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Press Release

WRD CELEBRATES MILESTONE IN ITS WATER RECYCLING PROGRAM

New Plant Will Free WRD from Imported Water & Protect 4 Million Residents from Drought

Pico Rivera – Last Thursday, the Water Replenishment District (WRD) of Southern California today celebrated the one-year countdown to completion of its landmark water recycling plant. That plant will position WRD as a leader in breaking with the Southland’s historic dependence on imported water, a dependence that has become increasingly infeasible financially and environmentally.

“Generations from now will look back with appreciation of the forward thinking ideas and actions we celebrate this morning,” predicted WRD Board of Directors President Rob Katherman at Thursday’s ceremony, recognizing that the agency’s advanced treatment water recycling plant is set to be operational a year from now. (A recent photo of the construction site is attached).

“WRD is now just one year away from becoming this region’s first groundwater district to derive all its water supplies from locally sustainable sources and be completely free of using imported water,” Katherman said.

“Through years of vigorous planning, we are setting the stage to eliminate our dependence on imported water,” WRD Director Sergio Calderon told an audience consisting of local water suppliers and elected officials, including Pico Rivera Mayor Bob Archuleta and California State Sen. Tony Mendoza. “Breaking free from the diminished supplies of costly imported water is definitely exciting and has tremendous long term rewards.”

Currently WRD imports 21,000 acre feet of water from Northern California and the Colorado River to replenish the groundwater supplies it manages. Once the district’s Pico Rivera water recycling plant (a.k.a. the Groundwater Reliability Improvement Project or GRIP) is operational, WRD will obtain 100 percent of its groundwater supplies from recycled water and storm water capture.

WRD manages groundwater supplies that provide 50 percent of the water used by 4 million residents who live in 43 cities in south Los Angeles County.

The recycling plant will use state-of-the-art techniques to additionally purify (to nearly distilled quality levels) treated wastewater obtained from the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant, a

facility operated by the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. Those techniques include ultra-filtration, reverse osmosis and advanced oxidation disinfection using ultra-violet light in combination with sodium hypochloride.

The water recycling project will further insulate WRD from the challenges posed by Southern California's semi-desert conditions, challenges that have traditionally necessitated enormous water imports. "When our water recycling plant goes on-line, drought conditions may return," said WRD Board Vice President John Allen. "But those conditions will no longer seriously threaten WRD's groundwater supplies – and the 4 million residents we serve - because we'll be producing safe and affordable water from local sources only."

"Once again, WRD is breaking new ground, literally and figuratively, to bring the City of Pico Rivera and 43 other cities independence from imported water they most rightfully deserve," said WRD director Albert Robles. "About 12 years ago, WRD made a bold decision to pursue water independence, regardless of whether we faced wet or dry years. Our steadfast commitment is now being realized today."

"WRD has secured \$95 million dollars in state funding through the Proposition 1 Water Bond recently passed by California voters statewide," Allen noted. "This funding, administered by the State Water Resources Control Board, will allow this project to be built with no impact to water ratepayers throughout our 43-city service area."

Also praising the project were California State Sen. Tony Mendoza and Mark Stanley, Executive Officer of the San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.

The GRIP plant is part of WRD's Win Independence Now (WIN) program. WIN is a suite of projects that includes – in addition to GRIP – the use of recycled water to build a water barrier to prevent the contamination of the region's underground aquifers by seawater infiltration. The GRIP plant contractor is J.F. Shea Construction.

A few of the 43 cities WRD serves: Long Beach, Torrance, Carson, Rancho Palos Verdes, Gardena, Whittier, Pico Rivera, Bell, South Gate, Norwalk, Inglewood and Compton.

As part of the day's event, WRD sponsored a dunking contest. "Drought Man" was the target, and he got promptly dropped into a 300 gallon tank of water by a 4th grade girl from Pico Rivera's Valencia Academy of the Arts. Three dozen Academy students participated in today's program, not only by taking shots at Drought Man, the nemesis of Southern California water districts and their customers, but also by leading the Board of Directors and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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The Water Replenishment District of Southern California is the regional groundwater management agency that protects and preserves the quantity and quality of groundwater for two of the most utilized urban basins in the State of California. The service area is home to over ten percent of California's population residing in 43 cities in southern Los Angeles County. WRD is governed by a publicly elected Board of Directors which includes Willard H. Murray, Jr., Robert Katherman, John D. S. Allen, Sergio Calderon, and Albert Robles.