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South County Regional Wastewater Authority Sweeps Four Top Awards

The South County Regional Wastewater Authority's facility (SCRWA) that serves the cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill has earned the 2007 "Plant of the Year" Award from the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) Monterey Bay Section.

The Plant of the Year award honors the wastewater system that has demonstrated top compliance and reporting, innovation, operational practices, cost-effectiveness, waste reduction, and other evidence of superior plant operation. Also named Plant of the Year, the SCRWA facility is entering the statewide competition in April.

In addition to Plant of the Year, the facility and staff earned three other awards, presented in February's annual meeting.

- o. Safety Program of the Year Award, earned for the sixth time in seven years.
- o. Operator of the Year Award for lead operator Oscar Baltazar.
- o. Laboratory Person of the Year Award for laboratory director Jesus Luna.

These awards validate that the SCRWA facility is one of the top wastewater treatment and reclamation facilities in California. SCRWA's award-winning treatment plant uses an innovated system called "advanced activated sludge process." The facility was built in 1994 for \$39 million. It is designed to provide advancement treatment for up to 8.5 million gallons per day during dry weather flows, and to provide wet weather treatment for up to 11 million gallons per day. The recycled water that comes out of the system is reused around the community to irrigate golf courses, parks, sports complexes, park strips and median islands. The facility is operated by CH2MHILL OMI - Denver-based Company - since 1984 and has a comprehensive safety and quality program in place. The facility benefits the community and doesn't create a stink.

SCRWA team is currently working on a facility expansion project that is anticipated to be completed by 2012 at an estimated cost of \$85 million. The system is what engineers call "membrane bioreactors", or MBR, which is considered state of the art in wastewater science. The new treatment system will be comparable to long-delayed wastewater treatment plant currently under construction in Hollister.

In the picture –

Back row- Dave Pollard; Edward Lujan; Rick Trujillo; Duane Reische; Brandon Burton
Middle- Alfred Lujan; Dan Ames; Ambrose Rodriguez; Juan Zepeda; Kara Taylor
Front- John Hernandez; Jesus Luna; Brenda Miles; Saeid Vaziry; Oscar Baltazar
Not pictured - Mark Gerald and Richard Eglinton

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