

NEWS



From the Countywide Vision Project
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2012

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Vision group unveils historic first-ever countywide water inventory

ONTARIO – More than enough water will exist to meet the needs of San Bernardino County residents and businesses through 2035 only if water users step-up conservation efforts and the public and local government leaders are willing to invest in projects that will store and protect additional water supplies.

That was the conclusion of the first-ever complete inventory of the county's water resources unveiled today at the Sixth Annual San Bernardino County Water Conference in Ontario. The inventory is a product of the Countywide Vision's efforts to bring together the leaders of all county water agencies and other experts to work cooperatively on solutions to a potential imbalance between population growth and water supply.

Board of Supervisors Chair Josie Gonzales and Vice-Chairman Brad Mitzelfelt, who co-hosted the conference, both stressed the importance of conservation and support for new infrastructure in their remarks to attendees. Economic prosperity as well as life itself is impossible without an adequate water supply.

The Countywide Vision Statement, adopted in June 2011, calls on community leaders to work collaboratively to reach shared goals, and water agencies throughout the county had to work together and share information to create the inventory. This created a process that suggests the revolutionary prospect of agencies eventually sharing resources and supplies to meet the needs of county water users.

"This is the year of 'we,'" said Kirby Brill, general manager of the Mojave Water Agency and a member of the Vision Water Element Group. "There will be much more of an emphasis on working together in the context of the Countywide Vision. ... Silos are being destroyed."

The inventory shows that the combined current and projected supplies of San Bernardino County water agencies will meet the demand of the county's growing population in normal years and drought years through 2030, but just barely so. Demand will exceed supplies by 2035. However, demand can be met and exceeded through the development and improvement of water facilities and increased conservation efforts (see attached graph).

"We will have enough only if all things come together – investment and behavior modification," said Celeste Cantu', general manger of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority and another member of the Vision Water Element Group. The complete presentation can be viewed on the Vision website at www.sbcounty.gov/vision under "Brochures, Maps & Reports."

The inventory is the first of many major deliverables the Vision process will produce as county residents and business, nonprofit, and government leaders work together to create the "complete county" outlined in the Vision statement, which also can be viewed at www.sbcounty.gov/vision.

The Vision Water Element Group is made up of leaders from county water agencies, business representatives and other stakeholders. It has been meeting regularly since January to discuss creation of the inventory and challenges faced by the county community as it strives to meet the water needs of an ever-growing region.

The Countywide Vision was developed last year in an effort to identify a common goal for all county communities and residents. The Vision was created from information received during 18 community meetings, an online survey, more than two dozen expert roundtables, and data from the county and all 24 cities.

Inventory: Results

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