



NEWS RELEASE

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OCWD Wins AMWA Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (Oct. 21, 2019) — The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) received the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies' (AMWA) 2019 Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance. The presentation was made on October 21 at AMWA's Executive Management Conference in Newport, Rhode Island.

The AMWA Gold Awards for Exceptional Utility Performance recognize the large public drinking water systems that exhibit high levels of performance in the areas of product quality, customer satisfaction, employee and leadership development, operational optimization, financial viability, community sustainability, enterprise resiliency, infrastructure strategy and performance, stakeholder understanding and support, and water resource sustainability. Gold Award winners also show achievement in the areas of leadership, strategic business planning, knowledge management, measurement, and continual improvement management. The honor was bestowed by a distinguished panel of peer judges for OCWD's significant contribution to the drinking water industry.

"This award is recognition by your colleagues that your agency has made remarkable efforts to compete in a highly challenging and constantly changing environment. Congratulations on this high achievement," said Diane VanDe Hei, AMWA chief executive officer.

"Acknowledgement by our industry peers for our strong record of effective utility management is a true honor," said OCWD President Vicente Sarmiento. "This prestigious award spotlights our efforts towards community sustainability and pays special tribute to our employees and executive leadership."

The Orange County Water District began in 1933 as a California Special District to protect the local rights to Santa Ana River water and to manage the vast Orange County Groundwater Basin. It is now an international leader in water reuse and groundwater management and is home to the Groundwater Replenishment System—the world's largest advanced water purification project for potable reuse.

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OCWD was the first to use reverse osmosis to purify wastewater to drinking water quality; and staff were called as consultants as California shaped its Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014. The District's Philip L. Anthony Water Quality Laboratory is one of four public agency labs in the nation to have an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) 4 program for five EPA methods. It is also the first laboratory in California to receive certification for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) detection.

OCWD created the largest constructed wetlands in the West to help purify Santa Ana River waters and for greater water yield while protecting endangered species. The Orange County Groundwater Basin, which OCWD manages, is non-adjudicated, and yet, because of a unique method of assessments and incentives, its 19-member groundwater producers can pump 77% of their drinking water (approx. 104 billion gallons per year) while the basin remains reliable.

Sound planning and investment, high standards for water reliability, exceptional water quality, environmental stewardship, sound financial management, and transparency are the District's hallmarks and standards, and they guide its ultimate mission to provide a reliable, high quality water supply in a cost-effective and environmentally responsible manner for 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County, California.

About Orange County Water District (OCWD)

The Orange County Water District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities rely on the groundwater basin, managed by OCWD, to provide 77 percent of their water demands: Anaheim, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster and Yorba Linda. For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com, like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, and follow @OCWD on Instagram.

About Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA)

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies is an organization of the largest publicly owned water utilities in the United States. AMWA is the voice of metropolitan water systems on federal water policy issues, and its programs foster sustainable, innovative utility management. Headquartered in Washington, DC, additional information about AMWA may be obtained by visiting <https://www.amwa.net/>. You can follow @AMWA_water on Twitter.

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