

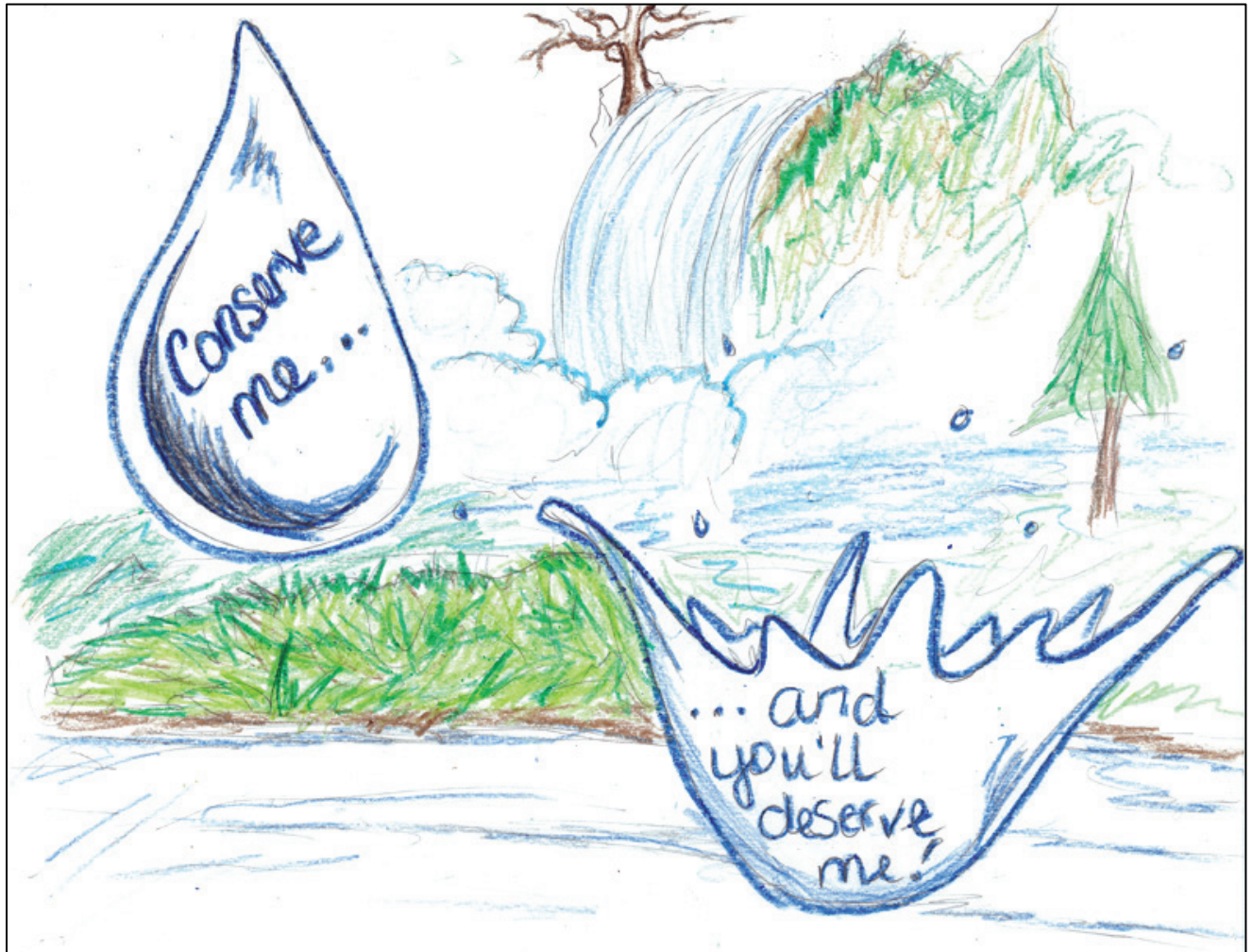


TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Press Clippings

November 13, 2015 – December 9, 2015



*Desiree Villareal (Lincoln Park Elementary School)
2010 Poster Art Contest - Second Place, Grades 4-6*

Reno's 'water year' pretty wet so far - but it's just been a month

[Marcella Corona](#), mcorona@rgj.com 10:30 a.m. PST November 12, 2015



A file photo showing snow covering Pyramid Peak. Reno forecasters expect a second cold front to drop more snow. (Photo: RGJ File)

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Reno saw its wettest "water year" so far since records began in 1893 - but that's just Oct. 1-31.

Still, it leaves forecasters optimistic that it might put a dent in the four-year drought.

Every year, forecasters measure how much water the Reno-Sparks area received from Oct. 1 the year before through Sept. 30, National Weather Service Meteorologist Alex Hoon said.

"We're only one month into the water year," Hoon said.

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

[UPDATE: NV Energy prepares for next snow wave](#)

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

Hit by heavy snow? What to do with fallen tree branches

This water year (again, just a month so far) is tied with this time in the second-wettest water year, putting the area well ahead of average, he said.

“It could put a dent in the drought if it continues,” Hoon said.

“Will these couple of storms end the drought? No, but it’s doing some good stuff. We’re on track for improvement, but it needs to continue.”

Forecaster expect a warming trend for the remainder of the week with highs reaching into the low 50s before the next cold front hits on the weekend. The cold front is expected to hit the Sierra on Saturday, blowing wind and dropping snow on the mountains.

“There’s a chance that we can see more snow in Reno, but it’s mainly in the mountains,” Hoon said. “Lake Tahoe could see several inches of snow to up to a foot, especially along the crest like at Donner Pass.”

Although forecasters aren’t as confident that the valleys may see snow, it’s still possible on Sunday.

“With the water year starting out on a good note, hopefully it continues to be wet and snowy,” Hoon said. “But not too wet, we don’t want flooding.”

Marcella Corona covers breaking news for the Reno Gazette-Journal. Contact her at 775-788-6340, online at mcorona@rgj.com or follow her on Twitter at [@Marcella Anahi](#) or on Facebook at [Facebook.com/Marcella.Anahi](https://www.facebook.com/Marcella.Anahi)

Reno-area forecast:

Thursday: Sunny; high 48, low 02

Friday: Sunny; high 51, low 28

Saturday: Mostly sunny; high 55, low 36

Tahoe-area forecast:

Thursday: Mostly clear, sunny; high 21, low 49

Friday: Sunny; high 49, low 25

Saturday: Rain mixed with snow, 80 percent chance for precipitation; high 50, low 31

Our view: Kudos to Reno 5th graders for water efforts

The Opinion of the RGJ Editorial Board 9:07 p.m. PST November 14, 2015



Reno fifth-graders wrote letters to the editor to encourage water savings.(Photo: Getty Images/Fuse)

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As the Reno area grows, water conservation becomes more and more important, regardless of how wet this fall and winter turn out to be.

One fifth-grade class deserves congratulations for learning about the water cycle in our drought-ravaged desert environment and researching ways to cut back on water usage.

At the beginning of the school year, students in Gail Corthell's class at Westergard Elementary collected data on their home water usage. They will soon run the numbers again and compare in a graph how much their families' usage has changed.

"It's more interesting to do it that way than teach them out of the book," Corthell told Mark Robison of the RGJ Editorial Board.

The students wrote letters to the editor to explain why they think the community needs to save water. All spelling and punctuation have been maintained.

- **Zach Wells:** As you know, we're in a drought. So I have some tips to help us save water. There are a number of ways to conserve water, and they all start with you. First tip; when washing dishes fill a basin instead of letting water continuously run. You'll save many gallons of water per year.

- **Nia Young:** "Water is the driving force of all nature," said Leonardo da Vinci. ... Don't use running water to thaw food. For food efficiency and food safety, defrost food in the refrigerator. "Collect the water you use while rinsing fruit and vegetables, in a pan," P.D.F. Use it to water plants. If you use a dishwasher, only do full loads and avoid extra cycles.

- **Megan Torres:** First, I will tell you tips on how to save water. This is important because water is a need in life. ... Outdoor saving tips: use a pool cover to prevent evaporation. ... Don't use sprinklers when there's rain expected. The rain will water your lawn for you.

- **Taylor T:** Play in the sprinklers when you want to play in the water. It double uses water. Not only are you having fun but you're also watering your lawn. Water your lawn in the late afternoon or early morning so there is not a lot of wind so it conserves water.

- **Sydney Shoemaker:** Water conservation is important for Reno residents because we consume a lot of water in one year, for instance, a person needs approximately 7,300 liters of water per year and now that Washoe County has so little water, it makes it difficult to drink the recommended 20 liters a person needs each day.

- **Ava Schwachter:** Conserving water does not have to be a chore that you have to do it can be as simple as changing the way you do laundry load. Another easy trick is if you had people at your house that didn't finish their glass of water. Instead of dumping the water down the drain use it to water your plants.

- **Alex M Ramos:** Right now we are in a really bad drought and let me say thanks for the rain but sadly our drought is still pretty bad. I wanted to say some things to help conserve water. ... First, you could start turning off the water in between brushing your teeth instead of leaving the water running.

- **Roman J Perini:** When you wash your car use a hose nozzle because all the water builds up in the hose and doesn't go into the sewer. Furthermore, if you wash your pet on your lawn you can water your lawn at the same time. Lastly, if your kids want to shower then lather up and run through the sprinklers when they're on.

- **Tyler Ochiltree:** What I know about the water cycle is the water in the ocean evaporates into the air. Then the evaporation (steam) fills up the clouds, and it morphs into precipitation and rains. Then it morphs back into water. In conclusion: "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water." W.H. Auden.

• **Quincy Kendrick:** Did you know that a person can only live five to seven days without water? Furthermore, each person should drink about eighty ounces of water each day. ... I hope we can all save water by doing all these things to help our environment and stop our drought.

• **Jake Johnson:** It is my belief that our local water cycle is very fragile and needs to be protected. Protection and conservation of the tributaries that feed our water source is imperative living in Northern Nevada. Furthermore if we have better ways to conserve water as an entire community we will have plenty of water for everyone.

• **Alessandra Coons:** I'm writing you today to tell you why water conservation is very important for Reno residents. Did you know: The human race could not survive without water. It also is reinforced by the fact that humans use over 16,000 gallons of water during their lifetimes. Although water is important to our lives, we waste and destroy this precious resource every day.

• **Tristan Christensen:** We need to learn to save water and not waste it. By teaching people how important it is to conserve water and teaching them simple ways to save water, we can help our environment. Hopefully, this can help Reno too.

• **Madison Breshears:** Don't be lazy, and water your lawn with a hose. If you do now, you should probably install a sprinkler system, that way you will use less water. You can also save water indoors, by changing the water level to fit the size of the laundry loads, so you only use what's needed.

• **AJ Bell:** Water your lawn less often but more heavily, because it saves water and it makes the roots stronger. Do not hose off your driveway or sidewalk, because it is pointless and it wastes water. In conclusion, water conservation is important for the future of all living things.

• **Olivia:** Water is very important to our world. We all need to try really hard to save water indoors, outdoors, and everywhere. Lets commit to saving water.

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Ask the RGJ: Do new buildings require grass in Reno?



[Mark Robison](mailto:mrobison@rgj.com), mrobison@rgj.com 10:35 a.m. PST November 16, 2015



Reno, Sparks and Washoe County are working with TMWA to consider revising landscape requirements for developments that are more water-conscious, such as seen at this home off of Mount Rose Highway.(Photo: Handout)

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“As the Reno-Sparks area expands and new housing developments are built, what are the regulations for new developments?” Nicholas Rhea wrote in. “Are they allowed to plant grass for landscaping or are they required to landscape with desert scape? Are the developers required to use turf?”

The Reno resident said he’s concerned about these questions because “as the community expands future water, concerns must be taken into account and new housing is a major part of this.”

Local governments are thinking the same thing. All are working with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to update landscaping requirements for new developments — and there are four chances coming up for community members to give their input.

Below is a look at current requirements followed by what’s brewing to change them, but it appears xeriscaping or “native” landscaping is not required.

Reno

Claudia Hanson, planning manager in the city of Reno’s community development department, said Reno does not require developers to use grass in their landscaping.

“In fact,” she said in a phone call, “we have a maximum limit — no more than 50 percent can be turf.”

For commercial business developments, she said, zoning districts require 15 to 20 percent of the site be landscaped. Under certain circumstances in mixed-use zoning where there may be a combination of residences, businesses and retail shops, minimum landscape requirements can go down to 5 percent.

“Residential

requires 20 percent” of the area at a minimum be landscaped, not necessarily with grass, she said.

Sparks

Armando Ornelas, Sparks city planner, emailed a PDF of the Sparks landscaping code. It says, “Turf grass is not required and may not constitute more than 80 percent of the required landscape area.”

The code also says the entire landscape area needs ground covering to prevent erosion, inhibit weeds and be nice to look at. The options for ground coverings include shrubs, grass, decorative rock, pavers and decomposed granite.

However, Ornelas said, “This landscaping code does not apply to planned developments, which is where most single family housing is being constructed. Each planned development — Sparks has over 40 — has its own development standards handbook which include landscaping standards.”

Washoe County

Bill Whitney referenced [the county’s development code online](#). He is director of the county’s planning and development division within the community services department.

The county code says, “In multi-family residential use types, turf areas shall be provided at a minimum of fifty (50) percent of the required landscaping area in a practical configuration for recreational uses and shall be balanced with other landscaping materials.”

Whitney clarified 20 percent of the total developed land area must be landscaped and it is 50 percent of this area that must be grass.

He said multi-family residential developments are rare in the county.

In the unincorporated areas, he said, single-family homes are exempt from landscaping requirements, meaning they can leave their yards alone or xeriscape if they choose.

Commercial areas in the county must have 20 percent of the area landscaped with “living ground cover.” It’s 10 percent for industrial areas. Whitney said, “ ‘Living ground cover’ could be turf but is not required to be.”

Revised rules

All three jurisdictions said they are working with the local water utility, TMWA, to have more water-saving landscape requirements.

Reno City “Council asked us to review our landscape codes and TMWA volunteered to head that up and did an analysis of all three jurisdictions,” Hanson said.

Laine Christman, TMWA resource economist, said, “We anticipate submitting a staff report on the findings and recommendations at the TMWA Board of Directors’ December meeting, after which it will be presented to the local governments by their respective staffs.

“The primary recommendations for new landscaping requirements include: 1) Maximum limits on the amount of turf new developments can have. 2) New landscaping plans for large developments include hydro-zoning (i.e., grouping vegetation with similar water needs together) to support irrigation efficiency.”

He said this effort is a direct result of public input.

“One of the underlying reasons for reviewing municipal ordinances on landscaping requirements is in response to increased customer concerns regarding discrepancies between TMWA’s goals on water conservation and requirements for drought-tolerant landscaping under private agreements such as Homeowners Association CC&Rs” (covenants, conditions and restrictions), Christman said.

Community members can offer their input during TMWA’s open house meetings on its 2016-2035 Water Resource Plan.

There are four more scheduled for Nov. 16, 17 and 18 as well as Dec. 9. For details and to view a draft of the water plan, visit www.tmwa.com. The TMWA board meeting where the findings will be presented is set for Dec. 16.

TMWA open houses

Truckee Meadows Water Authority has four open houses scheduled where the public can talk one-on-one with its staff members to discuss its 2016-3035 Water Resource Plan.

- Nov. 16: 5:30 to 7 p.m. at TMWA, 1355 Capital Blvd.
- Nov. 17: 5:30 to 7 p.m. at O'Brien Middle School, 10500 Stead Blvd.
- Nov. 18: 5:30 to 7 p.m. at South Valleys Library, 15650 Wedge Pkwy.
- Dec. 9: 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at McKinley Arts & Culture Center, 925 Riverside Drive.

Details: tmwa.com

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Final TMWA Winterization Workshop is Tonight; Comments Invited for Water Plan

By: News Release [Email](#)

Posted: Tue 9:20 AM, Nov 17, 2015

By: News Release [Email](#)

- [Home](#)
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- **Related Links**
- [TMWA Conservation Page](#)

RENO, NV - Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is offering a final 2015 winterization workshop to help you prepare [your home](#) for cold weather and freezing temperatures, in case you haven't already.

Join TMWA's conservation staff for the workshop to [learn](#) how to turn off your sprinkler system and protect water pipes from breaking this winter. The hour-long workshop starts at 5:30 p.m. and will be led by TMWA's Conservation department at TMWA's main office at 1355 Capital Boulevard in Reno.

Homeowners can avoid the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes by attending this free workshop. Learn how to protect your pipes [at home](#) – inside and out – from freezing temperatures this winter. For more tips and how-to videos on winterization, please visit the Conservation section of www.tmwa.com (linked at right).

To RSVP, please [e-mail](#) conservation@tmwa.com or call 834-8005.

TMWA is also in the process of updating its water resource [plan](#).

The purpose of TMWA's "2016-2035 Water [Resource](#) Plan" is to review, update and/or revise TMWA's "2010-2030 Water

Resource Plan." As part of the update process, the following open houses are scheduled to collect comments and input from

[customers](#) before the final plan is presented to the TMWA Board of Directors.

- Monday, November 16 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority - 1355 Capital Boulevard, Reno

- Tuesday, November 17 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
O'Brien Middle [School](#) - 10500 Stead Boulevard, Reno
- Wednesday, November 18 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
South Valleys Library – 15650 Wedge Parkway, Reno
- Wednesday, December 9 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
McKinley Arts & Culture Center, 935 Riverside Drive, Reno

You are invited to drop in to any open house listed above and talk one-on-one with TMWA staff [members](#). They will be available to discuss the contents of the plan and answer any questions you may have.

TMWA Offers Free Winterization Workshop

Posted: Nov 17, 2015 10:26 AM PST <em class="wnDate">Tuesday, November 17, 2015 1:26 PM EST *Updated: Nov 17, 2015 10:26 AM PST* <em class="wnDate">Tuesday, November 17, 2015 1:26 PM EST



From Truckee Meadows Water Authority:

Truckee Meadows Water Authority is offering its last winterization workshop on Tuesday to help you prepare your home for cold weather and freezing temperatures.

Join TMWA's conservation staff for the last workshop to learn how to turn off your sprinkler system and protect water pipes from breaking this winter. The workshop will take place on Tuesday, November 17. The hour-long workshop starts at 5:30 p.m. and will be led by TMWA's Conservation department at TMWA's main office, located at 1355 Capital Blvd. in Reno.

Homeowners can avoid the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes by attending this free workshop.

Learn how to protect your pipes at home – inside and out – from freezing temperatures this winter.

For more tips and how-to videos on winterization, please visit the Conservation section of www.tmwa.com.

To RSVP, e-mail conservation@tmwa.com

From Truckee Meadows Water Authority

DRI's Cloud-Seeding Adding to Sierra Snow Pack

By: [Ed Pearce - Email](#)

Updated: Mon 8:36 PM, Nov 16, 2015

By: [Ed Pearce - Email](#)



- [Home](#)
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RENO, NV - Once again this season, the Sierra [snow](#) pack is getting a little boost from scientists at the Desert Research Institute.

They're helping build that snow pack with one storm at a time with a system of ground-based generators at [remote](#) locations near Sierra mountain tops.

Similar efforts are underway around the world, but DRI scientists are veterans in the [weather](#) modification field, having been in the cloud-seeding business for 30 years. Methods and equipment they've developed is in use as far away as Australia.

They can't break a drought. They can't even make it snow, but when the conditions are right, these remote control generators can make it snow a little more.

"We need a storm to be moving through the area," says Frank McDonough, a research meteorologist and [manager](#) for the Desert Research Institute's Weather Modification Project.

"We need clouds to exist. We need those clouds to be in a specific temperature [range](#) and the winds to be in a certain direction.

"When those conditions are met, the staff at D-R-I's weather modification project turns these generators on. Silver iodide is pumped into the air, and a storm drops a little more snow.

"Approximate increase is about 10 percent more snowfall over the [course](#) of the entire winter," says McDonough.

So far, they've seeded three Sierra storms, including the one that dropped snow on Reno and the surrounding mountains Sunday.

That 10-percent figure may not sound like much, but it adds up in other, more impressive numbers.

So far, McDonough figures they've added between 2,000 and 25-hundred acre feet of snow-water equivalent to the local snow pack.

More water for next summer delivered at a [reasonable price](#).

"It's on the order of \$10 to \$20 dollars per acre foot to conduct cloud-seeding," says McDonough. "So, it's a very cost-effective method to increase snowfall.

This season the project is aimed at the Tahoe-Truckee River and Walker River drainages. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority and the Western Regional Water Commission are funding the [work](#).

Some may wonder about a downside to pumping silver iodide into the atmosphere. McDonough says there's no reason to worry.

"Silver iodide has been studied for 60 years," he says. "And it has no negative impact on the environment. So it doesn't hurt the environment, it works and it's relatively [inexpensive](#). So it's a good way to add snowfall."

Not much bang for the buck in DWP turf rebates, city controller audit says



Richard Delgado, 65, replaces most of the turf in his frontyard with three different colors of bark in the San Fernando Valley in June.

(Anne Cusack / Los Angeles Times)

Taylor Goldenstein and Matt Stevens Contact Reporters

Los Angeles' turf rebate program saved less water per dollar spent than other Department of Water and Power conservation programs, an [audit](#) released by the city controller said Friday.

Auditors found that money spent for rebates on items such as high-efficiency appliances yielded a water savings almost five times higher than turf replacement. They also found that the DWP does not prioritize water conservation projects based on which are the most cost-effective.

City Controller Ron Galperin called on the water provider to focus its conservation programs in order to achieve more sustained and cost-effective water savings.

Read the story

"If money is no object, turf replacement rebates are a relatively expedient way to save water," Galperin said. "But, of course, money is an object."

In fiscal year 2014-15, the DWP spent \$40.2 million on customer incentive and rebate programs, Galperin's office said. Nearly \$17.8 million of that went to turf rebates. Each dollar invested in turf rebates is expected to save 350 gallons of water over the estimated 10-year "life expectancy" of residential turf replacement, the audit said.

In comparison, the department spent \$14.9 million on rebates for high-efficiency appliances and fixtures. Those rebates yield a per-dollar savings of more than 1,700 gallons of water over their estimated lifetimes of up to 19 years, Galperin's office said.

The turf rebate program "had value as a gimmick that ... probably spurred a heightened awareness," Galperin said at a news conference, adding: "It's the job of my office to look at return on investment."

In a statement, DWP Board President Mel Levine and General Manager Marcie Edwards said the agency wants to offer "a menu of tools" to customers. However, they added, appliance rebates, which have been around since the early 1990s, are not in as high demand as they once were.



[Newsletter: Water and Power](#) [Subscribe to the newsletter](#) [What to expect: When William Mulholland brought water from the Owens Valley to thirsty Los Angeles in 1913, he didn't mince words. "There it is. Take it," he proclaimed. Over the next century, the quest for water to support growing cities...](#)

[Read the story](#)

"For many of these fixtures we have reached a market saturation point and they no longer offer the broad-based water savings opportunities they once did," Levine and Edwards said. "LADWP's turf replacement program has helped us target the largest remaining opportunity for broad-based water savings: outdoor water use."

Mayor Eric Garcetti said the turf replacement program had more long-term goals than just upfront water savings.

"Our city's water conservation efforts aren't just about reacting to the current crisis, but rather changing the way we think about water," Garcetti said in a statement.

The DWP has allocated \$59 million for water conservation programs this year, Galperin's office said. He called on the agency to base its rebates on water saved, and advocated for the widespread installation of so-called smart meters, which give customers real-time information about their water usage.

He also said the department should invest more in water infrastructure and technology, such as water recycling and storm-water capture.

"Water conservation programs should be assessed based on how much water they save, and whether they will enhance our future supplies," Galperin said in a statement.

But experts said the audit overlooked some major benefits of the turf replacement rebate programs.



When it came down to it, the number crunchers at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California knew they saved a lot more water for every dollar spent subsidizing low-flush toilets than drought-friendly lawns.

But there was one thing the MWD planners didn't bank on when they threw an unprecedented...

(Rosanna Xia and Rong-Gong Lin II)

J.R. DeShazo, director of the Luskin Center for Innovation at UCLA and professor of public policy and urban planning, said the audit did not seem to take into account the high price of water as well as the relatively small amount of water saved by a high-efficiency appliance compared with drought-tolerant landscaping.

“These investments are freeing up water at a lower cost than the DWP could buy the same amount of water from MWD [Metropolitan Water District of Southern California], and we can get a lot of water out of the turf rebate program,” DeShazo said.

Though DeShazo agreed that smart meters are worth consideration, the devices and their installation are very expensive — much more expensive than the turf rebate program — and also serve as an educational tool that does not directly affect consumption.

By some accounts, Californians' penchant for ripping out their grass has been the most significant silver lining of the state's ongoing drought.

In October 2014, Garcetti ordered an increase in the size of turf removal rebates to as much as \$3.75 per square foot. In those large payouts, the MWD paid \$2, and the DWP paid \$1.75.

Then on April 1, Gov. Jerry Brown issued a historic executive order calling on Californians to reduce their urban water consumption by 25%. As a part of that order, he called on the state to replace 50 million square feet of lawns with drought-tolerant landscaping in partnership with local governments.

Weeks later, Garcetti said Los Angeles alone would account for half of Brown's goal by the end of 2015.

By July, the MWD said it had stopped offering rebates, having committed more than \$300 million to customers for lawn removal. The DWP continues to offer the rebates without the MWD's contribution.

The DWP has thus far refused to release the names and addresses of residents who received turf rebates, citing privacy concerns.

Galperin called for the DWP to release them. The agency is suing the MWD to keep the information private.

“Billing information for customers ... is different than the person who voluntarily chooses to ask for an incentive or rebate and gets money from ratepayers for that,” Galperin said.

Times staff writer David Zahniser contributed to this report.

Water agency's land purchase rattles California farmers

Military photographers battle g-forces, motion sickness to capture Blue Angels' iconic images [More >>](#)
Military photographers battle g-forces, motion sickness to capture Blue Angels' iconic images [More >>](#)

- [More>>](#)

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and JAE HONG
Associated Press

BLYTHE, Calif. (AP) - The nation's largest distributor of treated drinking water became the largest landowner in a remote California farming region for good reason: The alfalfa-growing area is first in line to get Colorado River water.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's play in Palo Verde Valley, along the Arizona line, tapped a deep distrust between farm and city that pervades the West over a river that's a lifeline for seven states and northern Mexico.

Farmers recall how Los Angeles' modern founders built an aqueduct a century ago to bring water hundreds of miles from rural Owens Valley, a story that was fictionally portrayed in Roman Polanski's 1974 film, "Chinatown."

"Are we going to dry up our rural, agricultural communities just to keep Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego growing? I think it would be a sad state of affairs," said Bart Fisher, a melon and broccoli farmer who is board president of the Palo Verde Irrigation District.

Metropolitan tried to calm nerves by sending its chairman in September to a public forum in Blythe, 225 miles east of its Los Angeles headquarters. It pledged to honor a 2004 agreement that caps the amount of land it pays farmers to idle at 28 percent of the valley.

That agreement, which expires in 2040, is hailed as a model for farms and cities to cooperate. Metropolitan pays farmers about as much as they would profit to harvest - \$771 an acre this year - to bring foregone Colorado River water on its 242-mile aqueduct to 19 million people in the coastal megalopolis it serves.

Palo Verde enjoys California's highest rights to the river, making their immune to drought.

The dynamic changed when Metropolitan paid \$256 million in July to nearly double its Palo Verde holdings to 29,000 acres, or about 30 percent of the valley. The agency denied its purchase from Verbena LLC, a company that bought the land several years earlier from the Mormon church, was part of an orchestrated plan.

"It's made the farmers out there nervous that we are the largest owner but there was a strategic opportunity that came up," Metropolitan's general manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said.

Metropolitan stirred similar angst this month in Northern California when its board expressed interest in buying farms on several islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. Its staff said the land could provide water storage and wildlife habitat.

Blythe, a riverside town of about 13,000 people in the Mojave Desert with two state prisons, is an oasis of gas stations, motels and fast-food restaurants on Interstate 10 between Los Angeles and Phoenix. Thomas Blythe staked claim to the river in 1877, beating Southern California cities under a Gold Rush-era doctrine called 'first in time, first in right.'

Los Angeles and its suburbs founded Metropolitan in 1928 to build the remarkably durable Colorado River Aqueduct. Parker Dam and the reservoir it created in Lake Havasu empties into a gray Art Deco-style building with nine pumps that quietly pipe water 300 feet up a steep slope. Teal metal cases that cover the pumps vibrate so little that a nickel placed on top stands on its side.

The water goes uphill through four more pump stations and through tunnels, canals and pipelines before reaching Southern California's coastal plain two days later.

The Colorado's huge man-made reservoirs have made the river an unheralded savior in California's four-year drought. Last year, the river supplied two-thirds of the 1.7 billion gallons of drinking water that Metropolitan delivers daily, up from a third three years earlier.

The river sustains 40 million people and farms 5½ million acres, but white "bathtub rings" lining walls of the nation's largest reservoir in Lake Mead, near Las Vegas, are evidence of shrinking supplies. California took more than it was entitled to until Sunbelt cities like Phoenix and Las Vegas clamored for their share and forced the nation's most populous state to go on a diet in 2003.

"It's really the only supply of water to this otherwise bone-dry region," said Bill Hasencamp, Metropolitan's manager of Colorado River resources.

Metropolitan has diverted up to 118,000 acre feet of water a year from Palo Verde since 2005, enough for about 250,000 households. It paid \$3,170 an acre to farmers who committed for 35 years, plus an annual fee for fallowed land. It idles 7 percent to 28 percent of the valley each year, depending on its needs.

Jack Seiler, a grower who volunteered 900 acres, calls the agreement a "poster child" for farms and cities to cooperate but Metropolitan's July purchase of nearly 13,000 acres unsettled him. It gave Metropolitan the largest voting bloc on Palo Verde's water board.

Metropolitan says it won't have to pay someone else to idle the land it now owns and will lease it to farmers, cutting its net cost to about \$50 million. It voted for incumbents in a September election to Palo Verde's seven-member board, which includes Seiler.

"I obviously don't know why they bought all this land," Seiler said. "It puts us a little bit at odds."

—

Spagat reported from Parker Dam, California.

TMWA Holds Open House Dec. 9 on Water Resource Plan

NOVEMBER 30, 2015 BY [THISISRENO](#) [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

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Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is holding an open house about its 2016-35 water resource plan.

The meeting is Wednesday, December 9, 2015 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the McKinley Arts and Culture Center, 925 Riverside Drive.

TMWA is seeking public comments and input on its water resource plan before it is submitted to TMWA's board of directors.

The plan updates or revises TMWA's 2010-30 water resource plan and details "the present state of water resources available to TMWA to meet customer water demands current planning environments, and efforts to address and adapt to evolving water supply and demand conditions."

The plan includes forecasts for [Washoe County's population and the region's projected water demand](#). The reason for the updated plan is because of the consolidation of Washoe County's water resources department into TMWA. It also includes the [Truckee River Operating Agreement](#).

Our view: Reno-Sparks has much to be thankful for

The Opinion of the RGJ Editorial Board 8:02 a.m. PST November 26, 2015



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Reno saw improvements on many fronts in 2015.(Photo: Andy Barron/RGJ)Buy Photo

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Reno-Sparks has much to be thankful for in 2015.

Highlights include an economy that continues to grow stronger, an improving water situation, a fire season without major damage in Nevada, and new and serious efforts to turn around the state's education system.

Economy

Northern Nevada has come a long way. Just five years ago, the Reno-Sparks unemployment rate was 12.7 percent. Now, it is half that: 5.9 percent, according to figures from the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

With regular frequency, the [Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada reports new businesses locating here.](#)

One of the most spectacular announcements this year was the high-tech firm Switch. [It plans to build what may be the world's largest data center](#) in the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center next to Tesla, the world's largest battery manufacturing facility.

Switch says the Northern Nevada data center will cost \$3 billion when fully built out, encompassing seven buildings totaling 6.49 million square feet. The anchor tenant using its computing services will be another major player, eBay.

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[Our View: Don't break rules for Reno police chief](#)

Water

Although the state suffered through its fourth year of drought, the community stepped up to save water. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority reports [customers used about 10 percent less water this summer than they did in 2013.](#)

TMWA also finally switched over the last flat-rate customers to metered rates, a change expected to save tens of millions of gallons of water each year. The newly approved Truckee River Operating Agreement will also expand TMWA's drought reserve capacity.

If early storms are any indication, this winter's El Nino weather phenomenon should make a significant dent in drought conditions, replenishing drought reserves and putting the region in a good position for 2016.

Fire

Tahoe, Verdi, Caughlin Ranch, Washoe Valley and the edges of Carson City have all seen devastating and deadly fires in recent memory that have destroyed multiple homes.

Despite dry conditions that proved disastrous in California, Northern Nevada has so far dodged the worst wildfires, thanks in part to prevention efforts, quick-acting fire personnel that have kept an eye on lightning strikes and more than a little luck.

In other positive fire news, Reno and Washoe County came to a common-sense agreement — forced by the Nevada Legislature — to have the closest station automatically respond to fire calls regardless of jurisdiction.

Education

Nevada's education system continues to struggle in national performance reports, but a bright spot in 2015 was approval of a billion-dollar overhaul.

Spearheaded by Gov. Brian Sandoval, it was passed with widespread backing from business organizations and representatives of both parties in the Nevada Legislature. Its passage shows Nevada will no longer accept the minor tweaks that were all politicians could manage to pass for decades and that did little to raise education performance in comparison with other states.

The plan funds full-day kindergarten for all; gives more money to educate poor, disabled, learning English and gifted students; reduces the number of students per teacher; adds hiring bonuses to address teacher shortages; and more.

Another bright spot in education involves the Washoe County School District's new policy this year to allow transgender students to use the bathrooms of their identified gender. This decreases bias against the students as well as the trauma and stress that naturally arise from being treated differently at such a vulnerable time of life. It likely will also save money from discrimination lawsuits that other districts have had to pay out.

Accountability

Almost 15 years after Nevadans voted — twice — to legalize medical marijuana, the state finally got around making that a reality. Shops and related businesses have opened in Reno and Sparks without causing the problems some opponents feared.

Reno, Washoe County, Las Vegas and Clark County sidestepped inaction by the Legislature that could have kept secret the names behind these medical marijuana establishments. They understand that government transparency requires residents be able to know who is behind the businesses where they live. (Sparks remains the lone holdout.)

The [city of Reno went even further](#) with transparency this year by making [more of its public data available to more people through its Open Reno initiative](#). The data can be used to identify trends, track performance and invite innovation. For example, New Orleans and Detroit use public data to attack blight, while Kansas City and Los Angeles use it to track the overall health and progress of their communities.

With high-tech companies and software developers blossoming everywhere, it will be fascinating to watch what they are able to do with Reno's data.

Northern Nevada clearly saw much progress in 2015. May next year bring more.

Summer water savings paid dividends in Reno and beyond

[Benjamin Spillman](#), bspillman@rgj.com 5:49 p.m. PST November 24, 2015



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Independence Lake is seen on May 28, 2015.(Photo: Jason Bean/RGJ)Buy Photo

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Remember that one time the water authority asked everyone to conserve a bunch of water?

Well, it worked.

That's according to figures from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority that will be included with customers' upcoming bills.

The totals represent what water officials say users in and around Reno accomplished since May 1 when the water authority asked people to reduce water use by at least 10 percent.

According to the insert, users cleared the 10 percent savings hurdle which resulted in a couple of benefits in terms of regional water supply.

For starters, the officials avoided using any water from Independence Lake, the authority's largest single drought reserve in the Sierra Nevada.

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

[Nevada Drought](#)

They did, however, tap 37 percent of upstream reserves, an amount that's likely to be replenished during the winter even if snowfall amounts are disappointing.

"Even with poor winters the majority of that will be replaced," said Mark Foree, general manager of the water authority.

Although this past summer marked only the second time regional water officials drew on drought reserves and the first time it asked users to cut back across the board, it could have been worse.

The region is mired on one of the worst droughts in recorded history and water sources throughout the Sierra Nevada and beyond are being pushed to their limits.

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

[RGJ Investigates: We're using more water today than in 2011](#)

With the Truckee River, Reno's top surface water source, running at a trickle through the summer the water authority turned to water it had banked underground the previous year.

Groundwater made up, "a much larger piece of the pie," for the region this summer than in years past, water authority hydrologist Bill Hauck told the Reno Gazette-Journal in July.

Aces Ballpark ice skating rink opens for winter season

- [Video](#)
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-

[Aces Ballpark ice skating rink opens for winter season](#)

Reported by: Olivia DeGennaro
Email: oadegennaro@mynews4.com



[Print Story](#)

Published: 11/25 5:08 pm

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Updated: 11/25 7:33 pm

RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- It's beginning to look a lot like the the holidays in downtown Reno. The outdoor ice skating rink at Aces Ballpark is officially open for the winter season.

"I think downtown is the heart of any community," Aces President Eric Edelstein said. That's why the ballpark is offering an ice skating experience to northern Nevadans.

"Its nostalgic," Edelstein said. "It's a great thing to do with your kids. You see kids out here with their parents learning how to skate."

But making the icy surface for people to skate on was no easy task. "It's a long process. It started about a month ago."

First, the ballpark had to build a perfectly level deck on top of its front lawn. "Then, we bring in ice coils that have a chemical in them that makes it extra cold," Edelstein explained.

And you can't make ice without water. "Good old TMWA [Truckee Meadows Water Authority] tap water freezes here," Edelstein said, "so it's not any type of special water."

This is the second year the ballpark has offered the ice skating rink, and you may notice a few changes this winter.

"We realized last year, if you can't go [somewhere] with your skates, people didn't go there." The Aces president said they added more mats around the rink so people can visit the Arroyo Mexican Grill and the concessions stand while wearing their ice skates. "Sort of the ski lodge experience here in downtown."

The rink has also allowed the ballpark to create some new jobs. "We have been able to add a few full time positions because of the extra work that this brings," Edelstein said, "and not to mention, all of the part-time positions that it brings as well."

If you take a trip to the Aces ice skating rink, you'll also see some of the more seasoned staff taking a break from the baseball green to try out a Zamboni. "People who are here more for the grass, for baseball- this is a slow time for them," Edelstein said, "so they all get to learn how to maintain the ice."

"This is awesome," he said. "In a time when the baseball stadium isn't typically being used, we get to welcome the community back for more fun."

If you want to try your hand at ice skating, the Aces Ballpark rink will be open seven days a week until Valentine's Day. They will even stay open on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

It costs \$8.00 for adults to skate and \$6.00 for children and seniors. Renting ice skates will cost you an additional \$3.00.

Water supplies tracked

By [Dennis Myers](#)
dennism@newsreview.com

This article was published on [11.19.15](#).

In a study of 421 drainage basins in the northern hemisphere, including the upper Great Basin, a group of scientists have tried to calculate the impact of climate change on water supplies, without much luck. The Great Basin contains most of Nevada.

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“Using a multi-model ensemble of climate change projections, we find that these basins—which together have a present population of approximately 2 million people—are exposed to a 67 percent risk of decreased snow supply this coming century,” wrote the authors in an abstract of the study published Nov. 12 in *Environmental Research Letters*. “Further, in the multi-model mean, 68 basins (with a present population of more than 300 million people) transition from having sufficient rainfall runoff to meet all present human water demand to having insufficient rainfall runoff.”

But the study was unable to predict whether the climate change would cause gains or loss in water supplies because “internal climate variability creates irreducible uncertainty in the projected future trends in snow resource potential, with about 90 percent of snow-sensitive basins showing potential for either increases or decreases over the near-term decades.”

Authors of the study, “The potential for snow to supply human water demand in the present and future,” are Justin S. Mankin, Daniel Viviroli, Deepti Singh, Arjen Y Hoekstra and Noah S. Diffenbaugh.

International climate talks begin this month in Paris on plans to curb carbon emissions.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority site hacked; accounts not affected

RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- The website for Truckee Meadows Water Authority was hacked sometime Tuesday, leading to a shutdown of the site, according to a spokeswoman for the utility.

Marlene Olsen told News 4 that the hack did not affect any customer accounts, and that TMWA was working to restore the site within a few hours.

Law enforcement had not been looped in yet, she added, and the perpetrators were unknown.

No other details were immediately available.

One view: TMWA plan fails to consider climate change

Ron Foster 3:18 p.m. PST December 2, 2015



Ron Foster(Photo: Provided to the RGJ)

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The Truckee Meadows Authority (TMWA) recently released its draft 2016-35 Water Resource Plan. It's an excellent snapshot of our region's most precious resource – it describes our existing sources of supply, demands being placed on them, and how TMWA plans to meet those demands. Its major flaw is the failure to address the potential impacts of climate change on water demand and supply. The plan relies on historical records for precipitation and runoff and tree ring studies, which tend to average out changes in precipitation. Inclusion of information on climate change is omitted. TMWA states that “Changes in management of any restriction to implementation of water resources due to climate change are not warranted at this time.” Since the plan doesn't really address climate change, how can we conclude that changes aren't warranted?

As average annual temperatures rise and seasonal temperatures become hotter, extending the growing season into April and October, the demand for water will increase. TMWA data indicate that commercial water demand increases 1 ½ to 2 times, and residential demand by a factor of 4,

due to irrigation during the growing season. Weather data for the region already indicates nearly a 50 percent change in frost-free days over the last 40 years; that trend is likely to continue. 2015 had the lowest snowpack on record; this following three years of declining snowpack. Our current drought exhibits higher highs (temperature) and lower lows (snowpack and surface water). What if this becomes the new normal?

There are already several strategies that help counterbalance the impacts of climate change on water demand: increasing the cost of water during peak periods, more public emphasis on water conservation, improved irrigation efficiency, decreasing the extent of water-demanding landscape, demographic trends (e.g., greater ratio of multifamily units versus single family homes), and building codes requiring low-use fixtures.

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

Ask the RGJ: How much Truckee water do TMWA customers use?

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Our current drought exhibits higher temperatures and lower snowpack and surface water. Foster asks, what if this is the new normal? (Photo: Jason Bean, Jason Bean/RGJ)

Opposing these trends is the expected growth in the region's population and economic development. TMWA has planned for predictable growth. But the region's water supplies are finite, and one could argue that they may decrease in the years ahead. Our theories of ever-expanding growth give lip service to this fact, but don't accept it in reality. We plan for ordered growth, but generally react only in crisis.

There will certainly be years of good snowpack, replenishing river flows and reservoir levels; maybe 2016 will be one of those years. Many people are betting on a strong El Nino to deliver this; but as TMWA officials are quick to point out, El Nino years don't necessarily increase snowpack or precipitation in our region. When these years occur, however, will we breathe a sigh of relief, dampen calls for conservation and changes in landscaping? Probably. These years temporarily obscure the changes in our environment and make meeting the challenges of climate change more difficult.

The effects of climate change are already being felt in our region; over the next twenty years they will likely worsen. The TMWA plan should recognize this potential and recommend changes in public policy to meet it.

Ron Foster is a Carson City resident.

The economy:

Nevada business incubator's mission: Improve water management

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[Steve Marcus](#)

An aerial view of Callville Bay Resort & Marina at Lake Mead Monday, Aug. 18, 2014.

By [Daniel Rothberg](#) ([contact](#))

Friday, December 4, 2015 - 2 a.m.

945

It has attracted interest from a company from Canada and one from California, established operating agreements with two companies in Israel, begun negotiating with three companies from Europe, started examining partnerships in Dubai and opened an ongoing dialog with the public utility in Singapore.

The Center of Excellence, a nonprofit incubator at the Desert Research Institute for water technology startups, has come a long way since it first received funding in 2013. And in the last six months, thanks to an infusion of funding during the legislative session, it's shifted into a higher gear in its quest to improve conservation of one of the most coveted resources in Nevada: water. Its two most recent calls for business proposals — one of which closed Tuesday and the other in September — generated interest from about 30 companies.

“I’m very optimistic, and I think it’s been very successful,” said Kenneth Ladd, a board member for the center as well as its first director. “When I say that, you have to realize this was a startup. Just like any startup, it took us a while. I think we have tremendous momentum.”

The center's goals are multifaceted and serve several interests in the state.

The basic premise of its model is to bring companies to Nevada with research and development funding to support projects that simultaneously satisfy the demands of the state’s water agencies. This, officials say, will spur economic development in water technology, an area where Nevada has plenty of experience, while supporting higher-education research.

Perhaps its most notable success so far has been a partnership with the Canadian company Echologics, which in April installed a real-time leak detection monitoring system that uses non-invasive sensors to track the sound profile of water along three miles of the Strip. The system allows the Las Vegas Valley Water District to evaluate the need to repair leaks.

“It’s the first installation of its kind in the world,” current director Nathan Allen said.

In addition to recruiting companies, the center provides contracts through partners like DRI and UNLV to cover commercialization activities, such as research, testing and demonstration.

The center’s interwoven mission is evidenced by the composition of its board, which includes the DRI president, the governor’s chief economic development officer, representatives from the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, and Pat Mulroy, who earned the unofficial title of “water czar” during her two-decade tenure as head of SNWA.

Scattered through the country are similar incubators focused on developing water technology companies. But what distinguishes the Center of Excellence, Allen said in an interview in August, is that it considers the needs of specific water agencies.

“We are really looking at what some of the demands are for the water sector,” Allen said.

From a company’s perspective, a partnership with the center offers an assurance that demand exists for their product. That’s important, Allen said, because breaking into the U.S. water

market can be a tiresome process, especially for international companies unfamiliar with the patchwork structure of water distribution in the states. There are thousands of drinking water utilities, wastewater utilities, stormwater utilities and irrigation districts, all with different needs.

The center, Allen says, also is at an advantage because it can pitch companies on its expertise, noting that DRI has more hydrology department faculty than other U.S. academic institutions.

“People nationally and internationally look to Nevada for how we manage our water,” Allen said.

Before putting out its most recent requests for proposals, for instance, the center surveyed its partners, such as SNWA, to identify its needs so the center could tailor its request to meet a known demand. One of the 15 needs SNWA identified was for software in its distribution network that optimizes energy consumption without sacrificing water quality. Another issue it wants the center to tackle: a cost-effective way to monitor infrastructure in remote locations.

Although slow to start, the center has received a glut of industry response in recent months.

The center received 13 responses to a grant opportunity it issued after Gov. Brian Sandoval’s trade mission to the United Kingdom and Ireland this summer. As a result, it is currently negotiating with three European companies to establish a partnership with the center.

The center has also signed agreements for two Israeli water companies — OutLocks and Ayyeka — to partner with SNWA and establish at least some of its operations in Nevada.

According to Allen, the center, which started the bulk of its recruiting in May, is responsible for four companies incorporating in the state and making commitments to employ people here. The center has provided contracts for commercialization activities to an additional five companies.

Those numbers might seem low, but the 2-year-old entity, several of its leaders said, had little funding and infrastructure in place when it first started. That is likely to change. This year, the center received a commitment for \$1.6 million over the next two years, in addition to the \$500,000 it received from the Governor’s Office of Economic Development to cover initial costs.

Ladd, a longtime executive at U.S. Bank, hopes to see growth in the number of companies that do any combination of manufacturing, distribution or sales here.

“My hope is in 2016, we can bring three to five new companies to Southern Nevada,” he said.

To expand, the center is exploring partnerships with big industries in the state, including gaming and mining, to determine their needs for water solutions, hoping it will generate more demand.

“It has been a good tool for economic development,” said Matthew Tuma, a natural resources specialist in the governor’s economic development office. “It’s still a very young organization.”

TMWA Seeks Feedback On Water Resource Plan

By JULIA RITCHEY · 19 HOURS AGO

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The Truckee Meadows Water Authority is asking for input on its water resource plan, as the agency looks to how best manage the region's critical water supply. Reno Public Radio's Julia Ritchey has the details.

Listen

Listening...

0:54

Listen to the story.

Every five years, TMWA looks into its crystal ball to review and revise its twenty-year water resource plan.

John Erwin is director of natural resources at the authority. He says when the snowpack is as low as it was last year, that can make things especially tough.

"Doing a water plan in the middle of a drought always has its challenges. Are we at the middle? Are we at the end? We just don't know."

Erwin says the one of the biggest changes will be implementing the Truckee River Operating Agreement, a multi-state compact, which will double maybe even triple of upstream reserves.

"And that is significant because that means now we're able to store water in certain times of the year, winter time for example, where we were never able to do that before."

TMWA's Board of Directors will vote on a final version of the plan sometime early next year.

The public is invited to the last open house Wednesday, Dec. 9 at the McKinley Arts and Culture Center in Reno from 5:30-7 p.m.

From: Tell the Board

Date: December 3, 2015 at 8:27:43 PM PST

To: M Olsen <molsen@o-apr.com>, R Charpentier <rcharpentier@tmwa.com>, "K Mazeres" <kmazeres@tmwa.com>

Subject: Tell the Board Submission

Name: Julie Steele

Email:

Comments: To all board members - I filed a claim for injury and damages to myself. I was walking home when my foot became lodged in a hole just outside the crosswalk in my neighborhood. I injured my ankle pretty bad and was subsequently unable to work (postal carrier) for two weeks. I am a single mother and lost my apartment and had to move. I went to the hospital and the documented my injury , I have a witness who was with me at the the time of the accident and pictures taken the next day. I have since spoken to other residents who claim the cap had been missing for days and had reported to TMWA employees in the area. But my claim to pay for medical bills because I have no medical benefits and for the time off work. Because it's not your responsibility / liability because I'm the only one who called the emergency line to report it - unbelievable, uncaring and shameful - I guess I will seek out an attorney to help.

From: Mazerres, Kim
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2015 9:35 AM
To: 'Tell the Board'
Subject: RE: Tell the Board Submission

I am pleased to be able to inform you that all remaining flat-rate customers, including your neighbor at 2135 [REDACTED] Way, were converted to the metered rate as of their October 2015 bill. There were approximately 5,000 customers who were still billing at the flat-rate and in the Spring of this year the Truckee Meadows Water Authority Board of Directors made the decision to convert them to the metered rate effective on their October bills.

Should you continue to see water waste at this home, I would encourage you to report it. You can call our Water Waste Hotline at 834-8005 or use our online form at: https://tmwa.com/conservation/assigned_day_watering/report_waste

However, I believe that based on what we have seen and heard from other recently converted customers, he will also cut his usage significantly now that he is paying for the actual water consumed.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have any other questions or concerns. My e-mail address is above, and my phone number is below.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday season!

Kim Mazerres
Director, Customer Relations
Truckee Meadows Water Authority
1355 Capital Blvd. | Reno, NV 89502
O: (775) 834-8032, M: (775) 848-6691
kmazerres@tmwa.com | www.tmwa.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Tell the Board [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2015 8:47 PM
To: Olsen, Marlene; Charpentier, Robert; Mazerres, Kim
Subject: Tell the Board Submission

Name: Concerned Neighbor [REDACTED] Way Reno 89512

Email: [REDACTED]

Comments: My neighbor at 2135 [REDACTED] Way has a deal grandfathered with Reno water where he can use all the water he wants and pay one small flat fee. So, he abuses it to the point where he runs his sprinklers all night long every night in the summer and has 40 foot trees that he does not have ever have professionally trimmed, so that his tree branches fell on the power lines and caused a 24 hour power outage for 24 homes on our street. It was a horrible inconvenience and besides losing hundreds of dollars in food in our fridge, the expense and inconvenience, we also suffered hypothermia and were treated at ER. It is unfair and a waste of resources to allow this type of abuse of water during a drought, while we conserve and water on assigned days. He was listed in the RGJ as one of the top 10 water users in the city. This has to be stopped for the sake of the environment and how his irresponsible usage impacts neighbors. Signed concerned neighbor worried about retaliation.