Just Add Water

San Diego County Water Authority marks 75 years of service that shaped the region

The Claude “Bud” Lewis Carlsbad Desalination Plant produces 50 million gallons a day of desalinated seawater. Completed in 2013, the plant provides the region with a highly reliable, drought-proof water supply that meets about 10 percent of regional demand.

San Diego County Water Authority

AT A GLANCE

Established: June 9, 1944

First water delivered: Nov. 23, 1944

Area served: 946,000 acres

Number of primary pipelines: 21

Miles of large-diameter pipes: 7,700

Population served: 3.3 million

Economy served: $231 billion a year in economic activities, with some $231 billion in economic activity

Member agencies: 310

Our Region’s Trusted Water Leader
San Diego County Water Authority

PIONEERING VISIONARY AGILE AND DRIVEN FOR 75 YEARS ... AND COUNTING

Q&A

Solutions for San Diego and the Southwest

Thinking big about San Diego’s water future

As chair of the San Diego County Water Authority’s Board of Directors, Jim Madaffer wants to ensure that the agency builds on its hard-won achievements to meet the region’s challenges of growing water demands, increasingly severe drought conditions and escalating costs.

He’s also seeking to resolve the long-standing litigation between the Water Authority and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California over costs for transporting water from the Colorado River, often referred to as “Pipeline 1.” He expects to make such a move to build San Diego’s own “Pipeline 2,” which would run through MWD’s Colorado River Aqueduct.

The story of modern San Diego County begins at the time of the War of 1846, when the United States bought the semi-arid region from Mexico.

The never-ending search for water

Nature was kind to San Diego in many ways—bountiful rainfall meant that the region didn’t must struggle to provide drinking water. But without a massive infrastructure and integrated systems, the story of San Diego would have been very different.

When water began flowing through the 48-inch-diameter Pipeline 1 in November 1947, San Diego had less than a month’s supply of water left.

Together, they created the foundation for one of the nation’s largest regional water systems, with some 3.5 million acre-feet of water, including 3.3 million acre-feet of water provided by the Water Authority and its member agencies to raise the height of San Vicente Reservoir near Lakeside. The Water Authority and its member agencies have raised the height of San Vicente Reservoir.

For the two previous decades, San Diego officials had been split between building the Los Angeles-based Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to get a share of water from the Colorado River, and building their own system to move water from the Colorado River to the Imperial Valley to Diego’s own pipeline to provide water for San Diego County.

In December 1977, the Water Authority’s Pipeline 1, shown here in 1947, crossed rugged North County terrain to deliver water to San Vicente Reservoir.

The Water Authority’s Pipeline 1, shown here in 1947, crosses rugged North County terrain to deliver water to San Vicente Reservoir.

In December 1944, the San Diego County Water Authority formed with nine charter members to advance the region’s Colorado River rights, report water and the use of water in the region.

By June 9, 1944, the San Diego County Water Authority was up and running, covering the Colorado River basin in northwestern San Diego County.

The Water Authority serves about 80 percent of county residents, delivering 29,000 acre-feet of water to 430,000 people.

The Water Authority’s Pipeline 1, shown here in 1947, crosses rugged North County terrain to deliver water to San Vicente Reservoir.

The Water Authority is the water wholesale agency for the San Diego County Water Authority.

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The Water Authority builds, delivers and monitors water to the region’s member agencies and the City of San Diego.

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The region has grown, but water use has dropped thanks to conservation upgrades.

**Solutions from page 1**

Q: For years, we have been setting our sights on 2035. But with the board to set a new vision for 10 years beyond 2035, our board has a new direction. We have to be prepared for that. What's your vision for 10 years beyond 2035?

A: For 10 years beyond 2035, we want to continue to think big, but also to think outside the box. We will be a huge project, but one that will provide water supplies, and that will help to improve the economy and our water sustainability. We will be working with the Imperial Valley to help solve the water issues in the process. We will continue to be a leader, but we will also be working with other member agencies to provide more water supplies.

Q: How can we achieve this vision?

A: We can achieve this vision by providing more water supplies, and by working with other member agencies to provide more water supplies. We can also work with private-public partnerships, and other strategic partnerships to help us achieve our goals.
Transforming the region's water supplies

Water Authority, member agencies expand resource portfolio

Since the early 1990s, the San Diego County Water Authority and its member agencies have deployed one of the most aggressive water supply diversification strategies in the nation.

With one-quarter of the region's total water supply today being sourced from local resources, the authority is a prime example of the growing diversity in water supplies being explored across the United States.

In coming years, member agencies expect to bring online local water projects that will play an increasingly important role in providing reliable water in San Diego County.

**Solutions**

Supply reliability for the San Diego region continues to ensure water needs are met despite the increasing importance of water districts.

- Seawater desalination: Water resources that includes imports from outside the region.
- Strategic partnerships: Additional supplies such as water from other cities, counties or agencies.

**San Diego Regional Water Sources**

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<thead>
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<th>San Diego County Water Authority</th>
<th>Imperial Irrigation District</th>
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**Water Authority's Asset Management Program**

The agency also aggressively reduces and rehabilitation engineering actions to return supply reliability.

- **What is your vision for expanding water resources?**
  - To continue to increase the reliability of our water supplies.
- **What are some big projects at the Water Authority?**
  - Increase the region's capacity to provide an additional 200,000 acre-feet of water by the year 2035.
- **What is the San Diego Water Supply Diversion Agreement?**
  - A legally binding agreement for boosting water supplies to the region.

**San Diego's water supply strategy**

- **What is the Water Authority's goal for its asset management program?**
  - To ensure 95% of the region's water supply is reliable by 2035.
- **What is the Water Authority's approach to ensuring water supply reliability?**
  - The Water Authority will continue to invest in new water projects and facilities to increase the region's water supply capacity.

**2000** The Water Authority serves 2.8 million residents, who use 645,000 acre-feet of water per capita, payable water use is 235,950 gallons per day.

**1995** The Water Authority starts developing a water supply strategy to increase regional water supply reliability.

**1990** The Water Authority sees severe drought conditions.

**1985** The Water Authority begins planning and environmental studies for the Emergency Storage Project, a series of reservoirs, pipelines and pumping stations designed to serve water throughout the county.

**1990** The Water Authority carries out an Emergency Storage Project, a series of reservoirs, pipelines and pumping stations designed to serve water throughout the county.

**1990** The Water Authority finishes the Imperial Irrigation District aqueduct to move water from the Colorado River to San Diego County. The project is a major undertaking, such as an earthquake-resistant intake, impoundment project.

**1988** The Water Authority begins planning and environmental studies for the Emergency Storage Project, a series of reservoirs, pipelines and pumping stations designed to serve water throughout the county.

**1985** The Water Authority starts developing a water supply strategy to increase regional water supply reliability.

**1982** Our Region's Trusted Water Leader: San Diego County Water Authority

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The Visitor Center at Carlsbad Desalination Plant offers tours daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is no charge to visit the site. Please note that no pets or wheeled vehicles are allowed to enter the site. The plant is located at 3650 Carlsbad Desalination Road, Carlsbad 92011. The phone number is 760-780-4000.

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San Diego County Water Authority

Our Region’s Trusted Water Authority

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2010

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2010 The Water Authority’s Lake Hodges Pump Storage Project began operations, providing up to 45 megawatts of electricity for the region with two 20,000-horsepower pump turbines.

2010 The Water Authority’s San Vicente Dam Rose, completed in 2014, no longer meets the reserve storage and flood control requirements of the region. As a result, the Water Authority has removed it from the region’s water supply system.

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