

## Video: MSWD History

While prospecting for water, early homesteaders in the desert discovered the hot springs that made this area famous. It was not until 1940, however, that the first subdivisions were established and L. W. Coffee started the village he called Desert Hot Springs. Early Water Company The critical need for freshwater led residents to form a mutual water company, which eventually proved unsatisfactory. Later, a privately-owned utility, called the Desert Hot Springs Mutual Water Company, acquired its assets. But this too failed and widespread dissatisfaction led local citizens to form a publicly-owned water district.

Formed By 1953, an election swept the new Desert Hot Springs County Water District into existence with a vote of 246 to 9. The new District began with 100,000 feet of pipelines, five water wells, and two reservoirs. It covered one square mile. The District expanded rapidly. It absorbed parts of the Coachella Valley County Water District, the West Palm Springs Village, and San Geronio Mutual Water Company systems. Today, it boasts more than 1.25 million feet of pipelines, 14 water wells, and 24 reservoirs, serving an area of 135 square miles.

As early as 1954, local citizens petitioned for sewer service. The cost, however, was prohibitive. However, growth brought an overload to the septic systems and health hazards to the community. The District built the Alan L. Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant in 1972, and it has been expanded four times to a treatment capacity of two million gallons of wastewater a day.