



City of Camarillo

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NEWS RELEASE

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Desalter at the Forefront of Camarillo's Path to Sustainability

Camarillo, California – The ribbon cutting ceremony, attended by approximately 120 guests on Tuesday, November 30, 2021, marks a long-awaited milestone for Camarillo's North Pleasant Valley Groundwater Desalter (Desalter).

Construction of the facility, located near the northwest corner of Las Posas Road and Lewis Road, has been underway for close to two years. The facility is fully constructed and currently undergoing precision testing for quality control before the plant becomes fully operational in early 2022.

"It's been a long complex undertaking to get to this point of accomplishing the relatively simple goal of transforming unusable brackish groundwater into a local source of high quality and affordable drinking water while also removing damaging salts from the regional watershed," shared Public Works Director Dave Klotzle, during his remarks at Tuesday's ribbon cutting ceremony. "The commitment and persistence of so many individuals and agencies has now taken this remarkable project from concept to reality."

The facility will treat brackish groundwater and produce approximately 3,800 acre-feet per year of potable water. At present, 60% of the City's water supply is from groundwater, while 40% is imported State water. When the Desalter comes online, 87% of the City's water supply will be from groundwater and only 13% imported. The City water system serves roughly two-thirds of City residents, while the other residents are served by other water districts including Camrosa, Pleasant Valley Mutual, California American, and Crestview Water Districts.

The Desalter is nearly 50% funded by outside sources. In August 2021, Camarillo received another \$4.6 million in federal funding for the Desalter, bringing the total amount of state and federal grant funding to \$31 million; \$15 million from two separate state grants, and another \$16 million from the US Bureau of Reclamation. The remaining \$35.3 million of this \$66.3 million project will be funded by existing water enterprise funds and revenue bond issuance.

The City is expected to save nearly \$50 million over twenty years, due to the lower cost of Desalter water compared to expensive imported water. The lower cost of water produced by the Desalter will translate into customer water rates not having to be increased as much in the future, compared to if the Desalter was not constructed, requiring the City to rely heavily on imported water.

Mayor Charlotte Craven shared of the trials and tribulations of the past twenty years in getting to this “watermark moment” of the ribbon cutting of the North Pleasant Valley Desalter. “The important thing” she shared, “is that right now we are all here with the team that actually made it happen.”

The Desalter facility will also be home to an educational center, equipped for public and school tours with interactive displays and exhibits to share Camarillo’s journey to water independence and the importance of water conservation and sustainability for the region. The City looks forward to welcoming the community to an open house and guided tour of the Desalter in Spring of 2022.

Water conservation has been a priority for years and is swiftly becoming a more urgent environmental issue. The Desalter is an integral part of the City’s critical infrastructure that will aid the City in sustainable use of natural resources as we continue to strive toward a more resilient and sustainable future for Camarillo and the region.

To learn more about the Desalter, please visit www.cityofcamarillo.org/desalter.

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