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## ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT RECEIVES HONORS FOR WATER REUSE LEADERSHIP

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif.** (November 8, 2023) – The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) and General Manager Mike Markus were recognized for expanding water reuse and showcasing exemplary leadership that has helped shape and advance water reuse policy and programs.

At the 2023 WateReuse California Annual Conference, the District, alongside its partner the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San), was honored with an excellence award for the completion of the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS). Already the world's largest indirect potable reuse facility, the GWRS completed a final expansion in early 2023 that increased water production to 130 million gallons of high-quality water a day, enough to serve nearly one million people. This expansion also recycles 100% of OC San's reclaimable wastewater flows, maximizing water reuse in the region.

Mike Markus received a Lifetime Achievement Award for his distinguished career in water resource management. With more than 40 years of experience, Mike has implemented multi-faceted, large-scale projects including the GWRS, administered innovative, award-winning programs, and managed the design and construction of over \$1.5 billion of facilities for OCWD. He has served as the District's general manager since 2007 and will retire in January 2024.

"I want to thank WateReuse California for recognizing OCWD and Mike as leaders in the industry and for setting the gold standard for water reuse," said OCWD Board President Cathy Green. "Under Mike's leadership, the GWRS has emerged as one of the most celebrated civil engineering and water reuse projects in the world."

The GWRS has garnered global attention for its groundbreaking approach and use of technology to reuse a once wasted resource. Its success is deeply rooted in sound science, collaboration, and public outreach.

"Mike is an incredible consensus-builder and visionary leader," added WateReuse California Managing Director Jennifer West. "His knowledge and expertise in developing water reuse programs goes beyond the GWRS, and he will surely leave a lasting legacy on the industry."

The GWRS serves as a global model and has paved the way for many water reuse projects around the world. Online since 2008, the GWRS has produced more than 420 billion gallons of water and counting. Today, the District remains committed to optimizing its operations, welcoming thousands of visitors annually, and maintaining a robust public outreach and speakers bureau program.

To learn more about OCWD or the GWRS, visit [www.ocwd.com](http://www.ocwd.com).

*The Orange County Water District manages the local groundwater basin that provides 85% of the water supply for 19 cities and retail water districts in north and central Orange County, serving 2.5 million people. Guided by its commitment to sound planning and investment, high standards for water reliability, exceptional water quality, environmental stewardship, sound financial management, and transparency, OCWD has proactively implemented initiatives to protect and increase local water supplies. OCWD replenishes the basin, prevents seawater intrusion, and protects Orange County's rights to Santa Ana River water. For more information about OCWD, please visit [www.ocwd.com](http://www.ocwd.com) and follow @OCWaterDistrict on social media.*

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