.

Back at the conference site, Mark Marshall from GSRMA discussed strategies for protecting cemetery grounds from illegal activity.

That evening, dinner and the annual awards presentation was held. The 2017 awards were presented to Roseville Cemetery District as R.W. Thomas Cemetery of the Year, and Sutter Cemetery District Manager Mary Shaw was honored with the President's award. (See Alliance Update cover for complete stories)

The conference continued on Thursday with some great breakout session choices. Kirk Hendricks from Christy Vault discussed presented "Innovative Revenue-Generating Cremation Burial Options". Bob Hunt of Hunt Jeppson & Griffin HJ&G) discussed Understanding and Complying with SB1179-Succecion of Burial Rights; and Mark Velasquez of HJ&G provided a training titled "Effective Human Resources Policy & Understanding the FMLA (Continued Page 5)



Above: Vendor Liaison Brian Connealy, (right) presents R.W. Thomas Cemetery of the Year award to Roseville Public Cemetery Manager Kelly Ehrman (center) and Trustee Joseph Almeida.

Below left: Kirk Hendricks, Christy Vault provides training Below right: Historic Columbia Cemetery entrance gate





Bowling Mixer Proves to be Excellent Teambuilding Event

The PCA bowling contingency took over lanes 9-12 at the Black Oak Lanes On Tuesday, August 22.

Fair Oaks Cemetery District Manager Ray Young provided the following summary of the competition:

"Kelly Ehrman, Roseville District Manager was by far the best bowler on lane 9 at our mixer for sure, his new nickname is the "RINGER"!! You know when you have a person show up with a bag and ball and arm bands for support and then he says, 'oh, I hardly ever bowl'" and I bought this years ago!!! LOL - He was a good sport about the harassment and is an excellent bowler, by far the most superior bowler at the mixer.

I am not sure if Dennis Kilkenny, Board Chairman from Winters Cemetery District, was the best

bowler on lane 10. I was told by the rest of their team due to his position on the Board and being he was the boss, oh yah, it was he who was high the scorer for certain!!

On lane 11, It was very clear Jim Perrin was the superior bowler, he is Terri Perrin from Fair Oaks Cemetery's husband. The rest of his team was pretty bad, they sorely needed a huge amount of practice to come close to being called bowlers!!

As for lane 12, Jonathan Lamsdin, District Manager Elk Grove Cemetery District was the clear winner on that lane. He had a Devil may care style of putting the ball down the lane. He could spin it, curve it, I think I even saw him make it hop, you name it he could put it where he wanted to at any given point in the game.



The high-tech Black Oak Lanes provided the perfect venue for the Bowling Mixer at the 2017 PCA Annual Meeting

All in all, I believe everyone enjoyed themselves and will be sore tomorrow, thanks to all the participants."

Team-building events are an important component of PCA Annual Meetings. These activities provide great networking and

knowledge-sharing that is difficult during formal training sessions. The PCA will continue to offer exciting and diverse activities at future meetings.

(Annual Meeting, continued)

FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act).

Each year, the Annual Meeting features a prize drawing for donated prizes from vendors and members. An unofficial poll of 2017 attendees declared this the best-ever drawing in regards to number and quality of prizes. Great gift baskets, high-quality wine, cash and San Francisco

Giants tickets! There was even a cremation urn vault donated by new vendor Crown Vault.

Gift baskets featured locally sourced food and drinks from agricultural regions throughout the state.

Due to overwhelming generosity of the prize donors, chances of being drawn were excellent; most attendees did not go home empty-handed.

Walter Michaels and Mark Marshall of GSRMA and Brian Connealy of ASCO-Pacific announce winners and deliver prizes during the raffle drawing. Cemetery 360's Jimmy Pinocchio's (right) gesture sums up the coffee and the entire conference! Attendees relax and visit during a break in activities (below)



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Law Enforcement Chaplain Mindi Russell Discusses Suicide Deaths with Cemetery Leaders



Fair Oaks Cemetery District Hosted Suicide Awareness Training



Most media outlets do not report suicide deaths unless they are a part of a larger news story or crime

September 10, 2017 marked the 15th World Suicide Prevention Day. This day has been designated as an initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention and endorsed by the World Health Organization. In the US, the entire week surrounding World Suicide Prevention Day is designated as National Suicide Prevention Week. These annual events are intended to raise awareness and provide at-risk individuals and survivors support.

Despite the growing resources and support for survivors and those at-risk, the rates of suicide are not declining, but rather increasing over the past 15 years.

Most media outlets do not report suicide deaths unless they are a part of a larger news story or crime. This approach has been customary for many years with the intent of being respectful to the surviving families and a belief that publicity may add to the number of suicide attempts. Based on this, suicide deaths are, understandably, under-reported.

Cemeteries work with grieving families daily. Most would agree that suicide is unlike deaths from disease, accidents or even homicide. Suicide deaths are far more difficult to understand; survivors can feel guilt and confusion in addition to the normal grief associated with the loss. Survivors can feel alienated, rather than comforted by the reaction of their friends and extended families.

Likely due to the sensitivity of this topic, an all too common, yet practically unknown occurrence is suicides on cemetery grounds. One cemetery manager recently reached out to other managers to discuss and seek advice on how to cope with a tragic suicide event at his cemetery. The surprising response from the other managers was that they had incidents of suicide deaths on their grounds as well.

After a bit of networking, it was determined that this was not an uncommon or isolated case. It has been happening with increased frequency over the past 10 years.

Conversations led to a meeting hosted by Fair Oaks Cemetery District on July 25, 2017 to discuss the topic. Fair Oaks District Manager Ray Young arranged for Mindi Russell, the Executive Director of Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Sacramento (LECS) to share her expertise.

Mindi graciously met with a group of eleven area managers and trustees, and shared her expertise on the subject. LECS serves the law enforcement community, victims of crime and tragedy and the community at-large with, among other services, on-scene emotional crisis support. Law Enforcement Chaplains are highly trained experts in the aftermath of grief and loss.

Mindi has responded to hundreds of critical incidences in her career, including "Ground Zero" in the aftermath of the 9/11 ter-

ror attacks on the World Trade Center. She presented a broad overview of the psychological issues related to suicide and the long-term pain suicide deaths cause

Hopefully, districts will never have to experience one of these tragedies. Unfortunately, based on the increased frequency, it is advisable to train and plan for such an event.

Any plan must incorporate both a prevention and a response/mitigation component. Below are some very general considerations.

Regarding prevention, district cemeteries are public places, so minimizing access to the grounds, is not only difficult, but contrary to the purpose of a public cemetery. Therefore, one focal point of the prevention component should be training employees on recognizing suspicious activity.

Training should include identification, reporting and most importantly, avoiding harm to the employee or public.

Should a suicide death occur on district grounds, the response needs to be swift and thoughtful. Law enforcement needs to be contacted immediately and the scene must be protected, yet undisturbed.

Post-investigation, districts need to restore the site and provide post-traumatic event support. Districts should know who provides related services in their area and engage those services immediately.

The examples above do not represent a complete or comprehensive plan or policy. Districts are advised to develop all policies and procedures with the advice and approval of legal counsel.



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*Ray Young, General Manager
Fair Oaks Cemetery District*

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*Pat Teague, District Manager
Gridley-Biggs Cemetery District*



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Pat Teague Retirement Leaves Void in PCA



Pat Teague, Manager, Gridley-Biggs Cemetery District

Pat Teague humbly, selflessly and capably served not only the Gridley Cemetery District and the PCA, but the entire California public cemetery industry. She served as Executive Secretary for the PCA since its inception in 1993.

Pat brilliantly performed the typical list of duties; taking minutes (using perfect shorthand), preparing agendas, managing the association's communications and finances, etc.

But it was the extra, personal value she added that shined the brightest. Pat became the go-to person for answers to anything related, and un-related to public cemetery operation and administration. Pat's answers and ad-

vice was always valuable, but given with a large dose of humility. Pat would preface her answers with "here is what works for us...", or "the way I understand it is...", and many times, "I

"Pat became the go-to person for answers to anything related, and un-related to public cemetery operation and administration"

do not know, but I do know someone who may have that answer."

At that point, Pat would quickly produce a name and contact information for the best source for the requested information. Her job description was never

formalized, but if it had been, there is not a chance that so much would have been so demanded of the position.

Pat took the assignment at the "suggestion" of Gridley Cemetery District manager Bob Thomas. Since Pat was serving as Gridley CD's secretary at the time, Bob knew she was an outstanding choice for the job.

Numerous new managers and district administrative staff have credited Pat with teaching them the business. She was always a phone call away, and always helpful.

The PCA will have a challenge to replace Pat's position, but it will be impossible to replace Pat, the person.

Ray Young retires from Fair Oaks CD and PCA Board



Ray Young, Fair Oaks Cemetery District Manager

Ray "Digger" Young has retired after 20+ years as District Manager of the Fair Oaks Cemetery District. Ray has served the PCA as a director and President. Ray has been particularly involved in legislative advocacy for Public Cemeteries. Ray's advocacy has benefitted public cemeteries by improving governing laws, and raising awareness about the important role of public cemeteries to the communities they serve.

Ray received his training at the Sutter Cemetery District and went on to manage Live Oak

Cemetery District for several years prior to his tenure at Fair Oaks. Ray is a past Director of the California Association of Public Cemeteries (CAPC).

He has served as Commissioner on the Sacramento Cemetery Commission since its origination in 2002.

Ray is always searching for better ways to "get 'er done". Ray has constantly sought improvement the services that the PCA provides its members.

A recent example of Ray's proactiveness was his response to a

suicide at a PCA member district. Ray organized, hosted and engaged an expert on the subject to provide training. (See article pg. 6). This response was typical of Ray; completely selfless, only looking to help fellow cemeteries.

Ray's passion and dedication to the public cemetery industry, the PCA and Fair Oaks Cemetery District will be missed.

Ray has retired from being a full-time cemetery manager, but will continue to pursue new projects that need to "get done!"

Pat Teague, Ray Young and the Alliance Goal

"The Goal of the Alliance is to be a resource for all public cemeteries. Our desire is to help each public cemetery be as successful as possible in providing quality and affordable cemetery services to their respective communities. This will be accomplished through education, communication and a spirit of teamwork between the Alliance and all public cemeteries regardless of size or funding"

Pat and Ray served the PCA with a constant focus on the stated goal of the Alliance. They carried out this mission in a way that will leave a lasting legacy. Appropriately, both have been awarded Honorary Life Memberships in the PCA!

Nevada CD Trustee, Dennis Casella and Hills Ferry CD District Manger Ken Moeller fill PCA Board Vacancies

The retirements of PCA Executive Secretary Pat Teague and Director Ray Young caused a domino effect on the PCA's leadership. Based on Pat's retirement, PCA director and past president Cheryl Smith stepped down from her Director post to take over the duties of PCA Executive Secretary. This move, coupled with Ray Young's retirement, left the PCA with two vacancies on the board of directors.

At their October 19, 2017 meeting, the board appointed Nevada Cemetery District Board of Trustee Chair Dennis Casella and Hills Ferry Cemetery District Manager Ken Moeller to serve the remainder of Ray

Young and Cheryl Smith's terms of office.

Both Dennis and Ken have been active, supportive PCA members, and have solid backgrounds in cemetery operations, administration and governance.

Dennis has served on the Nevada CD board since 2012, and Ken has managed Hills Ferry CD since 2006. Dennis in particular, will be immediately "thrown in the fire" as his Nevada Cemetery District will host the 2018 PCA annual meeting.

The PCA board is grateful for their willingness to accept these appointments.



Dennis Casella (left), and Ken Moeller will fill remaining PCA Board terms of Ray Young and Cheryl Smith



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Cheryl Smith Hands John Anderson the Gavel After Six Years as PCA President



PCA President, John Anderson, (above) and Past President Cheryl Smith (above right)

After six successful years serving as PCA President, Cheryl Smith is yielding. Madera Cemetery District Operations Manager and current PCA Vice-President John Anderson has been elected as the new President. John has served on the PCA board since 2010 .

Cheryl has resigned her board position and will assume the PCA's Executive Secretary role. This move will facilitate a smooth transition, as the Executive Secretary and President must coordinate efforts on most all PCA business matters.

There have been multiple changes to the composition of the board, but a great succession plan continues to assure that the PCA will be well-led into the future.



PCA Past-President, Arnie Brinton from Cottonwood Cemetery continues to serve as a director, as he has since the PCA was founded in 1993. Jeff Rodgers from Live Oak CD, has served for more than five years, and Trustees Rick Beale from Orland CD and Steve Perry from Sutter CD are experienced directors as well.

Steve Perry has been elected to serve as Vice President. Despite all of the changes, a wealth of experienced leadership remains intact.

Members can be confident the PCA will continue to pursue the Alliance Goal of constant improvement to the services they provide public cemeteries.

Nevada Cemetery District to Host PCA Annual Meeting in Grass Valley August 22-24, 2018



The Gold Miners Inn will be the site for the 2018 PCA Annual Meeting hosted by Nevada Cemetery District

Mark your calendars for the 2018 PCA Annual meeting in Grass Valley. Nevada Cemetery District has played host to previous events, and has been a fantastic host. The area has many outstanding places to visit including the Empire Mine State Historic Park, North Star Powerhouse Mining Museum and historic downtowns in both Nevada City and Grass Valley. The area is also home to

a number of outstanding wineries.

Nevada Cemetery District is unique, it is always informative to learn about their innovative ways. The district maintains many pioneer sites, and is a public cemetery pioneer itself with their Green Burial options.

The training and activity agenda will be finalized and available in early 2018.

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2018 Public Cemetery Alliance Scheduled Training and Events

Regional Training February 7, 2018 Hosted by Madera Cemetery District

Madera Cemetery District will host a regional training on February 7, 2018 from 9AM to 2PM. The training will feature breakout sessions to facilitate simultaneous training of multiple topics.

Madera Cemetery District has graciously hosted these events numerous times and always does a wonderful job. Please mark your calendars, registration and complete event information will be available soon.



2018 PCA Equipment Show March 18, 2018 Rocklin Cemetery

Newcastle-Rocklin-Gold Hill (NRG) Cemetery District will host the 2018 Equipment Show at the Rocklin Cemetery, 4090 Kannasto St. Rocklin, CA. In addition to vendor displays, a safety training, BBQ lunch and raffle prizes will be provided.

The following vendors will be displaying their goods and services: Valley Truck & Tractor, Pape Equipment, Sonsray Machinery, Gold Country Kubota, Quenvold's Safety Shoes, Ewing Irrigation, Paul's Cemetery Service,- ASCO Pacific, Cantrell Equipment, New Holland Tractor, Beeler Tractor, Grasshopper Mower Co., and Golden State Risk Management Authority. Additional vendors will likely be added.

Event reminders and details will be forwarded, if you have immediate questions, contact NRG General Manager Harley Forrey (916) 663-4660

Cottonwood Cemetery Northern California Safety Meeting, June 1, 2018 Cottonwood Community Center

Cottonwood Cemetery District Manager and PCA Past President Arnie Brinton (right), will once again host a training in Cottonwood CA, conveniently located for Northern California districts. These high-quality trainings have proven vital to districts in the north state by greatly reducing the time and expense associated with travel. The training will be workplace safety-focused and is scheduled from 9AM to 2PM. Lunch will be provided.

Mark your calendar, details and registration will be forwarded in early 2018.



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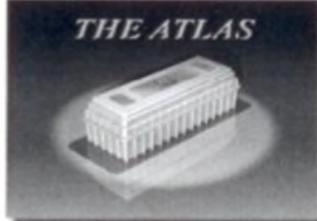
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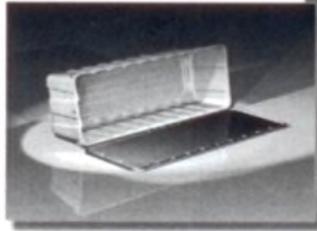
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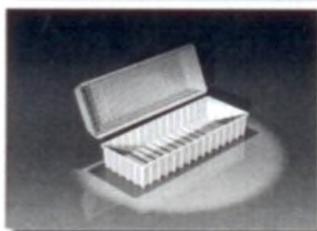


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