

# City of Thousand Oaks celebrates National Public Works Week

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Every January the City of Thousand Oaks Public Works Department, Municipal Service Center, gears up for its annual National Public Works Week celebration, even though the event is always held the third full week in May! What on earth could take over four full months to prepare for?

Thousands of invitational flyers are sent out to area schools. The past year is evaluated for what needs to be ordered and many meetings are held to ensure all is set. As the event gets closer our efforts increase; we order "giveaways," print informational brochures and create city-specific coloring books, go over the general plan of action, put a call out for volunteers to help, prune our roses, decorate and just do it for three fun-packed days!

The Public Works Department puts on about 20 demonstrations, which includes a working storm drain, traffic light, and a ride in a bus through the car wash; we open our city's sign shop, fleet shop and welding shop for viewing; we bring out the beneficial insects with thousands and thousands of ladybugs, landscape aerial lift, tree maintenance equipment and graffiti removal demo; our maintenance yard becomes a parking lot for large street maintenance equipment such as backhoe, dump truck, asphalt roller and street sweeper; we display how a residential water meter works and talk about water conservation; the wastewater hydro cleaning vehicle and wastewater line camera equipment with a video of a rat in the line is put on view; and emergency radio communications equipment is shared with the children and bicycle safety is displayed and explained. Year after year the children seem to have their favorites—the beneficial bug display, the rat video, and a working storm drain display with various types of pollution really grab their attention and elicit some fun responses. (See photos on p. 17 – Ed.)

Why do we take the time and expense to do this? It is our belief that our residents should know what we do, how we do it, and understand the importance of our doing it right. We live in a beautiful area and maintaining the quality of life and infrastructure is something the City and Public Works Department take great pride in. Local teacher Susan Mellon said, "We've been coming to the city's Public Works Week for seven years and it's our annual end-of-the-year trip. I think it's cool to see what city employees do and how they work and how our city is run. And it's free." The 2009 event entertained more than 1,400 children and adults, and we are gearing up for our next event scheduled for May 18 through 20, 2010. For more information about the City of Thousand Oaks Public Works Week, visit [www.toaks.org](http://www.toaks.org).

The City of Thousand Oaks is located about 40 miles northwest of Los Angeles, in Ventura County, with approximately 130,000 residents. The Public Works Department is comprised of about 210 employees with the Municipal Service Center maintenance yard having about half of them. The city is special in its outlook, which is definitely pro quality of life; its methods, which are ecologically and financially sound; and its accessibility to residents—they are our reason for being!

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**John Miller, Landscape Worker, shows the kids the ladybugs, lacewings, and praying mantis.**



**A working storm drain, created by using a small swimming pool, a gutter and grate, with water and trash added, clearly demonstrates what happens when trash ends up in the street.**



**Tony Ranallo, Street Worker, explains how the street sweeper works.**



**Wendy the Water Drop, created, sewn and worn by Wilma Chavez, poses with her grandson, Brian Chavez. Wendy helped to highlight water conservation.**



**The kids look startled as they learn about the sign fabrication shop.**



**These little people are fascinated by Street Worker Rik Gessler's explanation of sign fabrication.**