



## **OMWD's 4S Ranch Water Reclamation Facility Recognized as California's Top Safety Plant for 2017**

**Encinitas, Calif.** — OMWD's 4S Ranch Water Reclamation Facility received the "Safety Small Plant of the Year" award from the California Water Environment Association during the statewide awards ceremony on April 20. In addition, as the highest rated California facility in the Safety Category, the Water Environment Federation also presented OMWD with its coveted George W. Burke Award.

To date, OMWD employees have worked 4,374 days without a preventable lost-time incident, setting an unmatched industry safety record acknowledged by CWEA and WEF.

"Safety is a top priority for OMWD," said OMWD Board Director and Safety Committee member Bob Topolovac. "Every day, plant operators are faced with potential hazards that could result in an accident. Daily observance of safety program principles has resulted in over eleven years without a preventable lost-time accident at our 4S Ranch Water Reclamation Facility, which is something we can all be proud of."

CWEA's award program serves to recognize professional achievements within the wastewater industry and stimulate public awareness of the importance of wastewater treatment to public health and the environment. In addition to the honors as California's plant of the year, the 4S WRF received the designation at the local level earlier this year from CWEA's San Diego Section.

WEF's George W. Burke Award recognizes active, efficient, and well-organized safety programs in municipal and industrial wastewater facilities. WEF's award criteria included number of injuries and lost-time accidents,

record keeping, in-house training, emergency response, and safety program effectiveness.

There are inherent risks in operating any treatment facility. Plant operators at 4S WRF must implement and follow strict safety protocols when using powerful industrial machinery, working with chemicals, performing electrical maintenance, and working in and around hazardous work environments, such as confined spaces and deep storage ponds. OMWD's Safety and Risk Compliance Administrator works with operators on emergency preparedness by conducting emergency drills to identify opportunities to improve response time and coordinate with neighboring agencies. Additionally, operators participate on OMWD's Emergency Operations Committee to review policies and programs, and make recommendations for improved security and emergency response. OMWD's 4S WRF can produce up to two million gallons of high-quality recycled water each day. This alternative water supply irrigates schools, parks, golf courses, streetscapes, and homeowner association common areas in the southeastern portion of OMWD's service area.

Founded in 1927, the California Water Environment Association is a not-for-profit association of 9,000-plus professionals in the wastewater industry. The association trains and certifies wastewater professionals, disseminates technical information, and promotes sound policies to benefit society through protection and enhancement of our water environment.

The Water Environment Federation is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 33,000 individual members and 75 affiliated member associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF has helped to protect public health and the environment by providing the latest in water quality education, training, and business opportunities. In 1982, WEF honored George W. Burke, who was instrumental in developing WEF's annual safety survey and safety training aids, with the establishment of a safety award recognizing exemplary safety programs in his name.

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*Olivenhain Municipal Water District is a public agency providing water, wastewater services, recycled water, hydroelectricity, and operation of Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. Organized in 1959, OMWD currently serves approximately 86,000 customers over 48 square miles in northern San Diego County.*

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