



UNDERGROUND

Spring 2002

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ence attended by water managers, government officials, hydrogeologists, geologists, water quality experts, attorneys, engineers, public interest groups and others interested in key groundwater issues. The conference was hosted in cooperation with the Groundwater Resources Association of California and was held in Ontario, Calif.

Program speakers included State Senator Jim Costa, chair of the senate committee on agriculture and water resources, Jonas Minton, deputy director of the Department of Water Resources, and Richard Katz, member of the State Water Resources Control Board.

The program covered several key issues critical to water leaders, including an update on California’s Groundwater Bulletin 118, a discussion of water quality impacts on groundwater storage, how to control industrial contaminants, challenges facing recycled water, how recharging urban runoff impacts groundwater quality, successful monitoring programs in groundwater basins, water rights and conjunctive use and much more.

The program also featured a hosted reception in honor of former AGWA Chair Bill Mills. Stay tuned to *Notes from the Underground* for information on future conferences hosted by AGWA.

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Comments, story suggestions and articles are encouraged. Please call: (714) 964-1668, fax (714) 964-4614

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Visit the AGWA website at: www.agwa.org

AGWA CFO ADDRESSES GROUNDWATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA MEMBERS

More than 200 groundwater and water resources professionals recently attended a Groundwater Resources Association Symposium in Baldwin Park, Calif., to discuss how perchlorate and NDMA have contaminated much of the groundwater in California.

The meeting was held just blocks from one of the first treatment plants built in the area. The daylong symposium included presentations from experts on the issue and water officials throughout the state dealing with the problem.

Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster Executive Officer and AGWA CFO Carol Williams led the perchlorate portion of the symposium. She recounted how after many years of cleaning up solvents in San Gabriel Valley Basin aquifers, perchlorate was discovered. "All of the La Puente Valley Water District's supply wells were shut down as a precautionary measure due to the detection of perchlorate," she said. "Existing groundwater treatment systems, designed to remove solvents, were found to be ineffective at removing perchlorate."

Williams described a unique collaborative effort between water suppliers, the "potentially responsible parties," and state and federal regulatory agencies administering the cleanup. Agreements were reached to use wellhead treatment as part of the approved cleanup program rather than costly and redundant efforts that would result from suppliers and responsible parties acting independently. The agreement was a major breakthrough in bringing together parties—many of which have been in litigation for years—with diverse and opposing interests.

The agreement to build the Azusa/Baldwin Park operable unit, a \$250 million, 15-year-plus program to treat volatile organic compounds and perchlorate found in the groundwater, was signed in March. Williams also noted that construction has just begun on the second treatment facility in the area, which is expected to be completed this summer.

A variety of technologies for removal of perchlorate from drinking water were also presented. While perchlorate poses a vexing treatment challenge to California's drinking water providers, discussions of new and promising technologies indicated a reason for continuing optimism.

Perchlorate is most often associated with the aerospace industry and was detected in the San Gabriel Valley a few years ago, as discussed in previous issues of *Notes from the Underground*.

Aerojet General Corp.'s Azusa facility has been named as one of the major contributors of perchlorate contamination in San Gabriel, officials said. The defense contractor also has been named as responsible for other Superfund sites in northern California and elsewhere, where World War II-era workers allegedly dumped rocket fuel onto the ground during their work.

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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT ANNOUNCES NEW GENERAL MANAGER

The Board of Directors of AGWA member agency Orange County Water District (OCWD) has appointed Virginia Grebbien as its new general manager, effective April 15. Grebbien is the district's fifth general manager and the first woman to lead the groundwater management agency since its inception in 1933. Grebbien takes over the post after former AGWA chairman William R. Mills Jr., retired from OCWD after more than 14 years of service to the district.

With more than 16 years of experience, Grebbien is well known in the field of water resources management and planning in both southern California and throughout the state. Grebbien most recently served as senior vice president of project development for Poseidon Resources Corporation. She also has held several management positions, including principal engineer for Bookman Edmonston Engineering, general manager of Central and West Basin Municipal Water Districts and manager of the local resource development branch for Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

"I am honored that I have been selected as the new general manager of the Orange County Water District," Grebbien said. "I am committed to continuing to develop cost-effective, reliable water supplies for Orange County. I support a team environment and look forward to working together with the OCWD board of directors, water retailers and staff members to effectively meet the challenges of Orange County's water future."

"Virginia's long-time experience in both the public and private sectors of the water industry, her knowledge of water reuse, her understanding of Met, and her leadership experience at Central and West Basins will ensure OCWD moves forward in addressing the challenges of providing groundwater for this growing, arid region," said OCWD Board President Jerry A. King. "Her experience, skills and energy are a perfect fit for this organization, and she will bring many new, exciting

opportunities to OCWD."

Grebbien was extensively involved in gaining funding for the largest reclamation project in the state while at Central and West Basins. She has also served on several regional, state and national panels and committees on water policy issues. Grebbien is a professional engineer with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from California State Polytechnic University at Pomona. She is a former board member and past president of the WaterReuse Association and the founding president of the California WaterReuse Research Foundation. Currently, Grebbien is a board member of the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy and member of the American Water Works Association and Colorado River Water Users Association.

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WATER QUALITY PROGRAM EXPANDED

AGWA member agency Chino Basin Watermaster recently announced plans to double its groundwater cleanup operations. The announcement follows the Watermaster's announcement that it has secured funding for the expansion of the groundwater desalter program. The Watermaster's plans include expansion of the existing Chino I Desalting Plant and development of a second plant, Chino II.

"This is another milestone in our efforts to provide additional water supplies for local use," said John Rossi, CEO of the Chino Basin Watermaster. "Both water quality and water supply will be enhanced in the region, creating a win-win situation for local businesses, residents and our environment."

The expansion and operation of the desalters allow existing groundwater with high levels of salts to be cleaned up and later utilized. As a result, according to the Watermaster, water supplies will be increased and overall water quality in the basin will be enhanced.

The desalting process is accomplished by extracting groundwater with high levels of total dissolved

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solids (TDS), cleaning up the water and delivering the potable water to local suppliers. The expansion of the Chino I desalter and development of Chino II will more than double existing desalting operations, providing over 24,600 acre-feet of new water annually upon completion. The value of these long-term water supply contracts is estimated at more than \$250 million.

The Chino Basin Watermaster is the entity charged with managing the approximately 230 square-mile groundwater basin located in the Inland Empire region of southern California. The desalting projects are a critical component of the Watermaster's Optimum Basin Management Program (OBMP), which is designed to maximize the efficient use of local water supplies, improve water quality and drought-proof the region. The project will be constructed and operated by the newly formed Chino Basin Desalter Authority, which is comprised of the cities of Ontario, Chino, Chino Hills, and Norco, along with the Jurupa Community Services District, the Santa Ana River Water Company, and ex-officio member Inland Empire Utilities Agency. The project is partially funded by a state grant under Proposition 13, the comprehensive water bond measure passed by voters in 2000.

"We continue to make great strides toward improving the basin's water resources and protecting future water supplies," said Rossi. "By working together, we are able to meet our region's increasing needs for additional water while protecting and enhancing water quality. This is a huge accomplishment for our region."

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TEMECULA FIRM AWARDED MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION HONORS

A Temecula-area manufacturer of medical devices has been recognized with a major industrial award for its environmental protection and water conservation practices.

Interventional Technologies' (IVT) French Valley manufacturing facility was named the large industry "Plant of the Year for Southern California" by the California Water Environment Association (CWEA). The recognition was earned as a result of the firm's efforts to minimize discharge of hazardous waste and to recycle water in its manufacturing processes.

The IVT plant was nominated for the award by AGWA member agency Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), which provides water and wastewater service to the facility.

"It is critical to the operation of our wastewater plants that many of the materials resulting from manufacturing processes be minimized or eliminated," said EMWD Director Dick Hall. "IVT has done a world-class job at keeping its waste stream clean while conserving water as well."

IVT's facility produces state-of-the-art medical devices for use in acute coronary care.

A major factor in winning the award was the company's development of a method to process surgical blades that eliminates electro-polishing and acid rinsing. Both eliminated processes would have generated effluent harmful to normal wastewater treatment facilities like the one EMWD operates to serve the area.

"We are proud to be good citizens. Ultimately, everything we do to cooperate with EMWD and the community helps us in the long run," said IVT project engineer Ken Mapes in accepting the prestigious award. "It's a real win-win situation."

The presentation was made at CWEA's Hazardous Waste Conference in Huntington Beach on March 4.

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NATION'S LARGEST CHILDREN'S WATER EDUCATION FESTIVAL SET FOR MAY 2002

AGWA member agency Orange County Water District's (OCWD) Groundwater Guardian Team, together with Disneyland Resort and the Blue Planet Foundation, will present the nation's largest children's water education festival on May 7 and 8 at Hidden Valley Park in Irvine, Calif.

Entering its sixth year of educating Orange County's third- and fourth-graders about water, the festival is a fun, environmental education program designed to teach children about the interdependence of water, soil, plants, trees, animals and humans. Last year, the event drew nearly 6,000 students from throughout Orange County. This year, more than 7,000 students and teachers from 27 Orange County cities will attend the two-day festival.

For more information, contact Sharon Lien of the Blue Planet Foundation at (714) 378-3362.

WATER DROPS...

- Governor Gray Davis issued an Executive Order in February that will allow California refineries up to 12 additional months for the transition from MTBE (methyl-tertiary butyl-ether) to ethanol in gasoline. According to Davis, this extension will "prevent gasoline prices from reaching \$3 per gallon at the pump." Statewide water organizations, including the Association of California Water Agencies and the Groundwater Resources

Association of California, have stated that they strongly disagree with the governor's decision.

- On a related note, Senator Dianne Feinstein made a last-ditch effort on April 23 to kill a proposal that would triple the amount of U.S. ethanol used in cleaner-burning gasoline, complaining the plan was a sweetheart deal for agribusinesses and would boost fuel prices. The proposal, authored by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and endorsed by other farm-state lawmakers, is part of a broad energy bill scheduled to be finished in late April. The provision would set a renewable fuels standard requiring use of 2.3 billion gallons of ethanol by 2004 and 5 billion gallons by 2012. Feinstein said the plan would trigger gasoline shortages and higher prices because of the difficulty in shipping enough to refiners on the West and East Coasts.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has completed a detailed review of 69 existing drinking water standards, and is requesting comment on its preliminary decision to revise the standard for total coliforms. The current standard is at one colony/100 mL, and the agency said its revisions to the standard will be designed to better indicate potential risks to public health. The public has the opportunity to comment on these preliminary decisions for 60 days beginning April 19. The agency said it will also hold a public meeting and consult with the EPA's Science Advisory Board. Results were published in the Federal Register on April 17.
- California's public water agencies are spending millions of dollars to boost security and ensure the safety of local water supplies following the events of September 11, according to a recent survey by the Association of California Water Agencies. Agencies serving the largest populations spent well over \$1 million each on measures to enhance security and expect to spend nearly as much in the next budget cycle, the survey found. Average costs for all survey respondents ranged from \$46,350 to \$71,904.

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