Award Categories —
Large & Small Agency

Excellence in Innovation & Resiliency
This award recognizes efforts in the innovative application of technology or the development of new technology to the wastewater field (collection, treatment, wastewater and biosolids recycling, and renewable energy production). Technologies that are highly innovative and increase resilience, and/or which have broad application to the industry will be favorably considered.

Excellence in Public Outreach/Education
This award recognizes the development and implementation of programs that impact or educate a segment of the local community on issues important to the industry. Recognition includes ongoing programs, including education in schools, general public awareness or select target audiences. Measurable results will be favorably considered. Unique programs, and/or ones which can be readily replicated by other agencies, will also be favorably considered.

Organizational Excellence
This award recognizes excellence in managing the agency’s division, unit, or process. Submittals may focus on leadership/management practices, change management, strategies that promote organizational sustainability, organizational development, effective financial management, productivity, cost reductions, asset management, staffing resource utilization, labor relations, employee mentoring and development programs, or related subjects. Submittals that demonstrate measurable results and potential application to the industry will be favorably considered.

Outstanding Capital Project
This award recognizes exemplary wastewater capital projects. Submittals should highlight and will be judged on their unique or innovative design and construction applications, engineering applications, technical advancements, and/or difficult challenges of the project.

Special Thanks to Our Review Committee Members

Outstanding Capital Project and Innovation and Resiliency
City of Davis
Vallecitos Water District
Carollo Engineers

Outstanding Capital Project and Innovation and Resiliency
Josie Tellers
Alicia Yerman
Jeff Weishaar, P.E.

Excellence in Public Outreach/Education
Inland Empire Utilities Agency
Dublin San Ramon Services District
Orange County Sanitation District

Stephanie Chancellor
Lea Blevins
Daisy Covarrubias
2021 Nominees At-A-Glance

**Outstanding Capital Project**
- Ironhouse Sanitary District, Water Recycling Facility Capital Project
- Oro Loma Sanitary District, Castro Valley Sanitary District and Kennedy-Jenks Consultants, Nutrient Optimization Project
- Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin, Headworks Building Biological Odor Control System
- Rosamond Community Services District, Rosamond Water Reclamation Project

**Excellence in Innovation & Resiliency**
- City of Sacramento Department of Utilities, SSO (Sewer System Overflow) Simulation Manhole
- Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority, Pure Water Project Las Virgenes – Triunfo Demonstration Facility
- City of San José - Environmental Services Department, Cogeneration Facility

**Organizational Excellence**
- Orange County Sanitation District, Asset Management Program

**Excellence in Public Outreach/Education**
- Leucadia Wastewater District and Rising Tide Partners, Leucadia Wastewater District Virtual Tour
- Rosamond Community Services District, Rosamond Water Reclamation Plant Construction Community Outreach
- City of Roseville, Environmental Utilities, Virtual Wastewater Utility Tour
Ironhouse Sanitary District
Water Recycling Facility Capital Project

In 2019 Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) initiated a robust Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to identify the short and long-term capital needs of aging sewer infrastructure and multiple projects throughout the District’s Water Recycling Facility (WRF) to ensure safety, reliability, and efficient operations. A large part of the CIP included combining 29 WRF planned projects with a permanent liquid aluminum sulfate storage and feed system. The WRF projects were initially included in a reliability study which highlighted the need for the projects to be completed between 2019 and 2025. Over the past fiscal year, many of the planned projects were completed ahead of the Engineer’s estimated timeframe, challenges were met, and projects were added despite the disruption of a global pandemic.

Oro Loma Sanitary District, Castro Valley Sanitary District and Kennedy-Jenks Consultants
LARGE AGENCY AWARD
Nutrient Optimization Project – Leading with Innovation to Remove Nutrients During Treatment to Further Protect the San Francisco Bay

The Oro Loma/Castro Valley Sanitary Districts upgraded their jointly owned treatment plant to treat nutrients. The project is one of the first to provide both nitrification and denitrification processes within the San Francisco Bay Area. By removing nutrients during treatment, Oro Loma and Castro Valley are lowering the potential for harmful impacts to the Bay from high nutrient loading. Although no harmful impacts are observed now, lowering nutrients helps ensure that harmful impacts do not occur.

The project started with the unique question: “What can we make our existing plant do to treat nutrients and be a proactive part of a healthy San Francisco Bay?” With the cooperation of our local Regional Board, Oro Loma and Castro Valley are leveraging what they can do today, so they can defer larger expenses for at least 20 years.
Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin
SMALL AGENCY AWARD

**Headworks Building Biological Odor Control System**

Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM) operates a 3.6 million gallons per day (MGD) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Mill Valley, CA. SASM had a 38-yr Headworks Building located directly across the street from Mill Valley Middle School, which resulted in numerous odor complaints from school officials, parents, and local residents. In 2017, a $17.5M contract was awarded to execute SASM’s Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation Phase I Project, which included the construction of a $2.2M Headworks Building Bio-Trickling Odor Scrubber Control System. Instead of a traditional carbon filter odor system, this unique and innovative dual-vessel, two-story odor control process, involves biologically active, nutrient-rich scrubbing solutions over media while odorous air is forced upward through the media bed. Despite the numerous construction challenges, including the removal of two 12,000-gallon USTs prior to the pouring of a deep concrete pad over soft bay-mud conditions, this project was successfully completed on time and within budget.

Rosamond Community Services District

**Rosamond Water Reclamation Project**

Faced with the need to retire their existing wastewater treatment plant, the Rosamond Community Services District (RCSD) saw an opportunity to rethink water treatment and contribute both to healing their aquifer and providing greater water independence. The new Rosamond Water Reclamation Plant project saw the retirement of 50-year-old evaporation ponds, refurbishment of the existing aeration basin and clarifier, as well as the construction of six new sludge ponds, three percolation ponds, an emergency overflow basin, and a significantly higher capacity aeration basin and clarifier. This greater capacity will serve the growing community for decades and has earned RCSD 1,200 acre-feet of groundwater pumping credits. These credits make up over 46% of the groundwater pumping deficit created by the recent adjudication. Despite the onset of the pandemic just a few months after breaking ground, the project remained on budget and on time, except for additions requested by RCSD.
Excellence in Innovation & Resiliency

City of Sacramento
Department of Utilities

SSO (Sewer System Overflow) Simulation Manhole

The City of Sacramento Department of Utilities built a manhole in their parking area behind the wastewater building that will be used to simulate sewer overflows. The purpose was to be able to simulate a spill that they would respond to and practice the steps that are to be followed when at the site of a spill. The materials that were used were left over from previous projects and they chose a location that was easily accessible and would not interfere with work at the corps yard. The area that was chosen has a fire hydrant for water and a separated storm drain nearby which gave them the ability to practice containment and testing if a spill entered a storm drain. The water is supplied into the manhole by a pipe installed into the manhole. They control the flow at the hydrant with a meter to a hose, connected to the piping in the manhole. This allows the City to determine the amount of water that is being introduced into the spill area. The objective is to stop the spill and gather enough information to estimate a spill correctly. There is a classroom portion that goes along with the manhole simulator to help with the calculation of spills.

Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority

SMALL AGENCY AWARD

Pure Water Project Las Virgenes – Triunfo Demonstration Facility

The Pure Water Project Las Virgenes – Triunfo Demonstration Facility (PWDF) is the indirect potable reuse project of the Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority (JPA), which treats recycled water up to drinking water standards through the advanced treatment process. This pilot project has made use of the former Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) headquarters building by repurposing it to create the demo facility – showcasing the JPA’s commitment to sustainability. It will also pave the way for the full-scale Pure Water Project Las Virgenes – Triunfo, which is expected to be among the first potable reuse projects using reservoir water augmentation in California and will source up to 15% of our water supply locally.
Orange County Sanitation District (OC San)

Asset Management Program

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) continues to make a concerted effort to establish a robust understanding of the condition and performance of all critical and major assets. Asset management is an essential part of OC San, and our overall mission to deliver safe, economical, and reliable wastewater treatment services. Every part of our organization is involved in some aspect of asset management ensuring that assets are planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to reliably deliver the required level of service to our customers cost effectively. Through a very collaborative effort, each workgroup at OC San plays an important role in ensuring that the individual asset management initiatives are properly executed.

City of San José

Environmental Services Department – Capital Improvement Program Division

LARGE AGENCY AWARD

Cogeneration Facility

The new Cogeneration Facility at the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (RWF) powers the wastewater facility with a blend of biogas produced during the treatment process and natural gas. This newly commissioned project replaces aging equipment and marks a major milestone in a $2.1 billion, 30-year Capital Improvement Program to upgrade the RWF. It includes four engine-generators with the capacity to produce up to 14 megawatts, which covers the RWF’s average baseload energy needs. Half the energy used at the RWF is from renewable sources (biogas) and all heat produced by the engines is used to heat the plant’s digesters and buildings.
The Leucadia Wastewater District (LWD) created a virtual tour to continue educating their customers, even during the pandemic. Over ten LWD staff members narrated and were featured in the video, while informing the public of LWD’s services. In the virtual tour, the team explains how pump stations operate, how Vactor trucks and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras are utilized, and the importance of maintaining easements. The video’s introduction begins at the LWD’s headquarters building and concludes with a tour of the Gafner Water Reclamation Plant. The tour was also filmed at pump stations and easement locations to showcase the numerous operations performed by the team and to highlight the infrastructure maintained right under the community’s streets.
Rosamond Community Services District

Rosamond Water Reclamation Plant Construction Community Outreach

Investment of public funds should be done in an accountable and transparent manner. Recognizing this, Rosamond Community Services District (RCSD) began a comprehensive outreach plan when they broke ground on the $15 million Rosamond Water Reclamation Plant in November 2019. The center of this plan was monthly photos and videos captured by drone. Each month a 360-degree interactive panorama was posted to the RCSD website that allowed the public to explore the construction site from the safety of their computer or mobile device. These panoramas were accompanied by the cost to date of the project. Recap videos that showed the progress of construction were also periodically produced and distributed, culminating in a recently released final video. Additionally, notes from updates presented at board meetings were distributed to local media resulting in several articles. Collectively, this effort kept RCSD’s ratepayers informed as to where their money was going and how it would benefit them.

City of Roseville, Environmental Utilities

LARGE AGENCY AWARD
Virtual Wastewater Utility Tour

In 2016, the Roseville Utility Exploration Center (UEC) and Environmental Utilities launched an in-person utility tour at our regional wastewater treatment plant. The two-hour tour was led by interpreters describing the wastewater treatment process. It created lightbulb moments and offered an emotional response to the importance of cleaning water and how customers could reduce system impacts. We have toured hundreds of people since its inception—well over 300 in that short time period. Then COVID happened. UEC and utility staff developed a virtual tour to replace the in-person experience. And, rather than read words on a screen that described the treatment process (talk about a real snoozer), we wanted to go an extra step and do our best to replicate the in-person experience using motion animation, compelling visuals, and voice-over.
Interested in submitting your project? 
Mark your calendar! We will begin accepting applications for the 2022 Awards of Excellence in March.