



Annual  
Accomplishments  
2018-2019

66575 SECOND STREET  
DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA  
92240

Dear Board of Directors:

We all have an unending passion for this District. First and foremost, however, is the excellent leadership and oversight you have provided. Every day I thank god for this Board that I serve and even though I am quite young; I have never worked for a better Board in my career. Thank you for your support and confidence.

I can safely state that this District is in the best condition it has been in since I started fourteen years ago. This report is a snapshot of not only what we have accomplished but also where we are at this point in our history. It is always amazing to look back at what this District has accomplished but there are two additional accomplishments that, for good reason, have not been addressed in this detail of accomplishments; the reorganization and lawsuit.

Briefly, the reorganization encompassed the effort to build a culture that will be the foundation of our new District. We started from the Mission you adopted and built the Vision and created Values by which we will serve. This will be the core of our foundation and we will use these to take this district from good to great. Finally, I can say, after a considerable time with these in place, that it is working successfully. All employees will be evaluated based on their adherence to these guides and directives and the District will be held to these beliefs. This is another example of your great leadership.

Secondly, there is the lawsuit and for obvious reasons, we cannot report in detail on it. Nevertheless, this litigation has been a very complicated and onerous, but we have to date prevailed in the three attempts by DWA to dismiss. This is not just litigation but legislation and of course public outreach and the players on the chessboard change positions constantly. We have produced thousands of documents and met hundreds of times which has been a huge drain on our resources. This makes our accomplishments above and beyond even more impressive.

Again, our strategic planning is in place and our efforts are accomplishing the goals you set us to achieve. These along with new challenges are shaping our district:

**Water Supply** - *MSWD meets the current and future water supply needs of its customer base. Implementation of this goal will include strategies and programs designed to develop new water resources and conserve existing resources.*

**Infrastructure** - *MSWD provides continuous investment in its infrastructure systems to ensure the treatment and distribution of existing and future water and wastewater supplies as well as maintaining and improving its facilities and operational support systems.*

**Financial Management** - *MSWD practices stewardship of its financial resources in a responsible manner to ensure the current and future reliability of its operations.*

**Public and Political Outreach** - *Develop opportunities to positively influence outcomes favorable to MSWD. Developing strategic alliances and partnerships as well as fostering better relationships with other political entities and members of the public accomplish this goal.*

**Organizational Development** - *MSWD is committed to hiring, training and retaining the highest quality employees while providing them with the tools and organizational structure to grow in their personal and professional development.*

Finally, this is the time of year that we get to reflect on what we have done. Even though you know better than anyone, it is relevant and helpful to report on those accomplishments and reflect to what we have achieved. We will always be facing different challenges as time goes on but those will be welcomed and confidence because of the accomplishment in building a foundation that we can stand on far into the future. Let me conclude by thanking you for allowing me to be a part of your leadership and to be a part of the history of this great District.

Sincerely,

Arden

*Every Job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence!*

*– Author Unknown*

## **Administration**

### **Cost of Service/Rate Study implementation (continued)**

On March 1, 2016 the first phase of our five-year rate action was implemented and on January 1, 2019 the fourth phase was implemented. Communication on bills and reminder postcards were also sent to all customers as we continue to be proactive in educating our customers about District finances. The rate study (and all of the included assumptions) is now being reviewed by a third-party consultant to ensure that the District is doing its due diligence with regards to rates.

### **Additional financing and grant sources (continued)**

The District is continually looking into possible leads toward additional grant funds or financing sources that may be available for funding District capital projects. There are a few sizeable grants and loans on the horizon and contacts are maintained at several sources to be able to react to the District's needs as they arise. These involve entities such as cities, counties, Federal, State and local development agencies, banks, financial consultants, attorneys and engineers. The District's consulting engineer has been assigned the lead on these pursuits and the Finance department aids the consultant as necessary. Some of these grant opportunities include the SWRCB principal forgiveness, US Army Corp of Engineers construction funding, IRWMP Prop 84/Prop1A grants and AQMD.

### **Improvements to District accounting system and database (continued)**

Improved capabilities such as reporting, and user interfaces have been implemented. The current system performs very well and dependably, but modern interfaces make the system more user friendly and increase the ease of access. Reporting capabilities have also been improved and give management more information, faster. This implementation is ongoing and dynamic as our systems are custom designed for us.

### **Strategic Plan**

During 2018 staff continued implementing the 2017 Strategic Plan. An update report was also provided to the Board.

### **Reorganization (continued)**

The District's reorganization continued during 2018. Efforts to support this ongoing reorganization were very training intensive. Tweaks are still being made to the organizational chart as the process goes on. Possible further refinements to the current organizational structure will be presented as part of the 2019/2020 budget process.

### **Website**

The MSWD website update was completed during 2018 both in appearance and function. The appearance, organization and layout were updated to be simpler, more customer friendly, as well as mobile device friendly. The functionality of the payment system was also improved. Customers can now store their credit card information online if desired, a guest check out feature was added, and recurring credit card charges are available. All applications and forms were automated so customers do not need to come into the District lobby to conduct business.

### **New Building**

After considerable space planning efforts during 2017, it was decided during 2018 to build a new building on the current MSWD location. Design of that building is now underway.

### **IIPP Implementation**

During 2018 the District's Injury and Illness Prevention Plan were updated and implemented. This puts the District in compliance with state law.

### **Facsimile Signatures**

The District switched from traditional signatures on checks to the use of digital signatures. Additional internal controls were put in place to accommodate the use of these signatures. Check processing is now a much more streamline process than before saving staff resources.

### **Employee Evaluation revamp**

During 2018 the District employee evaluation process and forms were redone to better reflect the current value system of the District and evaluate employees on such values. The old forms and process were much more "check the box" type forms. The current forms force supervisors to give input to employees on their performance in a more conversational forum. This should prove more valuable to both employees and supervisors.

### **Employee Handbook**

The District employee handbook update is almost complete. This update will insure compliance with current employment law as well as include some minor revisions to employee policy. This update will be presented to the Board shortly for review and approval.

### **Change in Banking Relationship**

During 2018 the District discontinued banking services with BBVA Compass Bank and began to use Wells Fargo. This transition went very smoothly and is now complete. Wells Fargo provides the District with much better services as well as a superior product line.

### **Employee Recognition**

An employee recognition award program was started in 2018 and has been very successful in improving employee relations. The first iteration of this was displayed at the April 3, 2019 employee appreciation lunch.

### **Budget Document**

The 2018/2019 fiscal year budget document was revised to include much more information than previously provided as well as explain the process and information to the reader. This is part of the District's continued effort to improve transparency and educate customers about public finance.

### **Paperless Workorders**

The Field Service department implemented a paperless workorder system during 2018. This does away with paper work orders and allows staff to complete work order in the field as they physically complete them. It also improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the District's collection process for shut off fees which was confusing for staff in the past.

## Engineering

This past year has been very busy for the Engineering Department maintaining the programs they administer and managing multiple capital and development projects. There have been staff changes with Theresa Murphy being promoted to an Engineering Technician. She is proving the right decision was made as she continues to excel and take on more responsibilities.

Below is a report of the multiple achievements of goals and objects including status of several projects and some highlights of what Engineering is working on. This list is nowhere near all-inclusive of the tasks that are completed each year.

### **Completion of the AD-12 Area D-1 Sewer Construction Project**

This project was completed in March 2014. Staff is preparing the fourth of ten annual Project Performance Reports to be submitted to DWR on or before June 1, 2019. Staff continues to maintain the monitoring log as a requirement of the grant.

### **AD-12 Area J-1 (Base bid and J-1-3) Sewer Construction Project (Prop 84)**

This project was completed on September 21, 2016. Prop 84 requires annual performance monitoring for ten years after the completion of the project. The second of ten annual Project Performance Reports was submitted to DWR on October 9, 2018. Staff continues to maintain the monitoring log as a requirement of the grant.

### **AD-12 Area J-1-2 Sewer Construction Project (USACE Section 219 Funds)**

This project was completed on May 18, 2018. This is the first construction project the District will complete with USACE being the lead agency for construction.

### **AD-12 Area D-2 Sewer Construction Project**

This project completed on February 8, 2017. Prop 84 requires annual performance monitoring for ten years after the completion of the project. The first of ten annual Project Performance Reports was submitted to DWR on February 21, 2018. Staff continues to maintain the monitoring log as a requirement of the grant.

### **Sewer Line Design for Areas H and I (Prop 1 – IRWMG)**

The District was awarded funds for the design of Areas H and I through the Prop 1 DAC Involvement Funds. 75% of the \$460K design costs will be funded by the grant.

### **Sewer Line Design for Areas A and G (USACE Section 219 Funds)**

The District was awarded \$1.2M towards the \$1.6M design costs to design Areas A and G.

### **Notice to Connect “Make the Connection” Program**

The latest Groundwater Protection Project area to be completed was AD-12 Area J-1-2. Notice to Connect letters were sent in August 20, 2018 to 25 improved parcels requiring property owners 90 days to have their septic systems abated and their properties connected. Staff continues to monitor all properties that have not connected in the assessment areas constructed to date.

### **Below are the sewer connection statistics as of March 2019:**

- Area F: 780 connections out of 821 total parcels
- Area M-1: 199 connections out of 215 total parcels
- Area D-1: 167 connections out of 179 total parcels
- Area F-1: 64 connections out of 69 total parcels
- Area L: 438 connections out of 443 total parcels
- Area J-1: 122 connections out of 157 total parcels
- Area D-2: 281 connections out of 362 total parcels
- Area J-1-2: 15 connections out of 37 total parcels

### **AQMD Solar Project**

Following a delay related to acquiring an easement, the design was revised, and interconnection construction resumed. Following the completion of interconnection conduits and facilities by the Contractor in July 2018, the Project was again delayed until SCE crews completed the interconnection process. In October 2018, SCE completed the interconnection of the solar field to the SCE grid. Concurrently, MSWD held its dedication ceremony. Thereafter, start-up, testing, and commissioning was completed by January 2019. Since then, Staff has been working out the details for an operations and maintenance contract with SunPower and coordinating on the remaining closeout construction items, including staff training.

### **Chromium 6**

Staff has been closely monitoring a response from the State Water Resources Control Board regarding an economic analysis of the Chrome 6 MCL. While the State indicated the feasibility process could take up to 24 months to complete, from mid-2017, no additional information has been provided to date. During the interim staff continues to review emerging Chromium 6 treatment technologies and is engaged on the search of economic solutions and alternatives to apply to our system in anticipation of the State's new MCL. The District received an Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation grant for a Chrome 6 wellhead treatment project. Due to the repealed Chromium 6 MCL and delay in issuing a new MCL, staff has begun the grant amendment process with the Department of Water Resources to repurpose said grant funding for the Well 42 project.

### **Well 42 Project**

Staff has been working with Operations on the coordination of Well 42 construction. The design originally completed in 2009 was shelved due to the decline in economy and conservation efforts reducing our demand requirements. The Well 42 project has been revived mainly due to providing backup supply to the 1400 pressure zone. Currently, Well 28 is the backup well and is only operational with the required uranium filtration system. The ongoing annual cost to maintain the filtration system will be better utilized in construction of Well 42. Additionally, this project has been approved by the Department of Water Resources as an alternative project for the \$920K grant funding for the Chromium 6 treatment project. The plans are being revised and the project budget is being updated.

### **Strategic Planning 2017**

The District is in the second year of the implementation of the strategic planning process. Priorities, budgets and goals will be set based on the strategic plan to proactively pursue the vision of the District.

### **Mission Springs Water District West Valley Wastewater Reclamation Facility**

Following direction from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWCQB), Staff completed a groundwater flow model study to address regulatory concerns with the proposed percolation ponds and the potential impact to the adjacent Well 33. The study was completed, and findings were presented to the RWQCB in May 2018. However, the RWCQB notified the District that a groundwater quality anti-degradation analysis to evaluate potential impacts to the groundwater aquifer would also be required to permit the WWRF. Thereafter, efforts to complete the PDR resumed and efforts to complete an antidegradation

analysis began. The Consultant completed the Draft PDR in September 2018. Following, MSWD requested a value engineering analysis be completed to determine the best economical option to proceed with in the design. The value engineering analysis was reviewed by staff and presented to the Board of Directors in October 2018. In addition, the Groundwater Quality Anti-Degradation Analysis, required by RWQCB, was completed in October 2018, and found no significant impacts to the groundwater aquifer. The Final PDR was completed in December 2018. Beginning in January 2019, Staff authorized continuation of the WWRF design and a 30% design review workshop was completed in March 2019.

#### **West Valley Wastewater Reclamation Facility Force main and Trunk Sewer**

Progress on the conveyance line proposed to serve the WWRF has been delayed while the design details related to the treatment plant were worked out, as stated above. Notwithstanding, a draft TM was presented to Staff in December 2018. Based on preliminary findings, Staff requested additional Dos Palmas Lift Station evaluation to confirm design parameters. Thereafter, the Final TM was completed in March 2019 and 60% design is anticipated in April.

#### **Willow Hole Groundwater Monitoring Wells (Prop 1 Local Assistance Grant CVMC)**

The monitoring well construction was completed in August 2018. Thereafter, Staff continues to maintain the monitoring log for a comparison on groundwater levels prior to and after tamarisk removal by CVCC. Tamarisk removal by CVCC was completed in March 2018. Staff will continue to monitor groundwater levels for at least three months prior to finalizing our findings in the draft hydrogeological study. In addition, grant reporting and invoicing with CVMC is up to date.

#### **N. Indian Canyon Drive Sewer Construction Project**

In late May 2017, the Riverside County Transportation Department informed Staff of their North Indian Canyon Drive Widening Project tentatively scheduled to go out to bid for construction in April 2018 and inquired if the District had any water or sewer projects planned for this area. Staff determined a dry sewer line project from Dillon Road south to 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. constructed prior to the County's widening project would substantially reduce the costs of construction. The sewer project will bring a dry sewer line to the frontage properties along Indian, which would eventually flow to the new MSWD WWRF when future sewer lines are constructed. MSWD awarded sewer line design to The Altum Group. Bids for construction were opened on February 19<sup>th</sup> with Tri-Star Contracting II, Inc.

being the lowest qualified bidder. The award of contract will go before the Board at the May 2019 Board meeting for approval. Construction is to commence in June 2019.

### **Horton WWTP Infiltration Pond Expansion Project**

November 16, 2018 the construction contract was awarded to TryCo General Contracting for a contract price of \$170,669. Construction commenced on January 16, 2019 and is 95% complete.

### **Water and Sewer Master Plans Update**

Staff is preparing the RFP and anticipates requesting proposals in May 2019.

### **Pending and Approved Development Projects**

Staff has been very busy addressing inquiries for several new development projects during this past year. The following projects are currently in various stages ranging from plan check to beginning construction to project completion:

- Two Springs RV Resort
- N. Indian Canyon Widening Project
- Vista Palms Development
- Multiple marijuana cultivation facilities and dispensaries
- Vista Rosa – WSA
- Tuscan Hill/Walton Group
- Highland Falls/Walton Group
- Tract 37065 – CUP 09-15/18-16
- Quick Quack Car Wash

### **Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Program**

The end of 2018 completed the FOG Program's eighth year and it continues to run smoothly. Since the program was implemented in 2010, 73 facilities have been either permitted or waived. Time is spent tracking compliance, assuring permit renewals are sent, doing routine site inspections, and monitoring pumping events. Staff diligently helps program participants maintain compliance with the District's FOG Ordinance. Staff continues to educate customers of the importance in complying with the program by handing out best management practices posters. Staff remains confident that continuous efforts will be successful in reaching a 100 percent compliance rate. Staff has implemented a specialty FOG Program software, LinkoFOG, to increase the efficiency of monitoring and reporting.

### **Geographical Information System (GIS)**

Staff along with GIS consultant, Nobel Systems, has worked diligently to update the water and sewer facilities mapping. Changes to our existing GeoViewer Online and GeoViewer Mobile platforms have added increased functionality, including standardized reporting for all our maintenance functions and more analytics.

### **PlanetBids eProcurement**

Staff worked with Operations for the implementation of a new procurement process. PlanetBids is a web-based company that provides solutions to help public agencies better manage bids, contracts, insurance certificates, and emergency operations in an easy to use system. They assist in streamlining outreach efforts to suppliers while gaining greater control of traditional time-consuming procurement practices. Procurement can then become more strategic as reports are readily available and manual tasks are automated. The recognized benefits are time and money will be saved managing RFQs, RFIs, RFPs, and electronic bids for purchase of commodities and professional and construction services.

### **Assistance to other departments on District projects**

- Engineering assisted in the following projects during 2018:
- AD-15/M-2 assessment district formation
- AD-17 assessment district formation
- Potential I-10 and Indian sewer assessment district (AD-16)
- Preparation of exhibits for SGMA
- CVRWMG Plan Update
- Potential AD-18 assessment district formation

### **Operational highlights**

During 2018 the Engineering Department processed the following (approximate):

450	Incoming and outgoing transmittals for development and CIP project plan checks, material submittals, project deliverables, etc.	3	Received and reviewed applications for Financial Assistance
84	Incoming and outgoing transmittals for landscape plan checks.	35	Received, reviewed and processed Requests for Information
9	Prepared, processed, notarized and recorded Non-Transferable Lien Agreements for Financing Sewer	286	FOG Program correspondences, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual Maintenance</li></ul>

	Connection Costs (Financial Assistance)		Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Fee Renewal</li> <li>• Annual Fee Renewal Receipts</li> </ul>
98	Received, reviewed and processed Fire Flow test requests	45	Conditions of Approval
45	Requests for Agency Comment	95	Processed new water services
115	Processed sewer connections	18	Will Serve Letters
184	Average department telephone calls or other Engineering inquiries per month (approx. 2,200 per year)		

## Operations

The District's Operations Department is committed to protecting our most valuable resource, our water. This past year has been exciting for Operations. We gained new staff, promoted staff, and had a retirement of a long-time employee. The new Field Operations Manager position was filled by Bassam Alzammar. Bassam brings new light to the District with his experience and knowledge. We have also filled two Field Operation Technician I position's in Construction and Maintenance with Tim Owens and Julio Martinez. We are currently in the process of filling a third vacant position. In Wastewater, Andy Grunnet, successfully achieved his grade II Wastewater Operator certification and was promoted to a Wastewater Treatment Operator II position. Andy came to the District with many talents and skills that have made him an integral part of the Wastewater team. He has learned new job functions related to his job duties and has adapted to many unique work environments that have not been part of normal operations at the treatment plant. Rick Johnson, Water Production Supervisor retired on January 16, 2019, after working for the District for 25 years. The additional staffing afforded the opportunity for staff to update our Emergency Response Plan (ERP). This effort is almost finished with the next step being the coordination of required training. Additionally, staff has applied for a grant to pay for a Hazard Mitigation Plan, a requirement of the ERP.

Below are some more highlights from each department within Operations.

### **Water Production Department**

- Municipal Diving Services, Inc. completed the annual cleaning and inspections of nine District reservoirs. Written reports and pictures have been submitted to staff for evaluation. In previous years, Municipal Diving Services would submit a DVD video of the cleaning and inspection of the reservoirs. Staff has requested written reports with color photographs to help minimize downtime and be more effective in creating priority maintenance programs. Staff is currently working on a nine-year Capital Improvement Project (CIP) and implementing a Reservoir Rehabilitation Program.
- Staff met with Palm Springs Unified School District officials and began the state mandated AB-746 Lead in School testing. Nine schools within the MSWD service area were tested. Five water samples were taken by

MSWD staff at locations designated by school district staff. All sample results came back non-detect for lead and were completed prior to the July 2019 deadline.

- In November 2018 the Well 33 Solar Field project was substantially completed. Staff is currently working with Engineering to finalize the RES-BCT process with SCE. Some of the final work on this project includes executing an annual operations and maintenance contract as required by AQMD grant language. Another highlight related to our SCE invoices is staff (Amanda Lucas) took it upon herself to contact SCE streamlining the monthly payment process. This resulted in a more efficient process saving several hours each month in staff time.
- Forshock, the District SCADA integrator upgraded the computer system and added a back-up computer to add long-term reliability and additional security ensuring the Districts SCADA system is up to date with today's technology. Staff will be working with Forshock for future system upgrades to help make the department more efficient with an automated system which will help minimize call-outs and save money spent on overtime.
- Over the past few years, MSWD has been working on and focused on our Mission, Vision, and Values. Another item we have been focused on is our image and public perception. Staff continues to work with Southwest Landscape & Maintenance on maintaining various well sites, booster stations and reservoir sites. The ongoing landscape maintenance will ensure sites are kept clean, well groomed, and at a level that meets standards set by the Operations department.
- GeoViewer Mobile (GVM) has been in place for the past two years but has not been operating to its fullest capabilities for the Water Production Department. Staff has met with Nobel Systems and reviewed GVMs functionality requesting more changes to help improve efficiencies continuing our efforts towards a paperless system.
- With the retirement of Rick Johnson, Water Production Supervisor, staff has decided to evaluate the overall performance of the Production Department. In March 2019, staff retained a consultant to evaluate the department's operations and determine where necessary changes are needed to become more efficient and effective. The consultant will also be

evaluating staffing levels and maintenance programs to determine if they fall in line with industry standards.

### **Operational highlights**

- Completed the annual CCR report.
- Completed the annual well extraction reports for our three public water systems
- Completed annual CASGEM reporting
- Completed the Electronic Annual Report (eAR)
- Completed two of the three tri-annual Sanitary Surveys
- Completed the Annual Water Loss Audit
- Completed the installation of a new Hydro Tank at the Vista Reservoir Site

### **Wastewater Treatment Plant Department**

- Due to increasing flows to the Horton WWTP, the Wastewater department along with the Engineering department found it necessary to construct three additional percolation ponds which were part of the plans in the Expansion Number 5 design. Tryco General Engineering was awarded the contract to construct the three additional percolation ponds as a CIP.
- A new motor control cabinet was installed at the Desert Crest WWTP as part of the capital improvement plan. This project allowed the District to have all electrical components of both process tanks in one cabinet and replaced older outdated equipment with new equipment. Other benefits of this project are operators only need to access one cabinet while working onsite instead of two cabinets, as well as the ability to install SCADA.
- Installed new SCADA plant monitoring software at Desert Crest WWTP. The installation of the SCADA software allows remote monitoring and operators can track what equipment is running while not having to rely on the current (outdated) alarm system that did not offer this function. Additional upgrades to the SCADA system will allow the current contract with ADT, as well as the Frontier phone service, to be discontinued, thus saving additional cost in the future.
- Design work has started on the new West Valley Water Reclamation Facility (WVWRF). Staff has visited other treatment plants that are using the SBR technology currently being designed for the WVWRF to better

understand the new treatment process and give better input on the design of the facility.

- The Alan L. Horton WWTP was awarded the CORBS Plant of the Year award.
- Capital improvements to the Horton WWTP include the installation of a secondary channel grinder in the bypass channels to help reduce unwanted matter getting into the downstream tanks during higher flows. The auger monster rotor that removes debris from the influent stream was replaced. In addition, new cameras were installed to monitor all process tanks and the belt press. These cameras are viewable through the SCADA software. The installation of the cameras allows the operators to remotely check on the plant during normal operating hours and after hours.
- A secondary transfer switch was installed at the Dos Palmas Lift Station (DPLS) as a CIP. In case of a major power failure and/or the failure of the generator at the DPLS, the transfer switch allows the District to be able to power the lift station via a portable generator.

#### **Operational highlights**

- CCTV Operations: Inspected over seven miles of main line pipe. 44 inspections were completed in main service areas by District staff. The inspections completed by District staff were routine inspections. Each inspection is for the mainline pipe connecting from manhole to manhole.
- Sewer mainline jetting and cleaning: 4.6 miles completed. The mainline jetting and cleaning program are routine maintenance programs to prevent sewer overflows. The normal yearly expectation of footage cleaned is 20 miles. Our milestone was not met due to increased maintenance in the treatment plants due to higher flows, and getting new operators properly trained.

#### **Construction and Maintenance Department**

- Staff removed over 1,100 feet of shallow eight-inch asbestos cement pipe (ACP) for various projects within the service area.
- For the last several years, staff has implemented a GPS tracking device to help minimize theft of the Districts fire hydrants. Over the past year staff has noticed reduction in theft from 13 in 2017 to nine in 2018. Staff has

replaced the nine missing fire hydrants from various locations and repaired 18 damaged fire hydrants resulting from vehicle accidents.

- Staff continued assisting the Service department with the meter change out program by changing out stuck meters.
- Staff worked with contractor to expand the existing ponds at the wastewater treatment plant by using MSWD equipment to relocate spoil that was being removed.
- Staff rebuilt a pressure reducing station by replacing an older non-working shut off valve allowing future maintenance of the new six-inch and two-inch bypass Cla-Val valves that were replaced.
- Staff along with the Production department replaced the hydro tank at Vista Reservoir due to aging and deterioration of the original hydro tank.
- Staff continues the use of the new Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) which allows paperless tracking of all work orders. This allows staff to manage work orders much more efficiently, eliminate paperwork, and enhance productivity. More importantly, the program allows staff to track all work, run analytical reports for labor and costs associated with repairs, allowing focus on planned preventative maintenance, thus facility downtime is minimized.

### **Operational highlights**

- Staff flushed 221 blow-offs as part of the blow-off maintenance program. This program is a requirement of the state health department and a good water quality measure for dead end mains and areas that are known for low flows or minimal water consumption.
- Staff exercised 1416 ground valves as part of the ground valve maintenance program. This was an increase from exercising 411 last year due to staff dedication and department goal setting. We expect this number to double next year.
- Staff serviced/maintained 311 fire hydrants as part of the fire hydrant maintenance program.

- Staff replaced 260 poly service lines with copper.
- Staff serviced 98 air-vac valves under the air-vac program.
- Staff installed 64 new water services.
- Staff completed the Cla-Val annual maintenance program.
- Staff completed 1777 underground service alert line locations.
- Installed wrought iron fencing around employee parking at the administration building for security. This has eliminated nightly homeless activity and minimized vandalism.

## Conservation/Public Affairs Office

### General Public Affairs

Public affairs consist of traditional outreach and public awareness activities to ensure Brand enhancement in the community. Further, it assures that community members are well informed about the essential issues, values and mission of the District. General Public Outreach is a primary tool for building trust, good will and respect for the agency.

- Enhanced social media presence through regular posts and interactions.
- Enhanced on-line ad program including geo-fencing tech that ensures ads run within MSWD service area only.
- Continued ad placement in local publications highlighting vision, values water quality and conservation
- Promoted district values and conservation through numerous sponsorship-related ads in partnership with local non-profit and community organizations
- Participated in water-issues forums through print media websites
- Authored numerous press releases related to elected officials, special events and issues of importance.
- Launched AD18 outreach.
- Provide support services for Customer Service, including
  - Assist in handling phone calls and information requests
  - Addressing “challenging” customers via phone or in person
  - Assisting with CS messaging on billing statements
  - Assisting CS manager in finding references and policies related to various customer inquiries and interactions
- Participate at least six times per year in the DVBA legislative forum.
- Attended various events that featured MSWD such as Rotary, School events and general community groups (HOAs, etc.).

- Participated in Career day at DHSHS.
- Facilitated the Resource Action Program Water Wise kit a curriculum distribution.
- Facilitated the REAL Academy visits to MSWD. There are two student field trips which include interaction with MSWD staff from each department. The purpose is to expose middle school students and REAL Academy candidates to career opportunities in the water field as well as teach them about the renewable resource of water.
- Continued outreach to I-10 property owners to continue conversation about sewer collection project.

#### **Cost of Service/Rate Study/sewer fee to tax roll**

The Public Affairs Office assists other departments with messaging and outreach activities related to implementation of Board policies and legal notices.

- Provided support services to the finance and customer service departments in public outreach related to notices about the January rate increases for water and sewer.
- Ensure rate information is updated on the website and other public-access mediums
- Provided support services for annual placement of sewer fee to the tax roll.
- Managed dozens of phone calls about the tax bill and sewer fees

#### **Assessment Districts and Capital Project funding - GWPP**

The Public affairs office provides key leadership in spearheading development of financing districts for the proliferation of the GWPP. The primary element of the PAO is public outreach and education. Secondary is management of the assessment formation process, interaction with the Assessment Engineer and Bond Counsel, and support for the Board Secretary in ensuring proper notification and implementation of Proposition 218.

- The GWPP continues to move forward. PAO provides support service in development of local, state and federal funding. In 2017 the PAO

accompanied the team who met with the USACE to develop a long-term strategy to access the USACE Section 219 Construction Authorization. The PAO is also working with MSWD's engineering office to develop a strategic approach to development of future funding and project areas.

- Over the past year AD-18 was initiated from the former AD-12 Sub-areas. This process includes multiple mailings and public meetings, as well as facilitation of reports and presentations for the Board and public in accordance with Proposition 218.
- AD-16 formation at the Interstate 10 and Indian industrial corridor is ongoing. Activities over the past year include developing new scenarios in an attempt to create a financing district which would exclude non-supportive properties. This also required extensive work with the assessment engineering firm and design engineers. Significant amounts of communication were also part of the ongoing effort as well as an annexation proposal (in process).

#### **Conservation and compliance with state mandated activities**

The PAO is the primary office for implementation of conservation programs. These include mandated and un-mandated programs as well as state monitoring programs, reporting and legislation.

- Monitored and reported on legislation related to changes in conservation mandates for public water agencies
- Ensured compliance with state-mandated conservation measures to ensure continues reduction in per-capita water use in MSWD's service area
- Ensured compliance with state water use reporting the CA "Drinc" portal
- Assisted in completion of Electronic Annual Reporting for conservation through the state Drinc portal.
- Continued to represent MSWD on the CV Water Counts group for regional conservation efforts and implementation of an "Addy-Award" winning program.
  - Participate in monthly planning meetings
  - Participate in regional events

- Plan and participate in annual Desert Horticultural society event including presenting on water issues
- Plan and participate in annual Coachella Valley Water Summit
- Plan and participate in the Water Counts Academy
- Partner with valley water agencies to create and execute regional messaging related to conservation
- Review and approve monthly Facebook posts
- Managed the marketing consultant contract

### **Special Projects**

The PAO is often tasked with special or non-traditional projects or assigned support roles within such projects.

- **SGMA:** The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act presents significant and complex challenges to MSWD. The PAO has been tasked with assisting the General Manager with elements for addressing SGMA, including:
  - Preparation of a communications plan
  - Preparation of and comment on various correspondences and media pieces
  - Support in developing a milestone Valley Voice article
  - General assistance to the GM on conference calls and follow-up activities.
  - Appearances before the television outlets and management of print media inquiries.
- **Advanced Meter Technology:** The AMT project has expanded to create an opportunity for technological advancement throughout the MSWD service area.
  - Modification and updates to AMT technology for practical implementation (wired to wireless, independent power source, improved integration into agency meter installation standards)
  - Introduction to the Comcast LORA Smart Cities technology
  - Preparation of customer outreach framework
  - Reporting of Grant funding
- **Annual Consumer Confidence Report.** The CCR is a mandated publication that reports on the water quality of the three service areas of MSWD. The report compiles water sampling results and information about water quality into a document that must be made available to the

- public by July 1 of each year. This effort is a collaborative between Operations Department (water production) and the PAO.
- Contract with designer for creation of post card notice and CCR document
  - Review with Staff and state health authorities
  - Oversee printing and distribution of CCR in accordance with State law
  - Comply with state-required confirmation of notice
- Serve on Riverside county Family Resource Board. The FRC interacts with our customer base in providing referrals to services for DAC members. The role of the FRC Board members is to assist the County in development and execution of programs that reduce dependency and increase self-sufficiency. This is of great benefit to both MSWD's customer base as well as the agency, as increasing self-sufficiency can translate into a reduction in delinquencies.
    - Attend bi-monthly meetings in Desert Hot Springs
    - Attended the first-ever FRC retreat
    - Facilitated the Build-A-Bike program for 2018