Major part of Chino Desalter expansion project comes online

Expansion project will increase regional water reliability and reduce dependence on imported water

JURUPA VALLEY – More than 100 local water leaders and officials were on hand today for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a state-of-the-art reverse osmosis efficiency project, a major component of the Chino Desalter Phase 3 Expansion Project.

The $144 million expansion project has been in the works since 2008 and will eventually increase the Chino II Desalter’s treatment capacity from 10 million gallons per day (MGD) to 20.5 MGD once it is completed in early 2017. This new water project will provide another local, reliable source for the region.

“A local, secure water source is one of our top priorities, and this regional partnership on the Chino Desalter showcases our commitment to water supply reliability,” said John Rossi, General Manager of Western Municipal Water District, one of the lead agencies for the project.

The reverse osmosis efficiency project employs a pellet softening technology that removes calcium and silica from the plant’s brine, allowing subsequent treatment of the softened water through a secondary reverse osmosis process. This process increases water recovery from 80 to 95 percent, and decreases brine waste by nearly 70 percent.

“This efficiency enhancement will enable capacity at the Chino Desalter II to be increased by an additional 2.2 MGD with the same amount of raw water input,” explained Curtis Paxton, General Manager and CEO of the Chino Basin Desalter Authority.

Several components of the expansion are still in the works, including expanding raw water well fields, installing a raw water pipeline and adding additional drinking water delivery facilities.

The expansion project is multi-year, multi-agency, multi-million-dollar effort to increase locally sourced water for the region. More than $77 million in grant funding has been obtained for the expansion project.

“Sound planning and appropriate investment in our local infrastructure have led to this long-term water reliability solution that will benefit our region for years to come,” said Inland Empire Utilities Agency’s General Manager Joe Grindstaff.

(MORE)
Desalters use reverse osmosis technology to remove salts and other constituents matter from water before it can be used for drinking water. The process works by pumping groundwater out of the aquifer, a layer of rock and sediment deep under the ground, and treating it through a process called reverse osmosis, which forces water across a membrane at high pressure. The membrane traps salt and other impurities and allows only clean water to come through.

“This process actually improves groundwater quality because pumping and treating more groundwater accelerates restoration of local water basin quality,” explained Jurupa Community Services District’s General Manager Todd Corbin “Groundwater can also be stored in the ground and used during drier times or emergency situations.”

The Chino Desalter is located at 11251 Harrel Street in Jurupa Valley and will benefit Western Municipal Water District, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Jurupa Community Services District, the cities of Ontario, Norco, Chino and Chino Hills, as well as the Santa Ana River Water Company. All of these agencies are members of the Chino Basin Desalter Authority, a Joint Powers Authority overseeing the expansion and operation of the desalter. The three lead agencies funding the project are Jurupa Community Services District, City of Ontario, and Western Municipal Water District.

For more information, please visit www.chinodesalter.org.

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