



PRESS RELEASE

Water Department

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CONTACT: Genevieve DePerio
(619) 533-6607
(619) 980-7870

SAN DIEGO WATER DEPARTMENT DEDICATES NEW WATER RESERVOIR

SAN DIEGO, CA – San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders and Councilmember Jim Madaffer helped the City of San Diego Water Department dedicate the new Earl Thomas Reservoir during a celebration today at the Alvarado Water Treatment Plant, located next to Lake Murray.

Community members, contractors and City staff attended the event to celebrate the completion of the reservoir which is the largest, pre-stressed concrete drinking water reservoir in the world. Also unveiled were a new parking lot for Lake Murray visitors and a new directional sign to Lake Murray.

“The new reservoir is a wonderful and important addition to our city’s water treatment system,” Mayor Sanders said. “Water Department customers, and the State Department of Health Services, which provided us with a low-interest loan, are to be thanked for funding this project. This helps increase Water Department reliability, which is important to everyone in San Diego.”

The old, reinforced concrete drinking water reservoir was built in the 1950’s at the city’s oldest water treatment facility, the Alvarado Water Treatment Plant. The old reservoir had the capacity to hold 35 million gallons of water per day (mgd) and in 1957 was named after Earl Thomas, a long-time City employee. After 50 years of service, the reservoir became seismically unstable

and required total replacement. In September 2002, the old reservoir was demolished and excavated to make room for the modern one and to help upgrade the plant.

The replacement carries the same capacity, holding 35 mgd, but now represents a 38-foot deep, 406-foot in diameter, circular reservoir. The tank was externally machine-strand wrapped with 58 reels of prestressing strand, making it the largest pre-stressed concrete drinking water reservoir in the world. In addition, it was built to be more earthquake-safe, with rubber pads between the wall and the roof, and between the wall and the floor, with cables near the pads to manage seismic displacement. Now safer, the new reservoir increases the Alvarado Water Treatment Plant's on-site drinking water storage capacity from 42 million to 77 mgd.

The design of the reservoir began in 2000 and construction began in the late summer of 2002. Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. and Richard Brady and Associates headed the design of the reservoir and site improvements. The construction management firm is CH2M Hill, the general contractor is C.E. Wylie, and the reservoir contractor is DYK Incorporated. More than \$26 million went towards construction with a total project budget of \$32 million.

The reservoir replacement project is part of the Alvarado Water Treatment Plant Upgrade and Expansion which started in 1993 and is expected to be completed in 2010 or later, depending on bond financing and State grants. The overall upgrade and expansion will incorporate new equipment and technologies, three new reservoirs, the building of eight new filters, the rehabilitation of the existing filters, new sedimentation and flocculation basins, an upgraded Operations Building, ozone disinfectant facilities, rehabilitation of the old sedimentation and flocculation basins, security upgrades, and new chemical storage and processing facilities. Once the project is completed the capacity of the plant will reach 200 mgd, helping the plant to keep up with the latest federal and state drinking water regulations. The increased capacity will also help meet the anticipated water demands projected for 2030 with the growth of population.

For general questions on the Water Department Capital Improvements Program, please call the 24-hour Public Information Line at (619) 533-4679 or go to www.sandiego.gov/water.