California Air Resources Board Chair Mary Nichols sounds off on technology, innovation and California’s environmental challenge.

PHOTO BY ERIN BRETHAWE
Courting Cannabis
When the city of Needles, California, staked its economic future on marijuana, the local utility quickly adapted.

Innovation Showcase
California’s publicly owned electric utilities and water agencies are leading the way forward for California, the nation and the world.

POWER PLAYER
The Courage to Lead
World-renowned regulator Mary Nichols sounds off on technology, innovation and California’s environmental challenge.
Innovation is a trendy word. The conventional wisdom is it’s a core competency of start-ups, but not as common in our world.

How can we, working in the stodgy infrastructure business, also innovate in a way that moves our agencies forward, using cutting-edge technologies, and delivering efficient and affordable water and energy?

Here’s the answer in one word: pilot.

That’s the suggestion of innovation expert Soren Kaplan, who spoke recently at the Southern California Public Power Authority’s annual conference. Kaplan, author of “The Invisible Advantage: The Culture of Innovation,” studies innovative companies to help others adapt to changing environments, survive and thrive.

Kaplan had a lot to say, and his presentation had many interesting elements. He spoke about different types of organizations and how they can innovate. The one that seemed to ring the loudest was how we, in risk-averse infrastructure agencies, also can innovate.

We hear about interesting ideas all over the place: conferences, magazines, fellow agencies, colleagues, the internet. You name it, there are plenty of ideas out there. The problem is, when we make an investment in a new technology or service, it usually costs money—and sometimes, lots of money. We have to commit to it, implement it and evaluate it. All that takes time. Lots of time.

How can we minimize the investment and time to evaluate? According to Kaplan, set up pilot projects to evaluate new ideas. Try them out in small doses, examine and evaluate them carefully, then decide what to expand. Be in the habit of trying lots of ideas.

Kaplan laid out three types of innovation.

Incremental innovation is where you examine your operation and determine opportunities for changes to processes, products and services that provide continuous improvement. More efficient transformers and leak detection/remediation technology are good examples. These kinds of actions improve efficiency and help lower costs over time. Most of your agency is open to incremental innovation. Every staff person should be challenged to develop ideas.

Sustaining innovation involves major advances to your core business. AMI, advanced metering infrastructure, is a good example. First, you can learn from many other agencies that have already installed it. Second, it’s possible to implement a portion of the customer base with the new technology to try it out. Finally, once everyone sees how it works, you can decide whether to expand it to all customers and, of course, properly budget since it requires substantial investment.

Disruptive innovation is the breakthrough that changes the game, such as a new business model, or offering a new product or service. Glendale Water and Power’s Online Marketplace and SMUD’s Energy Store fall into this category. These services, still clearly in the energy space, are new ways for customers to buy energy-consuming products, accept utility rebates that lower costs and interact positively with their local utility. It’s both a customer service innovation as well as an energy-efficiency one. Battery technologies may be another form of disruptive innovation for both water and energy utilities: water agencies particularly for the ability to take advantage of incentive rates by their energy supplier, and electric utilities for the opportunity to decarbonize and use intermittent renewable resources to significantly improve capacity factor.

The risk is lowest for incremental innovation and highest for disruptive innovation. As a result, we should focus more on incremental and less on disruptive—but still try it. We need to be constantly aware of all opportunities to innovate.

This issue of California Water & Power offers a multitude of ideas for innovating. Our feature story focuses on CMUA members who are implementing fascinating projects that improve their communities and transform the way they do business.

Start small and commit to innovation. Pilot your projects and get comfortable with evaluating new technologies and services. Watch what industry leaders do and assess their results. Then act.

Using these methods, everyone can be an innovator.
California Municipal Utilities Association staff, from left, Matt Williams, Teresa Rexrode, Patrick Welch, Danielle Blacet-Hyden, Jonathan Young, Frank Harris, Christine Chapman and Barry Moline, brought their copies of California Water & Power magazine to the State Capitol on a sunny day in June.
California’s publicly owned electric utilities and water agencies are constantly innovating to provide their communities with reliable, affordable and sustainable service. They are implementing the latest technologies and new solutions, launching customer-friendly programs and incentives, and showing how to responsibly manage and conserve natural resources while moving toward a carbon-free future.

The California Municipal Utilities Association showcases the best and brightest of these projects and programs during its annual Resource Efficiency & Community Service Awards. On the following pages, learn more about the 2019 entries from participating utilities and water agencies. Together, they’re leading the way forward for California, the nation and the world.
Implementing Cutting-Edge Resource Recovery

**East Bay Municipal Utility District** is recycling wastes and producing renewable energy that exceeds the demand of the wastewater treatment facility it operates. The key to this transition is the successful growth of a Resource Recovery (R2) Program that accepts trucked-in, high-strength wastes for conversion in anaerobic digesters to generate biogas and renewable electricity. Following expansion of its onsite power cogeneration facility in 2012, EBMUD began producing more electricity than required to treat wastewater from its 685,000 customers. It now produces enough electricity to power approximately 5,000 homes.

The benefits of the R2 program are threefold:

1. It treats wastes that otherwise might be improperly disposed of.
2. Digestion produces biogas that can be used for renewable energy generation and transforms the solids into a beneficial, fertilizer-like soil amendment.
3. These activities provide new revenue to public agencies through tipping fees for waste acceptance and energy generation, which either offsets purchased power or can be sold to the grid.

Encouraging Water-Wise Restaurants

**The Long Beach Water Department’s** Certified Blue Restaurant Program supports and recognizes outstanding Long Beach restaurants that achieve exceptional water efficiency in the community. Using a grant from the California Department of Water Resources, the program supports direct installation of efficient pre-rinse spray nozzles and faucet aerators. An onsite water efficiency survey is offered to all interested restaurants to identify opportunities for water, energy and greenhouse gas reductions in their kitchens and bathrooms. Once certified, restaurants are recognized by Long Beach Water and receive a branded “brag” kit to flaunt their pride in being water efficient. This kit includes a window cling, program coasters, menu stickers and conservation sink signs. As of early 2019, 49 restaurants have completed full certification.

Nourishing the Local Community

**The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission** partners with People Organizing for Democratic and Economic Rights—a local community organization—on Hummingbird Farm, an urban agriculture farm at Crocker Amazon Park in San Francisco. Hummingbird transformed underutilized land into a community farm to support the health and wellness of residents and the environment. Located on six acres of SFPUC land, the farm makes affordable produce available to communities in the Excelsior neighborhood, where the highest proportion of San Francisco residents pay more than half their income in rent, and 71% of students qualify for federally funded lunch programs. Managed and operated by PODER, the farm provides hundreds of pounds of organic fruits and vegetables each season.
Educating About Drinking Water

Irvine Ranch Water District created its Tap Water 101 campaign to better inform the public about the safety of its drinking water, dispel some of the myths behind it, and change attitudes that affect behavior and get more people to embrace tap water as a safe, economical and environmentally friendly alternative. To accomplish this, IRWD developed an integrated communications strategy drawing on video, a community workshop, online presence and social media to reach its customers. Public outreach about drinking water is increasingly needed, as bottled water is a $16 billion-a-year industry. In 2017, it surpassed soft drinks in U.S. sales. The sale of household water filters and purifiers also is growing and is expected to reach $45.3 billion globally in 2022.

Setting a Pathway to Sustainability

The City of Palo Alto Utilities and its Pathway to Sustainability is a set of steps CPAU is taking to become a carbon-free electric and natural gas utility. Palo Alto has a long history promoting energy efficiency and renewable programs since the 1970s. But as time passed, it became clear CPAU's focus would shift to greenhouse gas emission reductions rather than simply energy efficiency. In 2013, Palo Alto declared a 100% carbon-neutral electric supply as its default power supply to all customers. In 2015, CPAU launched a voluntary natural gas offset program that paired Green-e Climate-certified carbon offsets with customers' natural gas use. In 2017, CPAU began buying carbon offsets for 100% of its gas portfolio, making Palo Alto the only utility it's aware of with a 100% carbon neutral electric and natural gas portfolio. The next large step down the sustainability pathway will include electrification of natural gas-using equipment and focus on the transportation sector.

Upgrading ‘Forgotten’ Light Fixtures

Silicon Valley Power is administering a commercial parking lot and exterior lighting direct-install program designed to bring a focused, efficient approach to helping customers upgrade their exterior lighting. Silicon Valley Power hired Efficiency Services Group to provide program implementation. The program is designed to leverage the opportunities for exterior lighting the company identified in snapshot audits from visiting 2,500 customer sites in Santa Clara. ESG visits each customer location and provides recommendations for lighting upgrades. If the customer agrees, they are provided with the fixtures at no cost. They are responsible for installing the fixtures themselves or hiring a contractor. Targeting these “forgotten” fixtures at locations owned or operated by hard-to-reach customers makes this direct-install program beneficial to both the utility and the customer. Since the program’s inception in mid-2017, the program has served more than 100 customers, replaced 1,000 fixtures and achieved nearly 800,000 kWh in first-year energy savings.

Optimizing Energy-Efficiency Programs

The SMUD Home Performance Program provides homeowners with whole-house solutions to improve energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of their home. This unique bundled offering, coupled with SMUD’s new time-of-use rates, allows customers to save on air conditioning during the summer while providing ways for customers to reduce heating bills in the winter. The Home Performance Program includes substantial incentives for customers to replace their gas water heater and gas furnace with a heat pump water heater and heat pump space heater, respectively. The program also offers incentives to help homeowners make the necessary upgrades to their electric panel and circuitry to fully electrify their homes and support their choice to embrace a low-carbon lifestyle. With more than 80% of SMUD customers using gas to heat their water and homes, the program is a critical piece to decarbonizing the Sacramento region.
Placer County Water Agency created the Job Shadow Mentorship Program to inspire and educate high school students about careers in engineering, environmental science, drinking water operations, geographic information systems and construction management. The event allows as many as 35 high school students to shadow PCWA professionals for an action-packed day. Students arrive at PCWA’s business center in the morning for an introduction to PCWA, its workforce and culture. Following a safety briefing, each student receives a high-visibility T-shirt, hard hat and safety glasses. The group then departs into the field, organized into various tracks. Some groups visit a construction site, others go to a water treatment plant or a hydroelectric power plant. At each site, PCWA employees share their typical workday experiences, what they like about their job, and how they became interested in a career involving public service with a water and power utility.

Highlighting Water and Energy Careers

Supporting Solar at Schools

For the past two decades, Anaheim Public Utilities has partnered with Anaheim schools to install solar structures, improve electric and water efficiency, and educate students on sustainability. APU recently obtained feedback that due to funding priorities and maintenance budget limitations, schools were not seeking new solar installations in the immediate future. In response, Anaheim launched a Solar for Schools pilot program. Rather than pursuing another rebate program, the program is structured so APU owns, operates and maintains solar shade structures on school campuses, and provides a license payment based on solar capacity to compensate schools for access to their properties. Solar for Schools provides 1.5 MW of solar generation capacity, and will produce approximately 2.5 million kilowatt-hours in the first year, and generate more than $110,000 in annual license payments to the participating school districts in the first year alone.

Boosting Incentives for Turf Removal

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has worked with its 26 member agencies during the past several years to continually refine its popular turf rebate program to ensure the strong participation of homeowners and commercial property owners, and to track the success of the program by measuring actual water savings. In February 2019, Metropolitan's board of directors broadened the program by doubling the turf removal rebate to $2 per square foot, which can be further supplemented by member agencies. The board also increased the maximum square footage of projects to 5,000 square-feet for residential properties and allows work in both front and back yards to be eligible for rebates. The maximum allowance for commercial projects such as schools and parks is 50,000 square feet. Since 2015, more than 160 million square feet of lawn have been removed as a result of Metropolitan's program.
Leading in the Valley

Peter Rietkerk’s life, work and family is deeply rooted in California’s Central Valley. Born and raised in Corcoran, California, Rietkerk cultivated a love for agriculture and an appreciation for water on the family farm. He became a licensed professional engineer focused on water resource projects—a career path that led to managing water districts.

Rietkerk, 36, became general manager at South San Joaquin Irrigation District in 2015. SSJID, based in Manteca, provides drinking water to 163,000 residents in southern San Joaquin County, serves about 56,000 acres of irrigated agriculture in the region and could someday provide retail electric service to its customers.

**Lightning Round Q&A**

- **Choose three people from history to invite to dinner.** Jesus Christ, Leonardo DaVinci and Abraham Lincoln
- **The last good book you read?** “Work Rules!” by Laszlo Bock
- **Favorite sports teams?** San Francisco Giants and San Francisco 49ers
- **Hidden talents?** Playing the drums
- **The best advice you have ever received?** Two things: The devil’s in the details, and look for opportunity in times of hardship or challenges.

**CWAP:** You are younger than most people who lead large water districts and electric utilities in California. How does that inform your viewpoint and approach?

**Rietkerk:** When I first started in management, I think I had a certain perception about leadership and what it entailed, but I’ve grown and developed. My leadership style is collaborative. I like to work with my senior leaders and my staff in a team environment. I think there’s something to be said for working with a team and developing a solution. Doing it in a vacuum or from a dictatorial style doesn’t work well for me. I think it also provides an opportunity for those who I work with to see their efforts reflected in the potential solution. It’s also an opportunity to get some buy-in on the vision. That’s how we approach things here at the district.

**CWAP:** SSJID has been trying to buy PG&E’s power distribution system to provide retail electric service to the local community. What’s the status of the effort?

**Rietkerk:** SSJID has endeavored to become a retail electric provider in our region for more than 15 years now. SSJID is now celebrating its 110th year, so from a historical perspective it’s a relatively young project given how long the district’s been around. That being said, our “youthful” project continues to push on because we believe there are significant benefits to the local community by becoming a local, publicly owned utility. Our board has stayed steadfast in its resolve, and we have significant community support. We’re listening to our constituents and stakeholders, and have the long-term success of our communities and the district in mind.

We have two pending court cases in front of the appellate court in California. One is related to our Local Agency Formation Commission authorization of SSJID to exercise its latent power in providing retail electric service to the community. The other is related to a condemnation action that SSJID initiated against PG&E that would allow the district to obtain the right to purchase the system, go through a process to value the system, and eventually allow for the purchase of the system so SSJID could provide locally accountable power to its customers.

This is a unique opportunity, given the PG&E bankruptcy, for SSJID to potentially work directly with the bankruptcy court and with PG&E to work through the potential purchase of the system. Given all the liability that’s currently out there for PG&E and the concerns our local community has about the safety and resiliency of their retail electric power, we believe there’s an opportunity where SSJID could purchase those facilities. It would provide some cash flow to assist PG&E in some of their liabilities and also allow our local community to see that project come to fruition.

**SSJID General Manager Peter Rietkerk says there continues to be significant community support for a long-term project that would enable the district to provide retail electric service to the community.**
CW&P: What do you enjoy doing outside of work?
Rietkerk: I love spending time with my family. One of the things that we’ve taken up over the last few years is camping. We’ll take our trailer to the coast or up in the mountains. Being involved with our kids’ sports is also starting to take more time and effort. Currently, we have three sports going on among our four kids, so my wife and I are driving them back and forth and being assistant coaches. It’s fun and rewarding to see them grow and develop, and to experience some of those awesome successes and a few of the failures, too.

One of my personal hobbies is cycling. I’ll go on “leisurely” 70-mile bike rides on the weekends to train for a 100-mile ride I’m doing around Lake Tahoe in June. The last couple of years I’ve participated with a group called Team in Training, which is a fundraising arm of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

CW&P: How do you balance your family life with the rigors and demands of your job at SSJID?
Rietkerk: I wish there was such a thing as work/life balance. I feel like it’s more of a work/life teeter-totter! There are seasons for everything, whether in your family life or in work life. I can’t say I’ve designed or found the best way to manage them both. I think it’s about continuing to remember the priorities—for me, family first and also the commitments to the people who I work with and the communities and our customers we serve. The SSJID board has been really good about making sure we try to be respectful and responsive to our staff’s needs, not only in their personal lives, but also in their professional lives. I’m constantly reminded by this board to remember the families first. I do have bosses that are good about helping me remember those priorities.

Rietkerk says he brings a fresh perspective to new projects, initiatives and issues at SSJID.
The Courage to Lead

World-renowned regulator Mary Nichols sounds off on technology, innovation and California’s environmental challenge

By Matt Williams

During her remarkable 45-year career, Mary Nichols has been called a “rock star,” the “Thomas Edison of environmentalism” and a “queen of green.” Those comparisons and compliments are merited. Nichols, longtime chair of the California Air Resources Board, is credited with significantly helping California advance its pioneering cap-and-trade program and other groundbreaking efforts designed to protect clean air, reduce emissions and combat climate change.

Nichols is undoubtedly one of the most influential and well-known regulators not just in California, but the world—a rare feat in her line of work. Despite a measure of fame, it’s clear she remains focused on the difficult and challenging work at hand, both during the months ahead—her latest term as CARB chair concludes at the end of 2020—and for the long run.

In an interview with California Water & Power magazine, Nichols said her biggest agenda item during the next 18 months of her term is electric transportation, followed a close second by developing a long-range plan for bringing California to carbon neutrality by 2045, as required by a gubernatorial executive order issued when SB 100 was signed into law in 2018.

“I tend to always be looking toward the future while plodding along in the present, to try to get to where I think we are headed and where we need to go,” Nichols said. “In the work that I do, which is involving public health and air pollution—and increasingly, energy and climate change—it seems to me the world is heading inexorably in the direction of a much more climate-limited place than it is today.”

Some areas will be impacted more negatively than others, Nichols said, but future generations will face permanently changed landscapes, higher temperatures and more frequent droughts.

Nichols’ sobering assessment of the future is uplifted by what she believes is California’s tremendous capacity for ingenuity, innovation and technological progress. She said she believes the state will continue to attract people from throughout the world who want to make a difference and are eager to try solutions here that could effectively deal with the environmental crisis.

To that end, for California to reach its carbon neutral goal, Nichols said the state will need to do more with its natural and working lands. Forests need to be more resilient and capable of storing and taking carbon out of the atmosphere.

“It’s a big job that has never been done on anything like the scale that’s going to be needed, Nichols said. “Probably the biggest area where we don’t have all the technology that we need is in the area of carbon capture and storage—literally sucking carbon out of the air and figuring out how to turn it into useful products, or at least things that can be kept out of the air for hundreds of years while we figure out how to bring our emissions down to healthy levels,” she said.

“There’s a lot of work going on, a lot of research, development and discussion, but we don’t yet have easily deployable answers.”

Under Nichols’ leadership, CARB continues to address the water-energy nexus, and is working to improve calculations for water and energy savings and the resulting emissions avoided. Nichols credited water agencies for using Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding and other sources to reduce the energy cost of their operations.

Significant strides have been made to eliminate inefficiencies in the way California agencies move and treat water, and there’s still room for more gains, Nichols said.

“I think the water industry has come a long way in recent years in terms of becoming a participant in these discussions and not being inward-focused as much as they seemed to me to be,” Nichols said. “Since I first got involved in this work a number of years ago, I think they have come to recognize that they are players in the bigger picture around climate, and that forces us all to talk to each other and to work together. We have to have a broader view. I think that’s already going on, and I look forward to it continuing.”

In addition to water and energy efficiency, Nichols said there will be so many competing needs in terms of the infrastructure necessary to cope with rising temperatures and seas, and variable weather conditions. The available funding is already going toward priorities such as urban design, environmental problems in disadvantaged communities and transitioning to a cleaner vehicle fleet.

Tough choices will have to be made, but California has demonstrated it’s up to the task. After all, California succeeded in slashing emissions ahead of its own expectations and ahead of other parts of the world because of two factors, Nichols said: the good fortune of living where there is a lot of wind, solar and geothermal resources; and, more importantly, because of the will of Californians and their representatives in state government.

“Sometimes it takes some courage for elected officials to do things that can tread on the toes of regulated industries, and they’ve been willing to do that and to face the fact that energy here might cost more than it does in other places on a per kilowatt basis or on a per gallon of gasoline,” Nichols said. “Yet we have found ways as a state to prosper and make the investments that we needed to allow for people who live here to enjoy a very high standard of living.”

Career at a Glance

1975 — Initially appointed to the California Air Resources Board by Edmund G. Brown Jr. and four years later was elevated to chair
Other positions: senior staff attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council; assistant administrator for EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation during the Bill Clinton administration; and headed the Institute of Environment and Sustainability at UCLA.

Mary, second from right, says carbon capture technology and storage are among the big areas needed to address and combat climate change.

Photo by California Air Resources Board

Mary Nichols is considered one the most influential regulators not only in California, but the world. Under her leadership, the California Air Resources Board continues to address the water-energy nexus.

Photo by Eric Debonder
CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES WATER-ENERGY NEXUS CLIMATE REGISTRY

The Climate Registry and the California Environmental Protection Agency in May opened a voluntary registry for greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the water-energy nexus. Organizations with operations in California are eligible to participate at no cost.

“The Water-Energy Nexus Registry may become an important tool for water agencies, cities, agriculture, colleges and other large water users,” said former State Sen. Fran Pavley, environmental policy director for the USC Schwarzenegger Institute. “My hope is this will become one more solution to meeting our 2030 climate pollution reduction targets.”

NEWSOM DOWNSIZES DELTA TUNNELS PROJECT

This spring, Gov. Gavin Newsom directed the California Department of Water Resources to stop work on a twin tunnels plan that would deliver water from the Delta to Southern California. Instead, state officials will pursue an application and environmental review for a single tunnel. The change could save billions of dollars in construction costs, but likely will delay the project for years.

PG&E TRANSMISSION LINE CAUSED CAMP FIRE, STATE FINDS

After a thorough investigation, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection determined in May that a PG&E transmission line was the cause of the Camp Fire, which destroyed the town of Paradise and killed 85 people in November 2018. Bill Johnson, the new CEO of PG&E, said he expected this outcome when he took the position. PG&E has revamped its board of directors. State policymakers continue to mull significant changes for the investor-owned utility.

BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION LEADS TO CUSTOMER SAVINGS

Building new all-electric residential homes—and retrofitting gas-fueled homes to make them entirely electric—would save California households hundreds of dollars a year, on average, in energy costs and lower greenhouse gas emissions by 30% or more, according to a new study commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, SMUD and

Southern California Edison. “Building electrification is a key component of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing savings for our customers, which is a win-win for everyone,” said CMUA President and SMUD CEO and General Manager Arlen Orchard. “This study will help us meet our climate goals, maximize our reductions and improve air quality across our region.” The report is available online at www.ethree.com.

$130 MILLION

How much California will provide annually for Safe Drinking Water Fund and Program, under a budget compromise agreed to in June. The agreement avoids implementation of a water tax.

19

The number of additional firefighters the City of Redding and Redding Electric Utility plan to hire, at a cost of about $8 million, as part of the city’s broader efforts to mitigate wildfires and reduce risks for the publicly owned utility and its community. In 2018, the 229,000-acre Carr Fire destroyed more than 1,600 homes and structures, killed eight people and made its way into Redding.
Alameda Municipal Power earned a credit rating upgrade from Standard and Poor’s Global Ratings based on the utility’s strong financial performance and strong liquidity.

Azusa Light & Water Department, City of Moreno Valley and Lodi Electric Utility recently received a American Public Power Association certificate of excellence for reliable performance, as shown by comparing their outage records against nationwide data gathered by the Energy Information Administration.

City of Colton Electric Utility is receiving its first all-electric zero emission utility truck from Phoenix Motorcars, helping to achieve the city's greenhouse gas reduction target while saving on fuel and maintenance costs.

Eastern Municipal Water District recently celebrated the groundbreaking of its Perris II Reverse Osmosis Treatment Facility, the third desalination facility at its complex in the city of Menifee. The facility will have a capacity of 5.4 million gallons per day. Construction is expected to be completed in 2021.

Glendale Water & Power launched an online shopping marketplace for energy- and water-efficient products at discounted prices. Customers can browse through and buy a variety of lighting fixtures, smart thermostats, water fixtures and other devices that help save money and use water and energy wisely.

Roseville Electric Utility completed a community solar pilot project with construction of a 3,000-panel site at Roseville Energy Park. The voluntary program will provide locally generated, renewable energy at competitive rates for more than 200 homes.

Merced Irrigation District received a certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting through the Government Finance Officers Association, the fourth consecutive year the district took the honor.

Mesa Water District is celebrating the sixth anniversary of its Mesa Water Reliability Facility, which enables the water agency to serve its customers with 100% locally sourced groundwater supplies. The facility annually pumps, treats and delivers about 1.4 billion gallons of quality drinking water.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California approved a groundwater banking agreement that will capture surplus water locally along the State Water Project. The program includes construction of recharge basins to store water and groundwater wells to recover the water, enabling storage of 280,000 acre-feet of water in the basin.

Northern California Power Agency and Southern California Public Power Authority joined nine electric utilities in the West to sponsor the West Coast Clean Transit Corridor Initiative, a study to determine how best to equip Interstate 5 with sufficient charging to support electric long-haul trucks. Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, SMUD and San Diego Gas & Electric are among the backers.

City of Palo Alto Utilities in April hosted the sixth annual Earth Day and Great Race for Saving Water, which drew hundreds of runners and celebrated the local community's natural resources.

Pasadena Water and Power and Tesla are partnering to build what’s believed to be the largest electric vehicle-charging network in the Western U.S. The company will install 24 fast-charging plugs and lay conduit for an additional 20 fast-chargers for other EVs on the roof level of a city-owned parking garage near the city’s convention center.

City of Sacramento adopted a new ordinance on shared electric scooters and bikes that limits the number of the transportation vehicles on city streets and stipulates 20% of the fleet must be deployed in a disadvantaged community.

San Diego County Water Agency announced that regional water quality regulators have approved a permit for the installation of new, technologically advanced and environmentally sensitive seawater intake and discharge facilities at the Claude “Bud” Lewis Carlsbad Desalination Plant, which provides about 10% of the region’s water supply.

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission was awarded Environmental Finance's U.S. Municipal Green Bond of the Year recognition. SFPUC is among the largest issuers of municipal green bonds ($1.4 billion), which help finance infrastructure that supports climate resiliency and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Santa Clara Valley Water District offers subsidized courses for professionals to become certified graywater installers, the first offering of its kind in the Bay area. It’s another way Valley Water is encouraging sustainable water management in the local community.

SMUD, with the Balancing Authority of Northern California, began full participation in April in the Western Energy Imbalance Market, a real-time wholesale power market. The Western EIM uses state-of-the-art technology to find and deliver low-cost energy to meet real-time energy demand across eight Western states. Turlock Irrigation District will participate in the EIM starting in 2021.
Three California publicly owned utilities bring home national awards

By Matt Williams

Three California publicly owned utilities were recognized with prestigious national awards at the 2019 American Public Power Association conference in Austin, Texas, on June 11.

SMUD received the E.F. Scattergood System Achievement Award, which honors sustained achievement and customer service that enhance the prestige of public power systems.

In the recognition, APPA noted SMUD is the top-rated California utility for customer satisfaction in the JD Power survey and recently helped build more than 100 new all-electric homes in Sacramento. SMUD also has created an online platform where customers can shop for energy-efficiency products, and has partnered with Uber on an electric vehicle program. SMUD is one of the first utilities to use a LiDAR system to keep tabs on 4,000 miles of distribution power lines. SMUD took home the E.F. Scattergood Award in 1992 and 1960.

Anaheim Public Utilities was honored with APPAs Community Service Award. In less than three months, Anaheim Public Utilities and the City of Anaheim partnered with the Salvation Army on emergency construction of a temporary, 224-bed low-barrier homeless shelter.

City of Palo Alto Utilities was recognized with an Energy Innovator Award for its Home Efficiency Genie program. Residential customers can receive free energy-efficiency advice by phone and a subsidized comprehensive home assessment of water and energy efficiency. The program helps households find starting points for energy and water savings.

Also, Alcides Hernandez, SMUD supervisor of pricing, planning and performance and risk, was recognized for being one of 11 individuals across the nation who completed American Public Power Academy’s Public Power Manager Certificate Program.

A total of 15 individuals and nine utilities nationwide won APPA awards. CWP
Irvine Rink Ices Water Savings

Skaters at the Great Park Ice & FivePoint Arena sports complex in Irvine won’t be wasting water or frozen water. Irvine Ranch Water District recently teamed up with the facility, the National Hockey League and Anaheim Ducks to provide recycled water—about 4.3 million gallons a year—to make the ice for the rinks, including the water sprayed from the back of Zambonis during resurfacing. Drought-tolerant landscaping, irrigated with recycled water, enhances the drinking water savings.

2016 World Junior Figure Skating champion Marin Honda of Japan takes Great Park Ice surface for a spin during warmups for the recent grand opening. Photos courtesy of Irvine Ranch Water District.