

## RIVER ISLANDS

# C U R R E N T S



Susan Dell'Oso,  
Project Director

## OPEN LETTER FROM SUSAN DELL'OSSO PROJECT DIRECTOR

The holiday season is upon us, a time to think about those whom we hold dear and to appreciate our many warm relationships. Amidst all of the hustle and bustle of holiday parties, shopping, and preparing our homes for family members and friends to stop by, it's nice to take a quiet moment to consider how much our lives at River Islands have changed in just one short year.

As the leader of the development team, sometimes I tend to think about change in terms of miles of streets installed or acres of parks designed. This year, the accomplishment of building a new home for the River Islands Technology Academy wasn't just about meeting an impossible deadline.

Opening our school on a new site, allowing all of our staff, teachers, parents and students to remain together as a close community supporting an unbelievable program - that achievement gave me a happy heart.

Visiting the school this week with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and seeing our 550+ student body cheering a welcome made all of the thousands of man hours that went into this design, engineering and construction miracle feel so worthwhile. There are two articles about the school in this month's issue of Currents to catch you up on our accomplishments and provide recognition to the teachers, staff, administrators and parents who contribute tirelessly to the school's success.

In the next issue of Currents, I promise to catch you up on some of our exciting plans for 2016. For now, please enjoy the happiest of holiday seasons from all of us at River Islands.

Best wishes,

Susan Dell'Oso  
Project Director

## RIVER ISLANDS TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY SCORES HIGH IN FIRST STATEWIDE TEST RESULTS

Last spring, California held a statewide Assessment of School Performance and Progress testing for grades 3-8 to ascertain students' progress "in a more rigorous education regimen associated with the Common Core standards that were adopted in 2010".

Performance was measured by the percentage of students who exceeded state standards, met state standards, nearly met state standards and did not meet state standards in English and mathematics.

River Islands Technology Academy is among the state's top achievers, with 24% of its students exceeding state standards in English. To put this accomplishment into perspective, across California, only 16% of the state's students exceeded state standards. In addition, another 25% of the River Islands Technology Academy students met the state standards in English.

In mathematics, 14% of the students exceeded state standards, and another 20% met the standards. Almost 300 students, representing grades 3-7, participated in the testing.

The River Islands Technology Academy currently has a student body of approximately 550 students, with 600 students on a waiting list. Priority placement exists for students residing in River Islands or within the Banta school district.

## A SPECIAL VISITOR COMES TO RIVER ISLANDS TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson paid a visit to the new campus of the River Islands Technology Academy on Monday, December 7, where he met with Principal Brenda Scholl and Project Director Susan Dell'Osso, toured several classrooms within the K-8 independent charter school, its state-of-the-art computer and science labs, and the new multi-purpose room.

Torlakson referred to the students' outstanding test achievements while addressing a campus-wide assembly. He asked the students to guess the number of students in California—6 million—and told them that those students attend classes in more than 10,000 schools throughout the state. "River Islands Technology Academy students, you're at the top of those millions of students," he said, to cheers and applause from the assembled students and staff.

Torlakson visited the original campus of the school two years ago. With the school's move to another site within the River Islands master planned community, he returned to see the new, larger campus and its expanded facilities that support the school's STEM approach to education.

During Torlakson's tenure in the top educational post in California, the former State Senator has put together a blueprint for the future of California's schools, which includes a number of sound strategies that hold great promise for students—strategies which have already been implemented at the River Islands Technology Academy, including:

- Strong academics
- Well-rounded curriculum
- Parental involvement
- Qualified educators
- A focus on health and nutrition

Torlakson's commitment is to "ensure that the state provides a world-class education to all students, preparing them to live, work and thrive in a highly connected world." The teachers and administrators at River Islands Technology Academy support State Superintendent Torlakson's goals, and were thrilled to have an opportunity to have him meet their students.



### A DELICIOUS NEW OFFERING... THE BOATHOUSE BAR AND GRILLE

Coming your way: the official opening of The Boathouse Bar and Grille, overlooking the lakes at Sunset Point. Envisioned as a community gathering spot, the Boathouse will be serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Rich Hogan, local restaurateur, is managing the bar and restaurant with an eye toward a white tablecloth dining experience, with a diverse and satisfying menu and an exceptional wine list, including the Cambay Group's own Priest Ranch and Somerston labels. At this time, the Boathouse is scheduled for some special holiday events and an opening by the end of the year.

### NEW AND RETURNING BUILDERS COMING TO RIVER ISLANDS IN 2016

Although it is too early to divulge names or offer home sizes and descriptions, we are happy to announce that early in the new year we will be able to provide you with a list of homebuilders planning to offer neighborhoods in 2016.

We have attracted a wonderful group of well-known homebuilders, some of whom have already built in our community, and some whom will be bringing whole new approaches to creating neighborhoods to River Islands.

Once the builders take their homes' architecture through our Design Review Committee, we will be able to give you a sneak peak of what's to come!