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Olivenhain district strikes water deal

By: BEN FRUMIN - Staff Writer

ENCINITAS ---- The city of San Diego will sell at least 163 million gallons of recycled water next year to the Olivenhain Municipal Water District, which will deliver the recycled water to at least three golf courses in its service area, officials said Tuesday.

The agreement, approved earlier this month, calls for an estimated 2.6 billion gallons of recycled water to be sold to the district over the next two decades.

Recycled water is waste water that has been filtered and chemically treated to remove bacteria and other contaminants. State law allows recycled water to be used for just about everything but human consumption.

The city of San Diego has two treatment plants with the combined capability to treat 45 million gallons of water a day. A typical family of four uses about 163,000 gallons of water each year.

Greg Block, spokesman for the city's water department, said the water district will make two initial payments totalling about \$400,000, and about \$187,500 per year after that, adding that the annual price might increase with time.

The water district will distribute the recycled water to Del Mar Country Club, Morgan Run Resort and Club and Rancho Santa Fe Farms Golf Club, said Harry Ehrlich, the district's deputy general manager.

The water district serves a 48-square-mile area populated by about 58,000 people, and includes parts of several North County cities, including Carlsbad, Encinitas, San Marcos and Solana Beach.

Block said using recycled water for irrigation, recreational lakes and sprinkler systems helps conserve potable water, most of which is expensive and imported.

Block said about 90 percent of water used in San Diego County is imported from the Colorado River or northern California. It sells for about twice the price of recycled water because of the high cost of transporting it over several hundred miles, he said.

The golf courses served by the water district will see their water bills reduced by no more than 10 percent as a result of the deal, Ehrlich said.

The recycled water will be transported through a series of recently-completed pipelines and pump stations from San Diego's treatment plant near Interstate 805 and Miramar Road to the water district's facility near Fairbanks Ranch.

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