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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## High Desert Community Celebrates Water Sustainability Project and San Bernardino County Museum Center *Regional Recharge and Recovery Project Offers New Source of Drinking Water*

Victor Valley, CA—More than 200 community members and elected officials celebrated the dedication of the San Bernardino County High Desert Interpretive Center, the Mojave Water Agency's (MWA) Regional Recharge and Recovery Project, and the Agency's new Central Operations Center today in Apple Valley.

The water recharge project, called R<sup>3</sup>, the operations center, and the new outdoor museum venue share property located on Deep Creek Road near the Mojave River. The R<sup>3</sup> Project stores water from the State Water Project (SWP) in the local aquifer for distribution to local communities as a new supply of drinking water.

A theme of "Collaboration Yields Success" was echoed by speakers from MWA, U.S. Congressman Paul Cook (R-8), and First District Supervisor Robert Lovingood, and several project partners.

MWA Board President Beverly Lowry characterized the projects as a regional success story, and credited the MWA staff and Board of Directors with the vision to plan for drought conditions. "Some areas of the state are suffering terribly because of the drought, but thankfully we planned for it. Projects like R<sup>3</sup> help us drought proof our region," Lowry said.

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Congressman Cook echoed the need for continued collaboration, and focused his comments on the California federal delegation to work together to develop solutions for the state's water challenges. He said R<sup>3</sup> was an example of success when groups put aside their differences.

The R<sup>3</sup> Project encompasses several communities and required coordination among local, state, and federal agencies. It requires delivery of SWP water from the California Aqueduct in Hesperia to recharge sites along the Mojave River in Hesperia and South Apple Valley. This requires the use of MWA-owned production wells along the Mojave River, located immediately downstream of the recharge area, to recover and deliver the stored water directly to retail water agencies.

This ambitious \$54 million project is truly a collaborative effort with more than 65 percent of the project funded from federal and state grants. Approximately \$24.5 million was awarded through the Proposition 50 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan grant program, \$11 million was received from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and MWA provided some \$18.7 million to complete the project.

The first participant, the City of Victorville, received its first delivery of high quality water on March 28, 2013, and has received approximately 5,000 acre-feet of water to date. This has allowed the city to virtually eliminate the use of its treatment plants. Victorville Councilwoman Angela Valles said the project reduces city costs to treat water and allows the groundwater basin to achieve balance.

A major component of the project is the construction of the San Bernardino County Museum's High Desert Interpretive Center (HDIC). First District Supervisor Lovingood addressed the nexus between the Mojave River's rich history and economic development.

"An appreciation and greater understanding of our natural resources ensures sustainability for our region," Lovingood said. "The High Desert Interpretive Center will educate future leaders on the Mojave River and its significant role in the Victor Valley's development and future success."

The County of San Bernardino deeded 44.9 acres of the nearly 80-acre site to MWA in exchange for the construction of the HDIC. The facility includes a 1,500 foot-long walking trail and educational kiosks featuring information on water resources and the cultural history of the Mojave River, as well as an adjacent amphitheater for outdoor picnics or lectures. The partnership between the County and MWA also includes a joint use agreement allowing the Museum to use the nearby conference and restroom facilities in the new Central Operations Center.

Also located on the property is the new MWA Central Operations Center. The 5,116 square-foot, single story concrete block building features five offices, a conference room, lobby/reception area, men's & women's locker rooms, an employee break room, and a centralized Supervisory Control, and Data Acquisition system (SCADA), control room. The control room enables the operations staff to

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manage the water system's pumps, valves, reservoirs, and wells by computers using operator-determined set points. This system monitors and controls the water system based on these set points and will send alarms when the water system is operating outside the set parameters. It is programmed to control and monitor the water system through various complex operational strategies.

Adjacent to the operations center is the new 3,600 square-foot warehouse building. It consists of three vehicle/equipment storage bays and two controlled access tools and parts storage rooms. The warehouse building has one of the equipment storage bays constructed with doors on both sides of the building allowing equipment/vehicles better access as they can be driven through the bay.

Following a traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony, community members toured the R3 recharge site, the HDIC, and the Central Operations Center.

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