



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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El Toro Water District Takes Pride in Dedicated and Distinguished Employee

The Water District recently honored Ronald Hightower for his 30-year career as Operations Foreman.

Lake Forest, CA – An employee of 30 years is hard to come by these days. El Toro Water District is pleased to recognize Operations Foreman, Ronald Hightower, and his 30-years of dedication and service to the community.

As Operations Foreman, Hightower is responsible for overseeing and inspecting all repairs to the District's infrastructure, in order to reliably meet the needs of the District's 51,000 customers. Hightower was the first employee at ETWD to receive his California Department of Public Health (CDPH) D-5 Water Distribution Certificate in January of 2003 (D-5 is the highest level). Only 4 employees at ETWD hold this certificate. He also holds a CDPH T-3 Water Treatment Certificate.

Hightower is an integral part of the community events that ETWD attends. He enjoys interacting with the public and has participated in public speaking engagements regarding "Water Emergency Preparedness".

"Ron is considered a core part of El Toro Water District," shares Mike Grandy, Assistant General Manager for the District. "He's been with us since the beginning and has contributed tremendously to ensuring residents and businesses get water efficiently."

Hightower began his career as an employee of the Laguna Hills Water and Sanitation Company before ETWD purchased the assets in 1983. Back then, houses in the region were still being built and his job was to respond to house calls for various repairs. As a labor worker, he performed what he refers to as "duct tape and wire" repairs, responding to maintenance problems as they occurred. Since then, Hightower has been instrumental in developing a

comprehensive maintenance program in which proactive and preventative steps are taken to avert water conveyance malfunctions.

Over the years Hightower has actively participated in mutual aid to other water districts in time of need. He was sent to the site of the North Ridge earthquake to assist with the maintenance and repair of water and sewer lines. He also assisted the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, as well as the City of Laguna Beach during the fires of 1993.

Hightower's commitment to sound operating practices has contributed to the District's honor of being awarded the District of Distinction accreditation. Given by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF), the District of Distinction is one of the most prestigious awards in local government in the State of California. The District was first awarded accreditation in 1997 and was recently re-accredited.

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The mission of the El Toro Water District is to provide its customers a safe, adequate and reliable supply of water and wastewater service in an environmentally and economically responsible way. El Toro Water District supplies water to the city of Laguna Woods and portions of the cities of Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, Mission Viejo and Aliso Viejo.

Photo Caption Information: Photo 1: Ron Hightower (left) talks with water customers at the South County Disaster Preparedness Expo hosted by Supervisor Pat Bates in October.

Photo 2: Ron Hightower