



News Release

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Drinking Water Utilities Recognized For Excellence

Henderson, Nev. – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) will honor 13 public drinking water systems with its top utility management awards on October 26 in ceremonies at its 2010 Annual Meeting in Henderson, Nevada. Seven systems will receive Platinum Awards for Utility Excellence and six systems will be presented Gold Awards for Exceptional Utility Performance. The awards recognize outstanding achievement in implementing the nationally recognized Attributes of Effectively Managed Water Sector Utilities.

Winners of the 2010 AMWA Platinum Awards for Utility Excellence are:

Austin Water Utility (Texas)
City of Bellevue Utilities (Washington)
City of Boca Raton Utility Services (Florida)
El Paso Water Utilities (Texas)
City of Glendale Utilities (Arizona)
Department of Utility Services, City of Henderson (Nevada)
Newport News Waterworks (Virginia)

Gold Awards for Exceptional Utility Performance were presented to:

Anaheim Public Utilities (California)
Louisville Water Company (Kentucky)
Palm Bay Utilities Department (Florida)
San Antonio Water System (Texas)
San Diego County Water Authority (California)
Western Virginia Water Authority (Virginia)

“AMWA’s 2010 award winners are industry pace-setters, where forward-looking managers and committed workforces create sustainable utilities providing high quality, affordable water and responsive customer service, while protecting the environment,” said AMWA President James McDaniel, Senior Assistant General Manager, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. “The

communities served by these award winners should be proud of the accomplishments of their exceptionally well-managed public utilities.”

The Attributes of Effectively Managed Water Sector Utilities are industry standards and cover utility performance in areas of product quality, customer satisfaction, employee and leadership development, operational optimization, financial viability, infrastructure stability, operational resiliency, community sustainability, water resource adequacy, and stakeholder understanding and support.

Platinum Award Winners

The **Austin Water Utility** uses asset management and a thorough performance measurement system to significantly cut costs while increasing efficiency. A culture of continual improvement and environmental stewardship pushes the utility to make greater use of water and energy conservation and sustainability practices to strengthen its future water resource supply and reduce environmental impact. Austin Water has implemented sound, conservative financial management practices to strategically plan for the future and attain stable bond ratings. Its stakeholders and over-sight bodies are fully engaged to work hand-in-hand to identify standards, discuss future demands and implement publicly acceptable rates.

To provide exceptional public service, the **City of Bellevue Utilities Department** uses tools including audits, surveys, benchmarking and continuous improvement programs. Performance measures are tracked to gauge effectiveness, efficiency and workload. Advanced asset management tools are in place, and asset data is used for financial planning. The Department’s renewal and replacement fund accumulates funds to maintain and replace aging infrastructure, and a high bond rating is maintained without the use of debt financing and with reasonable incremental rate increases. Commitment to sustainability and environmental protection is demonstrated with successful public education and outreach programs, which have produced significant results for water conservation and environmental health.

Boca Raton Utility Services strives to sustain excellence by balancing regulatory mandate requirements, benchmarking established levels of service, achieving financial stability and ensuring employee sustainability. Through the evolution of its strategic planning program, the department has continued to adapt, enhance and transform its processes to effectively manage these elements. It

continues to meet the strategic goals related to customer satisfaction, financial stability and product reliability. By advocating commitment to technology and innovation through programs, educational processes and a dynamic organizational structure that maximizes employees' knowledge and skills, the utility is developing sustainable employee succession.

El Paso Water Utilities shares water resources with three states and two countries, which dictates a proactive water management strategy that focuses on policy, planning and technology. Guided by its strategic plan and with input from key constituents and stakeholders, the utility has aggressively implemented its strategic goals and objectives. Predictions of unsustainable groundwater pumping were mitigated by implementing total water management, and other management initiatives have reduced and deferred operating cost, improved safety and efficiency, and reduced gas and electricity costs while conserving natural resources. The average residential bill, among the lowest in the Southwest, reflects the utility's competitive rate structure and financial stability.

The **City of Glendale Utilities Department** has a record of providing exemplary water services while maintaining regulatory compliance. Major infrastructure improvements include new surface water and groundwater treatment plants, replacement and installation of water lines, improvements to existing water treatment plants and construction of state-of-the-art water security monitoring systems. The department also implemented robust sewer cleaning, aggressive meter testing and water production optimization programs to reduce electrical, chemical and water resources costs. Human resources initiatives improve employee skills, productivity and operational flexibility, and sound financial programs – such as benchmarking, gap analysis and strategic business plans – promote financial stability.

The **City of Henderson's Department of Utility Services** has in place a progressive management structure that supports process improvement, operational optimization and resiliency and employee development. For the past decade, the utility has successfully supported double-digit growth in the community while responding to the worst drought in history on the Colorado River System, its primary source of drinking water. Even with the substantial effects of drought and growth on its resources and infrastructure, customer rate adjustments have been kept below the rate of inflation and customer satisfaction maintained at levels above 90 percent.

Newport News Waterworks completed \$400 million in capital improvements between 1990 and

2010, yet staffing levels today are lower than in 1990. Over this same period, residential bills increased less than 3 percent per year (taking into account reduced water usage). Its system reliability rating of 99.997 percent equates to only a two-hour outage every ten years on average. The utility reduced leaks in its distribution system and replaced its billing system. Water quality was improved via the addition of ozone as primary disinfectant and a follow-up manganese removal project. Waterworks also earned the E4 environmental designation, the highest level awarded by Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality.

Gold Award Winners

The **Western Virginia Water Authority** is an example of the benefits of a regional entity to manage water and wastewater needs in a multi-jurisdictional area. By combining resources and gaining synergies for water supply and distribution, the Authority focuses on the management of assets, replacement or rehabilitation of failing water lines, reduction of water loss and operational expenses. Guided by a rate equalization plan that supports infrastructure maintenance and the creation of reserve funds, the Authority provides adequate funding for capital expenditures. Since it spans localities, multiple water resources can be managed in a manner that reduces the impact of droughts or other emergencies.

At **Anaheim Public Utilities**, investments in leadership, planning and infrastructure allow it to excel in the key areas of financial viability, water resource adequacy and operational resiliency. Bond rating agencies upgraded the utility's bonds into an elite class of only a few Southern California utilities. As the result of foresight in protecting water resources, Anaheim's population grew by 31 percent in the past 20 years, but water use decreased by three percent. The utility invests in public education, conservation programs and developing local supplies to avoid mandatory water restrictions. A Class 1 rating from California's Insurance Services Office demonstrates the reliability of Anaheim's water production and distribution infrastructure.

Louisville Water Company (LWC) sold \$202.9 million in bonds in 2009 to fund its capital program through 2013. Standard & Poor's upgraded the utility's bond rating, citing its strong financial operations, its large and diverse service area and its comprehensive capital planning. According to S&P, the rating places LWC in the top eight percent of the 900 water and sewer utilities it rates. The company's leadership team is actively involved in serving community

organizations, and last year employees donated more than 4,800 hours to community service. In addition, LWC's education programs reached students in nearly 100 schools last year.

Palm Bay Utilities Department's Environmental Management System is known as GreenWay, and the Department was the first water and wastewater utility in the state of Florida to receive certification under the internationally recognized ISO 14001:2004 environmental standard. The department achieved a 31 percent reduction in energy use for its water treatment plants from the base year of 2007 through the first quarter of 2010. The utility has been recognized recently with a number of state and regional awards, including the 2010 Outstanding Membrane Plant Award, 2009 Finalist for the Sustainable Florida Best Practice Award, the 2009 Plant Operation Excellence Award and the 2008 Water Distribution System Award.

San Antonio Water System's 50-year Water Management Plan identifies water supply projects to provide reliable service as the community continues to grow. Its strategy includes setting precedents in conservation, recycling, water management and water quality programs. The utility has taken significant steps to optimize operations, upgrade and maintain infrastructure, and ensure that it is prepared to continue operations after any crisis. It strives to ensure that customers are satisfied with the quality of their water and that its staff is available to quickly handle any concerns. Recognizing that stakeholder support is essential, the utility communicates with ratepayers in a wide variety of venues to facilitate cooperation and understanding.

San Diego County Water Authority's key strategy to enhance water reliability is to diversify its water supply portfolio. Bay-Delta pumping restrictions, along with three years of drought, led to reduced allocations from the Authority's largest supplier. Supply reliability highlights include finishing major construction on the All-American Canal Lining Project, commencing construction on the San Vicente Dam Raise Project and supporting the development of additional local supplies, including desalination. The Authority's Drought Management Plan outlined actions including aggressively promoting increased conservation and implementing a model set of water use restrictions to meet mandatory water savings targets.

AMWA (www.amwa.net) is the organization for the nation's largest publicly owned drinking water utilities. Its members provide safe and clean drinking water to more than 130 million Americans.

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