



UNDERGROUND

Winter 2004

AGWA ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF 2004 OFFICERS

During its November meeting, directors of the Association of Ground Water Agencies (AGWA) elected its 2004 board officers. By unanimous decisions, Director John Rossi was elected chair-

man; Director Rick Iger was elected vice chairman; and Director Carol Williams was re-elected secretary/treasurer.

As the chief executive officer of the Chino Basin Watermaster, John Rossi oversees the 220 square mile Chino groundwater basin. The basin provides water to approximately 700,000 people in the Inland Empire as well as the Cucamonga County Water District, the Monte Vista Water District, private water companies and agricultural pumping interests. Rossi's duties include monitoring groundwater producers' compliance with the 1978 Chino Basin Judgment and oversight of the implementation of the basin's Optimum Basin Management Program.

Rick Iger is manager of engineering and operations with Kern County Water Agency. A registered professional engineer in civil engineering, Iger is responsible for planning and evaluating long-term water supply projects. In addition to serving as AGWA's vice chairman, Iger is a member of the Association of California Water Agencies, the Agricultural Energy Consumers Association and the Indian Wells Valley Water Management Group.

Carol Williams is executive officer of the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, where she oversees groundwater quality and supply management as well as water rights administration for the San

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Visit the AGWA website at: www.agwa.org

Gabriel Valley's principal water source. In addition to serving as AGWA's secretary and treasurer, she serves as the executive secretary of the San Gabriel Valley Water Association and the Central Basin Water Association and assistant secretary/assistant treasurer of the San Gabriel Valley Protective Association.

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MEL BLEVINS, LONG-TIME ULARA WATERMASTER, PASSES THE BATON

The President of the board of AGWA member agency Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) recently presented Mel Blevins, long-time Upper Los Angeles River Area (ULARA) Watermaster, a resolution for his service. The resolution followed Blevins' September 2003 resignation as Watermaster, a position he held for more than 25 years.

Blevins passed the baton to Mark Mackowski, an engineering geologist who has been employed by LADWP since 1981. During the board meeting, Blevins was recognized for his long and faithful service.

On Jan. 26, 1979, Superior Court Judge Harry L. Hupp appointed Blevins ULARA Watermaster. During Blevins' tenure, he had managing responsibility at LADWP for the geologic, hydrologic and water rights studies that were conducted within the Mono Basin, Owens Valley, San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles Coastal Basins.

As ULARA Watermaster, Blevins oversaw the enforcement of the court's judgment in the City of Los Angeles v. City of San Fernando, et al, case that awarded Los Angeles water rights in the San Fernando Valley. By enforcing the San Fernando judgment, Blevins faithfully and wisely protected the interests of Los Angeles and other parties to the judgment, which includes the cities of Burbank, Glendale, San Fernando and the Crescenta Valley Water District.

Blevins, who retired from LADWP in August 1998

after 42 years of service, will remain at LADWP as a consultant on ULARA Watermaster activities. "I will assist Mark with the transition to the role of ULARA Watermaster," said Blevins, who recommended Mackowski for the appointment.

Sharing knowledge comes naturally to Blevins. For the past 30 years, this registered civil engineer has taught graduate courses in engineering and groundwater management at University of Southern California (USC), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Loyola Marymount University, University of California, Davis and California State University, Fullerton. He continues to teach engineering classes at USC and UCLA.

At an Aug. 25, 2003, hearing, Judge Susan Bryant-Deason commented: "Mr. Blevins, there's just no question that you have provided an invaluable service to the community and to all the residents of the city and county of Los Angeles. I know that most of the citizens don't even know that the Watermaster exists and they don't understand the importance of this job. You have done a really good job, and have filled the shoes of what the Watermaster is all about, and you will be tough to follow. I have enjoyed working with you."

Blevins will continue to serve as an AGWA director, representing the ULARA Watermaster's office.

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WHITAKER APPOINTED WRD GENERAL MANAGER

Robb E. Whitaker, who has been in the field of water resources engineering for more than 20 years, has been appointed general manager of AGWA member agency the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD).

"The Board of Directors is pleased to have a proven and capable professional such as Mr. Whitaker take over the management of the WRD," said Board President Willard H. Murray, Jr. "His knowledge of the agency and the water commu-

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nity makes him an ideal general manager.”

Whitaker, born and raised in Long Beach, will be responsible for the daily operation of the WRD, an agency responsible for managing and safeguarding groundwater in the Central and West Coast Basins. These basins extend 420 square miles throughout southern Los Angeles County and are among the region’s most reliable natural water resources.

Whitaker, who has served as assistant general manager/district engineer at the WRD, said he is enthusiastic about the new challenges. “I look forward to providing input to our board of directors to develop and implement sound and reasonable water policy, ensuring that the WRD continues to meet its mission of providing and protecting the groundwater in this region.”

A WRD employee for the past 12 years, Whitaker brings to his new position a wealth of experience and knowledge, ranging from water distribution infrastructure, water supply forecasting and groundwater basin management. During his tenure at the WRD, Whitaker developed the Safe Drinking Water Program, a project that provides treatment facilities for groundwater producers with wells affected by contamination. To date, 11 facilities are operating and another four are either in design or under construction. The program has returned approximately 5.5 billion gallons of water per year for pumping. He also conceived of a concept to use water from the 105 Freeway that is presently being discharged to the ocean and developed the concept of using physical barrier systems as an alternative to expensive injection wells to deter seawater intrusion.

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Society of Civil Engineers.

The WRD, established by voters in 1959 to protect the groundwater quality in the Central and West Coast Basins, serves nearly four million residents. The people in the service area use about 250,000 acre-feet of groundwater annually, which amounts to more than a third of the region’s total demand for water.

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Online since 1975, Water Factory 21 is a worldwide, water-industry landmark for its purification of sewer water that ultimately meets or is better than drinking water standards.

“This is both a sad and exciting day for Orange County,” said OCWD board President Denis Bilodeau. “Water Factory 21 has been the model for the rest of the world to follow. But as we close one chapter in Orange County’s water history, we are starting another new, exciting one with the Groundwater Replenishment (GWR) System, which also will be a worldwide model for future water management.”

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Minister of Thailand, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency from Catalonia Spain, the Secretary of Agriculture for Israel, and many other officials from around the globe have come to Orange County and OCWD to learn more about water purification, groundwater management and how to prevent subsidence and seawater intrusion.

Water Factory 21 was included as part of major water management and water purification textbooks since the mid-1970s. Hundreds of water managers, engineers, scientists and students from around the world have visited Water Factory 21 each year for the past many years.

The Groundwater Replenishment (GWR) System, a new, high-tech water purification system, will produce water similar in quality to bottled water. GWR System water will be used to service a larger, expanded seawater barrier and to help drought-proof Orange County's groundwater basin by providing better water reliability and more local control over part of the county's water future.

Water is injected into Orange County aquifers near the coast in order to create a fresh water mound or pressure zone, which acts as a barrier to keep ocean water from seeping into the groundwater basin. The water also helps to replenish the basin.

From now until 2007, when the new water purification system comes on line, the seawater barrier will keep receiving about 10-13 million gallons per day of water from Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley and deep well water, if needed. New pipelines, which were recently built as part of the expanded seawater barrier system, will carry the water to local injection wells. This summer, an interim water purification plant will come on line and produce about five million gallons a day of purified water that will replace some of the city water.

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More information on the Groundwater Replenishment System can be found by visiting www.gwrsystem.com.

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EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT FIRST WATER DISTRICT IN CALIFORNIA TO EARN PRESTIGIOUS CAPE AWARD

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CAPE assesses and recognizes organization excellence based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. The Baldrige Award was established in 1987 and was named after Malcolm Baldrige, who served as Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until his death in 1987. Baldrige's contributions to efficiency and effectiveness in government inspired the creation of the Malcolm Baldrige program. The Baldrige program emphasizes visionary leadership, customer-driven excellence, organizational and personal learning, valuing employees as partners, agility and focus on the future.

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Some of EMWD's strengths and outstanding practices noted by the CAPE board of examiners were emphasis on social responsibility, initiatives to help employees learn and develop their full potential, reliable information hardware and software capability, valuable perception of employees, strong safety culture, focus on the future and successful collaborative efforts.

According to Anthony Pack, EMWD General Manager: "The CAPE award is a significant accomplishment for EMWD. However, we still have a lot of growing to do. We have recognized areas where improvement is needed and will work toward accomplishing those goals. The CAPE award benefits our customers in the long run because it provides a tool for us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, enabling us to provide better service. Through an organized approach we can manage a culture change of performance awareness and continuous improvement resulting in improved planning and overall long-term health."

EMWD will be formally recognized for the achievement at a special luncheon honoring CAPE winners on April 16, 2004, in San Diego during the California Council for Excellence 10th annual Conference and Awards ceremony.

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AGWA member agency Orange County Water District (OCWD) and the Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA) recently received a prestigious national environmental award for their partnership to protect and enhance the Santa Ana watershed, which provides water to millions of Southern Californians. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented the 2002 National Wetlands Conservation Award to OCWD at its Fountain Valley headquarters on Nov. 19.

The annual award, established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990, honors individuals and groups or corporations for significant contributions

to the restoration, enhancement and protection of wetlands in the United States. OCWD and SAWA—which is comprised of OCWD, four area resource conservation districts, and other participating agencies—are among the select few recipients of the award for their efforts during 2002.

"We are honored to receive this award," said OCWD board President Denis Bilodeau. "The prestige of this recognition exemplifies the District's commitment to water quality while preserving and improving our local environment."

The Santa Ana watershed is the largest coastal river system in Southern California and provides water to millions of Southern California citizens and includes portions of San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange counties. OCWD and SAWA have worked for many years to successfully protect and enhance wetlands that are valuable to plants, fish and animals—including the federally endangered songbird, the least Bell's vireo—all the while conserving water supplies in the Santa Ana River.

Clint Riley, special assistant to the director of the Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington D.C., and Steve Thompson, manager of the California/Nevada Operations Office of the service, presented the award to OCWD and the Santa Ana Watershed Association. "The Orange County Water District and Santa Ana Watershed Association have demonstrated a strong commitment to conserving wetlands and promoting the recovery of endangered species," Thompson said. "They have been outstanding partners."

The Santa Ana Watershed is composed of four Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)—Riverside-Corona RCD, East Valley RCD, San Jacinto Basin RCD and Inland Empire West RCD. The purpose of the Santa Ana Watershed Association is to develop, coordinate and implement natural resource programs that support a sustainable ecosystem and social benefits from the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. For additional information about OCWD's innovative Santa Ana Watershed program, visit www.ocwd.com.

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MONTE VISTA WATER DISTRICT ANNOUNCES ELECTION RESULTS

The board of directors of AGWA member agency Monte Vista Water District elected officers at its Jan. 14 meeting. Robb D. Quincey was re-elected president and Sandra S. Rose was re-elected vice president. Josephine Johnson was elected to the position of board auditor. Mark N. Kinsey, general manager of Monte Vista Water District, serves as board secretary. Quincey, a member of the board of directors since 1993, has served as president since 1995. Rose was elected to the board in 1999 and re-elected in November 2003. She has served as vice president since 2002. Johnson, a member of the board since 1990, served as vice president from 1995 until 2002. Monte Vista Water District's bylaws call for an election of officers of the board of directors every two years following the general municipal elections in November. Officers are selected by a majority vote of the members of the board.

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News Drops...

- The Department of Water Resources on Jan. 16 announced an increase in the 2004 allocation for water delivery to State Water Project contractors. The increased allocation is 50 percent of contractors' requested amounts and could continue to increase during the winter months. At this time last year, the allocation was 45 percent. The initial allocation for 2004, announced in December, was 35 percent of requested amounts. The 50 percent allocation amounts to 2,064,406 acre-feet, distributed among the 29 long-term SWP contractors who serve more than 20 million Californians and nearly a million acres of irrigated farmland. A notice to SWP contractors appears on the DWR's State Water Project Analysis Office Web site at:

<http://wwwswpao.water.ca.gov/notices.html>

- Regional water quality officials have ordered San Bernardino County to step up an investigation into the extent of the county's role in groundwater contamination that threatens the city of Rialto's biggest-producing drinking water well. Tests show an area where the county plans to expand its Rialto landfill could be a significant source of perchlorate contamination in the San Bernardino Valley, according to Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board officials. Perchlorate in a test well 3,500 feet from the city's threatened drinking well was found to have levels of the rocket fuel component at nearly 50 times the state "action level" of 4 parts per billion.
- According to a recent decision by the Fourth Appellate District Court of California on Big-horn-Desert View Water Agency v. Beringson, a voter initiative cannot control the amount of the water rate, fees, and charges fixed by a public water agency. The court affirms the judgment in favor of the plaintiff and respondent, the Big-horn-Desert View Water Agency.
- San Joaquin Valley farmers who have diverted water to protect endangered fish under the Endangered Species Act will be compensated according to a federal judge's ruling. Judge John Paul Wiese of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ruled that a group of farmers in the San Joaquin Valley must be paid about \$26 million for water they didn't receive during drought conditions between 1992 and 1994. The decision benefits growers from Kern, Tulare and Kings counties.

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The board of directors of AGWA member agency Monte Vista Water District elected officers at its Jan. 14 meeting. Robb D. Quincey was re-elected president and Sandra S. Rose was re-elected vice president. Josephine Johnson was elected to the position of board auditor. Mark N. Kinsey, general manager of Monte Vista Water District, serves as board secretary. Quincey, a member of the board of directors since 1993, has served as president since 1995. Rose was elected to the board in 1999 and re-elected in November 2003. She has served as vice president since 2002. Johnson, a member of the board since 1990, served as vice president from 1995 until 2002. Monte Vista Water District's bylaws call for an election of officers of the board of directors every two years following the general municipal elections in November. Officers are selected by a majority vote of the members of the board.

News Drops...

- The Department of Water Resources on Jan. 16 announced an increase in the 2004 allocation for water delivery to State Water Project contractors. The increased allocation is 50 percent of contractors' requested amounts and could continue to increase during the winter months. At this time last year, the allocation was 45 percent. The initial allocation for 2004, announced in December, was 35 percent of requested amounts. The 50 percent allocation amounts to 2,064,406 acre-feet, distributed among the 29 long-term SWP contractors who serve more than 20 million Californians and nearly a million acres of irrigated farmland. A notice to SWP contractors appears on the DWR's State Water Project Analysis Office Web site at:

<http://wwwswpao.water.ca.gov/notices.html>.

- Regional water quality officials have ordered San Bernardino County to step up an investigation into the extent of the county's role in groundwater contamination that threatens the city of Rialto's biggest-producing drinking water well. Tests show an area where the county plans to expand its Rialto landfill could be a significant source of perchlorate contamination in the San Bernardino Valley, according to Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board officials. Perchlorate in a test well 3,500 feet from the city's threatened drinking well was found to have levels of the rocket fuel component at nearly 50 times the state "action level" of 4 parts per billion.
- According to a recent decision by the Fourth Appellate District Court of California on Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency v. Beringson, a voter initiative cannot control the amount of the water rate, fees, and charges fixed by a public water agency. The court affirms the judgment in favor of the plaintiff and respondent, the Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency.
- San Joaquin Valley farmers who have diverted water to protect endangered fish under the Endangered Species Act will be compensated according to a federal judge's ruling. Judge John Paul Wiese of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ruled that a group of farmers in the San Joaquin Valley must be paid about \$26 million for water they didn't receive during drought conditions between 1992 and 1994. The decision benefits growers from Kern, Tulare and Kings counties.