



Checking the Rearview Mirror ***A look back at 2019 – SCV Water’s Second Year***

By Bill Cooper, President, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

As you drive, it’s a good idea to frequently check your surroundings. It helps you make good decisions, anticipate issues, check your blind spots, and make course corrections to keep you on route to your destination.

It’s also helpful to check your mirrors, too.

So, as we begin our third year of operations as Santa Clarita Valley’s integrated regional water agency, it’s a good time to check our rearview mirror, and how far we’ve come in just two years.

Our first year was a time for the rubber to meet the road – a chance to put our new agency to the test. We integrated workplace cultures, organizational structures and processes, while insuring a smooth ride for our customers.

In our second year, we have found our pace. We’ve outlined a roadmap, put gas in the tank and set the navigation for long-term success. Our service is reliable, top tier, and always done with a smile.

Here are some of the highlights of our second year:

- **Five-Year Strategic Plan.** In 2019, the SCV Water Board of Directors approved its first five-year strategic plan (2019-2024), a roadmap that keeps us on course to provide reliable, quality water to our residents and businesses.
- **Biennial Budget.** We adopted the Agency’s first Biennial Budget (FY 2019/20 and 2020/21). Like gas in the tank, a balanced budget insures we reach our destination. A product of innovation and challenging the status quo, we improved upon the long-standing process of annual budgeting. Ultimately this change brought greater collaboration and effectiveness from all departments, while still allowing for course corrections via mid-year updates.
- **Water Quality.** PFAS* took center stage in 2019, as an emerging and rapidly changing critical water issue affecting the nation. Locally, SCV Water has taken immediate steps to address PFAS in our groundwater, including proactive quarterly sampling water all our wells to ensure they are in line with state and federal standards. There are future plans for treatment that will begin in 2020.

** PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a group of man-made chemicals which have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries worldwide for more than 70 years. They are typically known for being oil, grease and water repellants.*

- **Water Supply Reliability.** In California, our water supply is subject to regulations, legislation and even the weather – all of which can be unpredictable. In 2019, the weather was pretty extreme. Winter resulted in above average snowpack and reservoir levels, and summer brought several weeks of sustained 100 plus degree temperatures. Despite the fluctuations, SCV Water was still able to meet all water demands using our diverse water supply portfolio (groundwater, imported, banked, recycled).
- **SCV Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA).** As part of a state mandated effort to sustainably manage our local groundwater supply, the SCV GSA seated a Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Their input will assist the GSA in navigating the management of our local groundwater resources and develop the Groundwater Sustainability Plan.
- **Emergency Preparedness.** The Tick Fire in late October showed us that it's critical to be prepared for an emergency. SCV Water has short- and long-term operational plans in place to manage power outages, natural disasters and more. Like roadside assistance, our crews are on call 24 hours a day. And as a single, regional provider, SCV Water can better manage emergency preparedness across our service area.
- **Customer Care.** The Newhall Customer Care team relocated to our Valencia offices in November. Besides allowing for greater efficiency, this also came with an upgraded online billing platform for Newhall division customers. These changes affected about 9,700 of our 73,000 customers, and we thank them for their patience as we worked to upgrade their experience and provide them with better customer care.

We're so proud that the best-in-class promise of a new regional water agency has come to pass. In our first customer survey as an integrated agency, 80% expressed satisfaction with our service overall, a 20% increase from the previous year. And an overwhelming majority of 94% agreed that SCV Water provides accurate and reliable information.

The water industry is facing new challenges across the state, but with a unified voice and a strong foundation, we are in the driver's seat, never wavering from our priority to provide our customers with cost-effective, clean and reliable water.

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