

# El Toro Water District

“Serving the Public – Respecting the Environment”



## El Toro Water District Marks 45th Anniversary

### Celebrating 45 Years of Service

*As a part of its year-long 45th anniversary celebration, the El Toro Water District is publishing this special edition of its newsletter. Our purpose in doing so is to recall some milestones of the past, mention some challenges of the present, and explain some of the ways in which we are providing for the future. The board members and I hope that you find the information it contains to be both interesting and useful.*

—Robert R. Hill, *General Manager*

### Recalling THE PAST

On August 12, 1959, a group of local landowners gathered around the kitchen table in the home of Raymond Prothero, Sr., at 23572 S. Prothero Drive in the community of El Toro (known today as Cornelius Drive in the city of Lake Forest) to discuss their concerns about the water supply. Water for both agricultural and domestic use was pumped from wells, and these landowners feared that the existing ground water supply would not support an increased population or an expanded agricultural area. They wanted to find a more reliable, predictable source of water.

One year later, in September 1960, they formed the El Toro Water District, which is a special district under laws applicable to California Water Districts. As an independent special district governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected by landowners, the District’s charge was to develop



*The home of Raymond Prothero, Sr. was the birthplace of the El Toro Water District.*



*El Toro Road & Moulton Parkway*

and implement policies that would meet the short and long range economic, water resource and environmental goals not only of its customers but of Orange County. At that time, the total population of the district was only 125, and it encompassed 4,750 acres, 750 of which were devoted to citrus groves and other agricultural uses. Today, under the guidance of a five-member Board of Directors elected at large, the full service water, wastewater and recycled water district has expanded its service area to cover approximately 5,400 acres across portions of the cities of Laguna Hills, Mission Viejo, Aliso Viejo, Lake Forest and the entire city of Laguna Woods.

### SECURING Imported Water

The El Toro Water District and its south County neighbors rely almost 100% on imported water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) to meet their potable water demands, which is unlike ground water purveyors operating in central and north Orange County. As such, ETWD and south County agencies knew they would have to maintain a critical dependence on the import water system that would be conveying water that originated hundreds of miles away.

As ETWD charted its course for the well-anticipated growth of south Orange County, they joined with a neighboring water district to form the Santiago Aqueduct Commission in order to

# SECURING Imported Water

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secure imported water. This commission obtained permission from MWD to build an aqueduct that would carry water from one of MWD's pipelines adjacent to Irvine Park to the community of El Toro and south Orange County.

In 1961, and again exercising tremendous foresight and good planning for the future of not only the area served by the El Toro Water District, but all of south Orange County, ETWD authorized a bond issue of \$1.9 million to finance its share of the aqueduct construction costs and to fund construction of a water filtration plant in its service area near Trabuco and Aliso Creek, the 233-million-gallon Prothero Reservoir (also known as the R-6 Reservoir) north of

Alicia Parkway near Alicia Park, and a small water distribution system within the District.

In 1960, El Toro Water District also became a constituent agency of the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC), which has entitled the District to receive water imported from the Colorado River and from Northern California achieving its goal of a reliable, predictable source of water.

With an investment made many years ago by the El Toro Water District, the R-6 Reservoir is the largest covered drinking water reservoir in Orange County, benefiting south Orange County not only today but well into the future.



1967 construction of the uncovered 233-million-gallon R-6 Reservoir enabled the El Toro Water District to store imported water for later use.



R-6 Reservoir expanded and covered in 2002.

## Partnering with Other Agencies

Throughout its history, the El Toro Water District has actively sought opportunities to partner with other agencies in pursuit of its goal of ensuring an adequate supply of safe water at reasonable rates while respecting the environment.

To realize cost savings from economies of scale, the El Toro Water District joined the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) to process sludge and prepare effluent for appropriate disposal and to develop markets for regional reclamation of wastewater. Optimizing use of existing El Toro Water District labor, equipment and facility resources has enabled the District to partner with public and private community of interests for the purpose of outsourcing revenue generating technical and operational services. To further realize cost savings, the District contracts with

the Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Insurance Authority (ACWA-JPIA) to obtain cost-effective general liability insurance and employee medical insurance.

El Toro Water District's R-6 Reservoir Expansion Project was again another forward thinking partnership concept that came to fruition with the Santa Margarita and Moulton Niguel water districts. With this partnership, emergency water storage increased by 51 million gallons at a fraction of the cost if these districts were to build separate storage facilities on their own.

The El Toro Water District also works closely with representatives of the five cities it serves – Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, and Mission Viejo – on efforts to safeguard surface water quality, encourage water use efficiency, and enhance public awareness of water as a resource that is in constant demand and limited supply.



State-of-the-art sewer video inspection vehicle

# Preparing for Emergencies

Experiences like those of New York City on September 11, 2001, or New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, illustrate that it is almost impossible to anticipate the unexpected and to plan for the unthinkable. Yet, that is exactly what the El Toro Water District has been doing.

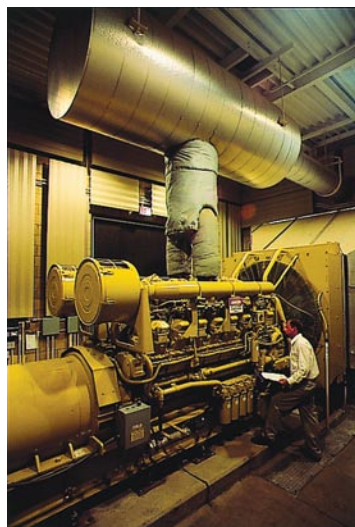
Given the nature of our business which is to protect public health, the environment and preserve quality of life, the security of water and sewers and natural disaster preparedness is nothing new to ETWD. Mindful that water is the only substance necessary to all living things, the El Toro Water District owns and operates an emergency storage reservoir (R-6) to meet the domestic demands and fire flow requirements for multiple south Orange County agencies. To monitor and track water quality under normal and emergency conditions, the

equipped critical facilities, such as its treatment plants, pumping stations and reservoir sites, with automated standby generators, redundant pumping equipment and centralized system wide computer monitoring and remote control capabilities so

that these facilities will continue to operate during power failures, pipeline breaks, earthquakes and other types of emergencies.



*Emergency Operations Center*



*Emergency Power*



*Centralized System Monitoring*

District owns and operates a state certified water quality laboratory. Also, the El Toro Water District has

operation with other local, regional and state agencies. In this regard, the District works closely with local police and fire departments, with neighboring water agencies, with regional wholesale water suppliers, and with the Orange County Health Department, the California Department of Health Services and the California Office of Emergency Services.

## ETWD Mission Statement

“The Mission of the El Toro Water District is to plan and invest appropriately to provide its customers a safe, adequate, and reliable supply of water, wastewater, and recycled water service in an environmentally and economically responsible way.”

## ETWD By the Numbers

**6,200**

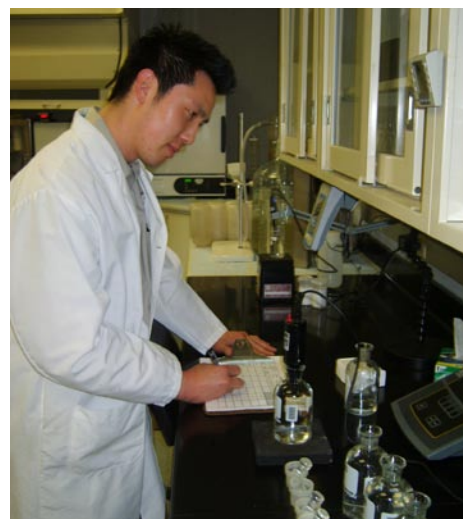
lab tests the El Toro Water District performs each year to ensure drinking water safety, taste, and clarity

**3,488,200,000**

gallons of water the El Toro Water District supplies to its customers each year

**137,000,000**

gallons of water the El Toro Water District holds in reserve to meet water demands following earthquakes or other supply-interrupting emergencies



*Ensuring water quality*

# Recycling WASTEWATER

Nature has always purified and recycled the earth's water through an endless process called the hydrologic cycle. Over time, innovative ways have been discovered by scientists to cleanse and recycle this precious resource. More than 40 years ago, the El Toro Water District established itself as a water-recycling pioneer when the District built its Water Recycling Plant in Laguna Hills to treat approximately 1.5 million gallons of wastewater each day. Through prudent planning and investment, the capacity of the treatment plant has increased to six million gallons a day.

Today, the El Toro Water District, by partnering with neighboring agencies, is exploring ways to recycle

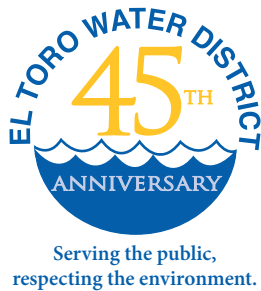
100% of its wastewater for irrigation purposes, thereby reducing south Orange County's dependence upon imported water and eliminating the need to discharge treated wastewater into our oceans.



*Recognized by the industry as "Plant of the Year", the El Toro Water District's recycling facility enables the district to recycle wastewater for irrigation purposes.*



Water Recycling Plant



## The Next 45 Years...

Exploring opportunities from a regional standpoint, the El Toro Water District continues to be involved and at the table with all of Orange County water officials to pursue options to diversify the water supply and the regional conveyance of water. Local and regional options that are being considered that could affect El Toro Water District customers include additional surface and ground water storage, interconnections between agencies, ocean desalinization, and the tunnel project (known by MWD as the Central Pool Augmentation Project) to name a few.

Strategic planning for the next 45 years is aligned with its commitment to meet the needs of its 51,000 customers. The El Toro Water District will continue to be forward thinking in meeting water demands from a combination of water resources and technology that optimally promote use of water conservation practices, water importation, recycled water treatment and delivery, infrastructure assessment, restoration and replacement with prudent planning to support the District's future financial investments. The District's ongoing objective is to reliably and competitively provide services that are in the best interest of its customers.

From a public education and outreach perspective, El Toro Water District will continue to provide ongoing education and outreach to its customers through its quarterly newsletter, participation in community events and the Community Advisory Group. At El Toro Water District, the Board of Directors and staff place great value in the interests and concerns of the people they serve. For more information or to become involved please call (949) 837-0660, or visit our Web site at [www.etwd.com](http://www.etwd.com). El Toro Water District looks forward to serving the needs of its customers for decades to come.



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