

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ORANGE COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICTS HONORED
FOR REUSE PROJECT AT MICROFILTRATION IV CONFERENCE**

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. – The National Water Research Institute (NWRI) of Fountain Valley, California, honored the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD) as joint recipients of the third NWRI Award of Excellence for leadership on the Groundwater Replenishment System, a world-class indirect potable reuse project.

NWRI established the Award of Excellence in 2000 to recognize projects throughout the world that demonstrate leadership in the application of technology to improve water supplies, protect public health, and enhance the value of water.

OCWD Board Director Phil Anthony and OCSD Board Director Norman Eckenrode accepted the award on behalf of their districts. The award, in the form of two identical plaques, was presented on Tuesday, March 21, 2006, at NWRI's Microfiltration IV, the fourth in a series of conferences held by NWRI devoted to low-pressure membrane (microfiltration and ultrafiltration) applications to water and wastewater treatment.

Over 180 people from around the world attended the conference, which was sponsored by MWH, Cranfield University, USFilter, Zenon Environmental Corporation, Kruger Inc., Corona Department of Water and Power, and OCWD.

World-renown as a leader among water utilities, OCWD is located in Fountain Valley, California, a coastal city about 30 minutes south of Los Angeles. The water district is responsible for protecting Orange County's rights to the Santa Ana River and for managing a groundwater basin that supplies water to more than 20 cities and water agencies in the region. Located just next door to OCWD, OCSD is responsible for collecting and treating 243-million gallons of wastewater generated each day from these cities. Together, these districts are leading the way in developing a project – called the Groundwater Replenishment System – to purify and reuse treated wastewater to near-distilled quality to provide a reliable source of water for 2.8-million residents of Orange County.

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Scheduled to begin operation in 2007, the Groundwater Replenishment System will be the largest advanced water purification facility in the world for indirect potable reuse. Its facilities will include microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultraviolet light with advanced oxidation technologies to purify wastewaters.

Microfiltration is a low-pressure membrane filtration process that takes small suspended particles, bacteria and other materials out of the water. It provides the most efficient preparation of water for reverse osmosis, which is a high-pressure membrane filtration process that sieves much smaller contaminants, like minerals, salts, viruses, and pharmaceuticals, from water. As the final step, ultraviolet light uses high intensity, low output lamps to disinfect water. Used in combination with hydrogen peroxide, ultraviolet light creates an advanced oxidation reaction that breaks down any remaining compounds – like trace organic compounds – to create ultra-pure water.

Past recipients of the NWRI Award of Excellence include the Public Utilities Board in Singapore for their pioneering research with membrane technology to create a new source of potable water called NEWater (2002) and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply for their efforts in using an innovative new technology called membrane bioreactors to enhance their water resources (2004).

A non-profit organization, the National Water Research Institute was founded in 1991 by a group of Southern California water agencies in partnership with the Joan Irvine Smith and Athalie R. Clarke Foundation to promote the protection, maintenance, and restoration of water supplies and to protect the freshwater and marine environments through the development of cooperative research work.

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