

GOP candidate Whitman brings ideas to Santa Paula

Jobs are priority, she says

By Kathleen Wilson

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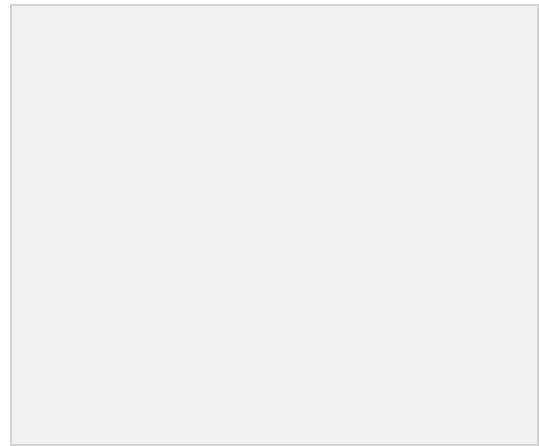
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Meg Whitman speaks with Carl Barringer after touring the wastewater treatment plant Wednesday in Santa Paula. Whitman is the Republican candidate for governor.

Republican gubernatorial candidate [Meg Whitman](#) came to Santa Paula on Wednesday to tour the city's newly opened wastewater plant and talk up her plan for fixing California.



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06/30/10 in Santa Paula: Meg Whitman speaks to some people after touring Santa Paula's new wastewater treatment plant. Whitman is running for governor of California and at the press conference she talk about creating jobs, education and cutting expenses.



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Meg Whitman talks to Brian Cullen, president of Perc Water, and Philip Dyk of Alinda Capital Partners on Wednesday in Santa Paula.



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Meg Whitman speaks after touring the wastewater treatment plant Wednesday in Santa Paula. Whitman is the Republican candidate for governor.

Speaking to dozens of supporters, business officials and city dignitaries gathered outside the plant, Whitman preached jobs as her No. 1 priority.

"If we don't get Californians back to work, there is no way out of this mess," she said.

The former CEO of eBay said the state is "bleeding jobs" to Texas, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and Colorado because it is simpler and easier to do business there.

"If I could do only one thing as governor, it would be to fix California's business climate," said the candidate, who is running against Democrat Jerry Brown.

Her other priorities are cutting government spending and fixing public schools, which rank near the bottom in funding per student among the 50 states.

In a news conference after her speech, Whitman said she could cut \$15 billion out of the state's \$19 billion budget deficit. She would do it by reducing the state payroll, reforming the pension system, putting limits on welfare benefits and running government more efficiently, Whitman said.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has advocated similar strategies, but many have been blocked by the Legislature, the courts and the voters.

Whitman's remarks were tailored mainly to the themes of her statewide campaign, not local issues. During questioning from the media, though, she pledged not to balance the state budget on the backs of cities.

Santa Paula newspaperman Don Johnson said he asked Whitman about the issue because Santa Paula has been devastated by the Legislature's decision to take redevelopment funds to balance the state budget.

Redevelopment money, which is derived from a share of

local property taxes, can be used to improve infrastructure and encourage development.

"We have no redevelopment money," he said. "It's put a real hamstring on the city of Santa Paula, which in turn is really detrimental to the citizens."

The private interests that designed, built, operated and financed the plant invited



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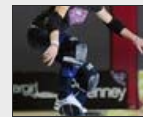
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Whitman to see the facility as an example of an innovative private-public partnership.

Normally, city governments split up the contracts for public works projects. But in this case, the Santa Paula City Council chose Costa Mesa-based PERC Water and its New York financing partner, Alinda Capital Partners, to handle the job from start to finish.

City officials predicted they could arrange the financing cheaper themselves, but the City Council considered the private partnership less risky.

Santa Paula Mayor Jim Tovias, who attended Whitman's speech, said the result has exceeded his expectations. The Santa Paula Water Recycling Facility opened in May, several months ahead of schedule, officials said. It replaced a 1939 plant that could not meet clean water standards. A recent state report shows no violations.

PERC Water Marketing Director Marian Clayton, who got to know Whitman when both worked on the presidential bid of former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, arranged the visit.

"I thought how exciting a project it is," Clayton said.

The event marked Whitman's fourth visit to Ventura County since her campaign began, Press Secretary Sarah Pompei said.

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Military Appreciation Night Chick-fil-A			4 p.m.
Presentation of the Master Vision Plan: Ventura Botanical Gardens Seaview Hills Condominiums			5:30 p.m.