

# THE JOURNAL

## Event to put the public in public works

By Alan Lopez

STAFF WRITER

El Cerrito will hold a public works open house on Wednesday, May 19, from 4 to 6 p.m., in honor of National Public Works week, May 17-22.

The city's corporation yard — the nerve center of public works, where tools and maintenance vehicles are housed — will be open to the public. The yard is located

at 7450 Schmidt Lane.

El Cerrito Fire Department employees will be there, as will representatives from many of the offices that provide city services. There will also be Togo's sandwiches, coloring books and games for children and a raffle for prizes provided the Stege Sanitary District.

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## Works

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Residents will have a chance to look at maintenance equipment, ask questions and get to know their city employees.

"It's our way of getting to know the public as well as addressing concerns they might have," said Margarita Nodal, a public works management assistant. "And for the public to get to know the workers out there trying to do the best they can."

Public works is in charge of street and sidewalk repair and maintenance of the city's storm drains, public parks and 18 public buildings. The city's recycling center, where residents can drop off used motor oil or drop off or pick up free books at a book exchange, is also under the public works umbrella. The recycling

center is located at 7501 Schmidt Drive, across the street from the corporation yard.

People may see one of the city's five maintenance workers fixing a pothole or doing park maintenance but may not realize exactly what the department does, said maintenance and engineer services manager Bruce King.

Residents sometimes call with questions about why problems, such as poor street conditions, persist, said Laureteen Morris, a management assistant in recycling and maintenance.

That lack of awareness sometimes proves to be a "minor frustration," for resident Al Miller, a member of the Stege Sanitary District board of directors. Stege provides El Cerrito, Kensington and the Richmond Annex with sewer service.

People may not realize how

### IF YOU GO

**WHAT:** El Cerrito second Annual public works open house

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 19, from 4 to 6 p.m.

**WHERE:** El Cerrito corporation yard, 7450 Schmidt Lane  
**INFORMATION:** 510-215-4382

much or how difficult the work is, even for a relatively small city like El Cerrito, Miller said, adding he hoped the department would get more credit.

"The strongest advantage is it gives the city a chance to put a positive image in front of the public and get a good message across about how they do things why they do things, how important what they do is," Miller said. "And it gives people a chance to meet the people who are doing it."

In addition to meeting public works employees, residents will be able to meet representatives and get information about the outside companies and agencies that also provide city services, such as Stege, the East Bay Municipal Utility District and the county's clean-water program.