

DWP

Fallen Employees Memorial

DWP unveils memorial to employees who lost their lives while providing City services.

Photos by the Bureau of Engineering Newsletter

A new civic monument was dedicated May 22 honoring more than 200 DWP employees who lost their lives while providing vital electric and water service to the City.

Councilmember and Club Member Tom LaBonge, DWP officials, and family and friends of fallen DWP employees unveiled the new memorial in front of the DWP's John Ferraro Building.

"As we begin Memorial Day weekend, it is fitting that we honor the City employees and their families who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the City of Los Angeles," said Councilmember Tom LaBonge. "It's also fitting that we moved the ceremony here from City Hall this year, since the Department of Water and Power has lost more employees than any other department in the City."

With hundreds of DWP employees looking on, the third annual Employee Memorial Ceremony featured the unveiling of a 16-foot-long glass memorial. The memorial is etched with the names of the 218 employees who lost their lives in service to the Department between 1922 and 2008. That number does not include 43 workers who died during construction of the first Los Angeles Aqueduct between 1908 and 1913, prior to records being kept.

"This monument is a testament to the extraordinarily dangerous work that

DWP employees do every day of the week, and which most Los Angeles residents really know nothing about," said David Nahai, DWP CEO and General Manager. "When you look at this monument, you will see that one side is completely full with 218 names, and the other side is blank. I believe we owe it to those whose names appear on one side to make sure that no name ever appears on the other side."

"Too often we take for granted the usually unseen work and huge risks our DWP workers

are forced to take to do their jobs to keep the water and power running for all of us," said Lee Kanon Alpert, President of the Board of Water and Power Commissioners. "Our employees also save lives – lives of the elderly, the infirm and those who are in hospitals, whose very breathing depends on the electricity that runs the equipment that keeps them alive."

Pointing out that the majority of deaths occurred during the Department's first 30 years -- through the 1940s -- Nahai said the



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Department has elevated safety as its No. 1 priority, illustrated by the formation of a joint safety institute, an annual safety summit, and many other cooperative efforts between labor and management to foster effective safety programs and policies.

"Still, day in and day out, our employees risk their lives to provide water and power to an ever-growing City," Nahai said.

The fallen employees worked for various divisions of the Department. The majority worked in the Power System in Power Distribution, Electric Trouble, Power Operations, Power Design and Construction, and Electrical Station Maintenance.

The memorial's unveiling was witnessed by about 30 family members and friends of fallen DWP employees, including the family of Herman Hermosillo, an electric mechanic who died in 1988. His son, Marco Hermosillo, also a DWP employee, said the memorial was a great tribute. "My father would be proud. This really means a lot to us and to all the families of those who have passed performing water and power work for the City," Marco said.

Charles Bragg, a DWP electric service representative, was best friends with Brian Blaney, an electrical mechanic who died in 1982. "This is impressive and fantastic," Bragg said. "It was time."



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