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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MWA Wins Awards for Its Small Water Systems Assistance Program

Apple Valley, CA—Giving disadvantaged communities a helping hand is the goal of the award-winning Mojave Water Agency Small Water Systems Assistance Program. The local program received the Clair A. Hill Award of Excellence May 5 at the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) spring conference in Monterey.

This is the second award for the MWA program. It also received the award of “Excellence in Support of Small Disadvantaged Communities” from the California Rural Water Association (CRWA) on April 26.

The program provides resources for disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged small water systems that lack staff, expertise, and funding to meet water quality standards, and ensure water reliability. Many of the small water systems have pipelines, pumps, and storage reservoirs that are 30 to 50 years old resulting in a variety of water quality issues.

Beverly Lowry, MWA Board President, was ecstatic upon hearing the news. She said the “program is near and dear to my heart. I have always been passionate about what MWA can do to help people. I believe government can do more and now we are---we are showing heart for the people.”

While the program is funded by the Mojave Water Agency and state grants, it represents a growing partnership with CRWA that is consistent with MWA’s goals to partner with other community organizations to ensure high quality, sustainable supplies for the region.

“This dynamic partnership between MWA and Cal Rural Water is helping our region optimize our collective water assets by strengthening our small water systems, said Kirby Brill, MWA General Manager.

The need to assist disadvantaged communities was identified as a critical need by the community during the Integrated Regional Water Management plan.

The program was led by MWA’s Matt Howard, Water Resources Manager. The team includes Dustin Hardwick and Richard Selby both with CRWA; Lance Eckhart, MWA Director of Basin Management and Resource Planning; as well as members of the regional Technical Advisory Committee, with exceptional work of the volunteers of Small Water Systems/Disadvantaged Community sub-committee that helped guide the project.

This program has assisted small water systems with site visits addressing financial and managerial issues, as well as technical issues. Assistance includes performing leak detection audits, rate studies, conservation plans, grant assistance, and more.

Providing free education is also a key program component. To date, eight workshops have been held averaging 20 to 50 participants on a variety of subjects including water quality, grant application processes, maintenance and operations, and more.

Among the programs’ key achievements to date is the award of a \$468,000 State Water Resources Control Board grant to Gordon Acres Mutual Water Company in Lucerne Valley that serves 44 connections. The grant will fund planning for a small water system to address insufficient delivery, water outages, and water quality issues.

In addition to recognition by ACWA, MWA as the Clair A. Hill Award winner will present a \$5,000 scholarship at next year’s spring conference that will be awarded to a local student pursuing a career in water.

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*The MWA service area spans 4,900 square miles and includes 40 small systems of which 65 percent meet the criteria of disadvantaged communities. More than half of the small systems qualify as disadvantaged communities with a median household income (MHI) of \$49,191, and more than a quarter of the total small water systems are considered severally disadvantaged with a median household income of less than \$36,893.*