



ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

75 Years of Serving
Orange County's Groundwater Needs

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 6, 2008

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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT BEATS OUT OVER 400 INTERNATIONAL NOMINEES TO WIN THE 2008 GLOBAL WATER AWARD

Groundwater Authority Named Top Agency for Groundwater Management and Innovation

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (May 6, 2008) — The Orange County Water District (OCWD) recently accepted the Public Water Agency of the Year award at the 2008 International Desalination Association/Global Water Intelligence conference held in London. The conference focused on water, finance and sustainability and was held in April to coincide with Earth Day. In addition to the Water Agency of the Year award, OCWD also received an honorable distinction award in the “Water Project of the Year” category for its new advanced water purification facility, the Groundwater Replenishment (GWR) System.

OCWD was recognized as Public Water Agency of the Year by members of the International Private Water Association and American Membrane Technology Association, as well as readers of *Global Water Intelligence* and the *Water Desalination Report*. OCWD was acknowledged in two key areas: exemplary performance in groundwater protection and management, and advanced water reuse technology. The District also received accolades for its excellence in communicating the importance of water reuse to the public through its extensive public outreach program.

“OCWD takes great pride in receiving this distinction from our colleagues. 2008 marks OCWD’s 75th year of service and we are honored to be acknowledged for our legacy of leadership in the areas of groundwater management and water reuse with these two awards,” said Stephen R. Sheldon, OCWD Board President.

Denis Bilodeau, OCWD Vice President, accepted the award on behalf of the District from Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus. “This recognition from the international water industry exemplifies OCWD’s world-wide leadership in groundwater management and innovation. Groundwater satisfies approximately 70 percent of the water needs for OCWD’s service area and projects like the GWR System are fulfilling our commitment to decrease our dependency on imported water, which is vital in facing today’s water crisis,” stated Bilodeau.

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**OCWD GLOBAL PUBLIC WATER AGENCY OF THE YEAR
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The District is responsible for managing two of Southern California's most important water resources – the Santa Ana River and the vast groundwater basin that underlies northern and central Orange County from Irvine to the Los Angeles County border. The basin has a capacity of approximately 40 million acre-feet of water (one acre-foot is 326,000 gallons), of which approximately one million acre-feet can be accessed through the existing groundwater production wells operated by the 21 cities and retail water agencies within the District. The basin provides approximately 70 percent of the water for more than 2.3 million people who work and live in OCWD's service area.

The District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities utilize the groundwater basin managed by OCWD: 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 the Orange County Water District and the GWR System, visit www.ocwd.com and gwrsystem.com.

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EDITORIAL NOTE:

A photograph of Director Bilodeau accepting the Global Water Award is attached to this e-mail or can be obtained by contacting Gina DePinto at (714) 378-3228 or gdepinto@ocwd.com.