

Metropolitan Water District's Silver Medal Supports Its Water Quality Mandate

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LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 24, 2003--Winning the silver medal at the International Water Tasting competition was good but not surprising news to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, where water quality remains the highest and constant priority.

"We're honored and pleased that this award recognizes our ongoing efforts to provide the highest quality water," said Adan Ortega Jr., Metropolitan vice president for external affairs. "We run more than 300,000 tests annually to assure quality, and we have our own panel of judges to monitor the flavor and scent of our product."

Metropolitan's entry in the municipal category was judged second to water from Montpelier, Ohio, and ahead of 44 other entries from the United States and Canada.

In past years Metropolitan's entries have placed first, second, third and fourth in the competition, held annually at Berkeley Springs, W. Va., a historic spa town about 100 miles west of Washington, D.C.

Metropolitan, the region's largest water importer and wholesaler, provides more than half of the water used by 18 million people in its six-county service area. In most cases, Metropolitan's imported water is blended with local well water before reaching consumers' faucets.

"Our winning entry was drawn at our Jensen Filtration Plant in Granada Hills, which receives water from Northern California through the State Water Project," said Jill Wicke, manager of Metropolitan's water system operations.

"At three of our five filtration plants, our State Project water is mixed with water that we've imported from the Colorado River, filtered and disinfected, and then sent through pipelines to our customers," Wicke said.

The contest judges compared the entries for appearance, aroma, flavor, "mouthfeel" and aftertaste, and awarded points for each category. First-place winner Montpelier, Ohio, received 464 points, Metropolitan's entry received 451 points, and Desert Hot Springs, Calif., ranked third with 435 points. The judges comprised journalists, broadcasters and travel writers.

The International Water Tasting and Competition was begun in 1990 and has categories for municipal, bottled, purified, and sparkling waters. Metropolitan's entries, also from the Jensen plant, won the competition's first-place gold medal in 1998, silver medal in 2000, and third place bronze in 1996.

For a report on Metropolitan's water quality, visit the district's Web site at www.mwdh2o.com.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 18 million people in six counties. The District imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage, and other water-management programs.

