

# R E M W D

September 2000

Eastern Municipal Water District



# P O R T S

## FROM DROUGHT TO DESTINY: BUILDING THE FUTURE.

October 16, 2000 marks the 50th anniversary of Eastern Municipal Water District. It has been a remarkable story.



*Area residents gathered for the first delivery of Colorado River water to the Diamond Valley area southwest of Hemet in 1954. A half century ago, it was big news to have water delivered from a pipeline in a rural area.*

Imported water has turned a largely parched, dry-land farming region with limited water of its own into an agricultural cornucopia and, later, a developing residential and commercial area in high demand.

The Colorado River Aqueduct, built by Metropolitan Water District, had opened

in 1941. It brought water from the West's largest river 240 miles across the desert to supplement the local supplies in burgeoning southern California.

But large amounts of precious local groundwater were actually piercing the lining of the aqueduct's tunnel through the San Jacinto Mountains and being carried away.

EMWD was the solution to that problem. Established following a 98% favorable vote of the people, Eastern was created with a two-fold mission: to recover and

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*Mead Valley got its water system in 1963. In this photo, a water storage tank is under construction.*

**Building - from page 1**

return the groundwater that was seeping into the tunnel, and to distribute additional Colorado River water to supplement local supplies. It is still fulfilling that mission today.



*Trenching is hard work! Here, digging is underway to place a pipeline for the Hemet-San Jacinto regional sewer system in 1963.*

Eastern served its first water in 1951. While most initially went to parched farmers, some towns in the region needed water, too. The first deliveries intended for community domestic use reached Perris in 1953.

Building a water system over such a large area was a great challenge for a brand new agency that opened its doors with \$75 in the bank! To finance the work with the least burden on local residents, EMWD pioneered the use of “improvement districts.”

I.D.s are small “districts within the district” that allow residents of an area that will benefit from a particular project to finance that project without burdening

other residents of the whole district. That same process is still used today and has become commonplace in the water industry.

By the 1960’s, as EMWD began serving Del Webb’s spanking new Sun City, it was apparent that another potentially rich source of water was being ignored. To make more fresh water available for domestic purposes, some types of agriculture and certain groundwater recharge could safely use highly-treated effluent from the wastewater treatment process.

EMWD led the way in revising state law so it could enter the wastewater treatment industry. Today, Eastern operates five highly sophisticated plants that produce well over 30 million gallons of recycled water for agricultural and irrigation use daily.



*Servicing of the district’s vehicle fleet wasn’t as sophisticated (nor as safe!) in the early days as it has become in current times. Eastern mechanics made do with what they had available.*

By the 1970s, the character of the region was clearly changing. As communities grew, it was apparent that still more supplemental water would eventually be needed. In 1973, Gov. Ronald Reagan presided over the dedication of Lake Perris, southern terminus of the State Water Project.



*Eastern's early leaders inspect a pipeline under construction in 1953. Standing above, board member Irwin Farrar (left) and general manager Doyle Boen. In the trench are board members A.C. Messelheiser (left) and Johnny Kolb.*

Meanwhile, Eastern was serving more communities and more people. In 1983, EMWD began distributing northern California water received through the State Project. Before it was able to do so, major construction had been needed. Eastern received a federal low-interest loan under legislation that the district,

itself, had been instrumental in writing and getting passed by Congress more than a decade earlier.

This additional source of imported water arrived none too soon as the building boom of the '80s was reaching

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## WATER WISE WORKSHOP

### REMINDER



EMWD's popular water wise workshops are underway throughout September and October. They're free, but you must

have an advance reservation. All workshops this year will be at Eastern's Perris headquarters, 2270 Trumble Road (off Highway 74 east).

To reserve a spot, call 909-928-3777, Ext. 4517 anytime.

The schedule:

- Sept. 9:** Basic irrigation, drip selection and design
- Sept. 23:** Soils, fertilizers, watering schedules and automatic timers
- Oct. 7:** Plant identification - drought tolerant plants
- Oct. 21:** Composting and green waste recycling. ▲



WATER DISTRICT  
PHONE NUMBERS

**EMWD**  
**Main Number**  
(909) 928-3777

**BILLING INQUIRIES**

In Perris and Sun City  
call main number  
Elsewhere (toll free)  
1 - (800) 426-3693

**JOB INQUIRIES**

Call main number, follow  
recorded instructions

**CONSERVATION  
INFORMATION**

Call main number,  
then press 3

**COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT,  
EDUCATION**

Call main number,  
then ext. 4226

**WATER QUALITY**

Call main number,  
then ext. 6238

**SYSTEM OUTAGES,  
TROUBLE CALLS**

Call main number, then  
ext. 6265 or (toll free)  
1 - (800) 698-0400

CLIP and SAVE

*Future - from page 3*

full stride. It was a time of fast-breaking events and huge demands, but Eastern was able to service every applicant.

Recycled water was becoming an increasingly important asset. Between 1990 and 1997, EMWD built a project linking all five of its treatment plants together and including a constructed wetlands that now produces a million gallons a day of marketable recycled water



*A trench is dug in the Moreno Valley's Alesandro Boulevard in 1955, as the district prepares to lay a pipeline for water service to the area.*

and houses the district's education facility.

As we enter the 21st Century, Eastern's customers are well served by an agency that has grown from 86 square miles and a population of 20,300 people.

Today, EMWD provides water, wastewater services and recycled water to a 555 square mile area with a population of 440,000 from Moreno Valley southward along the I-215 corridor to Temecula and eastward to Hemet and San Jacinto. ▲

September 2000

Published every other month by  
EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER  
DISTRICT • 2270 Trumble Rd.,  
P. O. Box 8300, Perris, CA  
92572-8300.

EMWD reports... is designed  
to keep EMWD's customers and  
the public informed of matters  
affecting them.

Forward your comments to the  
EMWD Community Involvement  
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