



## Whets Public's Appetite for More Information

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(Mission Times Courier, San Diego, CA) - The Sept. 8 power outage around Southern California resulted in boil order water orders for several neighborhoods around San Diego County, prompting many to wonder about the water in their district.

Coincidentally, the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) had earlier planned a "Water Talks" community forum for Sept. 13 to help enhance interaction with the public. The program had been launched in May and will be held on a quarterly basis at different locations around San Diego.

Last month's event, co-hosted by the San Diego North Chamber of Commerce, was open to the public. SDCWA Board Chair Michael T. Hogan and a panel of experts, comprised of Toby Roy, Water Authority Water Resources Manager; Bob Yamada, Water Authority Water Resources Manager; and Cathy Pieroni, City of San Diego Principal Water Resources Specialist, discussed the region's development of local water supplies.

"Water Talks" was the second in the series, but the first on water. According to the SDCWA, the "Water Talks" topic was chosen for this particular time because feedback from the public at the last forum indicated they wanted to know more about water recycling, desalination, and other aspects of local supply development.

The Public Utilities Department provides water and wastewater services to San Diego's more-than-3 million residents each day. However, the San Diego region currently relies on imported water for 85 to 90 percent of its water supply.

According to the SDCWA, there are very few local supplies – the region's rainfall is low (average of 9.3 inches of rainfall annually), and there is very little groundwater. A high percentage of water is imported from the Bay Delta and the Colorado River. Yet this imported water is potentially vulnerable to drought, disaster, or regulatory restrictions, so the county is working diligently to reduce our dependence on imported water and develop new local water supplies and storage.

The efforts, critical to support the future needs of the county, include using recycled water, groundwater, water conservation measures, indirect potable reuse and seawater desalination.

Recycled water is the water delivered by the city of San Diego in the "purple pipes," and is treated wastewater used for non-potable (non-drinking) uses, such as irrigation, industrial processing, cooling towers, construction site dust suppression and soil compaction, decorative fountains, and toilet and urinal flushing.

The City is currently investigating several groundwater basins to determine whether or not they could be used for production or storage. According to the SDCWA, the Water Conservation Program accounts for over 30.6 million gallons of potable (drinking) water savings per day. Indirect Potable Reuse is another effort that is being developed by San Diego as a pilot program. It will turn wastewater into potable water.

Seawater desalination via advanced water purification technology is being investigated in the City's Water Purification Demonstration Project. The Demonstration Project is the second phase of a process evaluating ways for the City to increase its use of recycled water, according to the SDCWA, and the endeavor will determine if reservoir augmentation is a feasible option.

Potential benefits of a reservoir augmentation project include a local and sustainable supply of high-quality drinking water, reduced dependence on imported water, less discharge into the ocean, and lower carbon emissions.

During the recent power outage, there were no delivery or quality problems with the regional water system – it continued to deliver water throughout, confirmed the Water Operations Branch of the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department.

For further information, visit SDCWA at <http://sdcwa.org/> or the Water Operations Branch at [www.sandiego.gov/water](http://www.sandiego.gov/water).