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County Wins Challenge Award and Two Merit Awards from CSAC

(Santa Ana, CA) – The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) today presented awards to three County of Orange agencies and departments at the Board of Supervisors meeting. The programs were selected out of hundreds of entries throughout the state as part of CSAC's annual Challenge Award competition.

"I am very proud of the innovation and creative spirit of these programs," said Board Chair Patricia C. Bates. "County departments and agencies are continuing to find new and creative ways to better serve our community, in the face of difficult budget times."

OC Waste & Recycling won a prestigious Challenge Award for its AB 939 Surcharge Program, which implements a surcharge of self-hauled waste to landfills to reduce the disposal of recyclable materials from landfills. As a direct result from the program, OCW&R has experienced an increase in diverted waste from landfills to recycling facilities. Self-hauled waste has decreased 70 percent since the inception of the surcharge. Almost \$14 million was generated from the surcharge for use in regional recycling education programs, including public education, outreach and a partnership with a local science center.

The Sheriff's Department was awarded a Merit Award for its Tracking Automated Graffiti Reporting System (TAGRS) for its launch of a clearinghouse that enables law enforcement and public works agencies to capture, share and investigate graffiti incidents. TAGRS maximizes staff time to the tune of a 90 percent reduction in administrative project time to document the necessary information on graffiti reports. The Orange County Transportation Authority Transit Police Services reports a 20 percent increase in cases of cleared graffiti and a cost reduction of \$50,000.

The County also garnered a second merit award for the Health Care Agency's Mobile Clinics for the Homeless program, which is a partnership between Public Health Community Nursing and private organizations to bring medical care to the homeless. In response to the challenges of regularly accessing homeless individuals, the public health officer worked with public and private entities to find solutions. With this partnership model, Public Health Nursing was able to promote the goals of the mobile clinics, which link clients to medical homes and pays for care.

All three awards were selected based on their innovative and resourceful solution to a problem, as well as each program's ability to be replicated and use of cost-effective practices.