

# NEWS



From the Countywide Vision Project  
[www.sbcounty.gov/vision](http://www.sbcounty.gov/vision)

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## Countywide Vision water inventory wins Good Government award

POMONA – Mark Twain is credited with saying whiskey is for drinking, and water is for fighting. For more than a century, California water purveyors have been notorious for warring over and hoarding their supplies, oftentimes to the detriment of the public.

San Bernardino County's Vision effort bucked that image in a big way in August when it unveiled the first-ever Countywide Water Inventory. The Water Inventory was honored in a big way Thursday night when it earned the 2012 Good Government Award from the Building Industry Association Baldy View Chapter.

The Countywide Vision's Water Element Group, which includes leaders from many of the county's water agencies, conducted a complete inventory of the county's water resources and determined that, acting separately, the county would not have enough water through 2035. But when the agencies' resources are combined, more than enough water will exist to meet the needs of San Bernardino County residents and businesses through 2035. But that is 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.

County leaders have stressed the importance of conservation and support for new infrastructure as a key element for economic prosperity.

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.

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“This is the year of ‘we,’” Kirby Brill, general manager of the Mojave Water Agency and a member of the Vision Water Element Group, has said. “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](http://www.sbcounty.gov/vision).

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](http://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.