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Utah's First Municipal Reverse Osmosis Plant Readies For Operation

Bringing A New Source Of Water To The Southwest Valley

After years of effort, Utah's first municipal reverse osmosis facility, the Bingham Canyon Water Treatment Plant, which is the first phase of the Southwest Jordan Valley Groundwater Project, is in its final stages of testing for operation.

"We are very pleased that we will soon be able to begin delivering high quality drinking water to some of the fastest growing cities along the Wasatch Front," says Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District's General Manager Dave Ovard. "This is a monumental milestone for the District and for the residents of Utah."

Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (JVWCD) has been cooperatively working with Kennecott Utah Copper Corporation (KUCC), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop and define the Southwest Jordan Valley Groundwater Project, which captures deep underground waters impacted by mining and other activities, purifies the water and delivers it to the communities in the southwestern Salt Lake Valley.

The Bingham Canyon Water Treatment Plant, which is the first of two reverse osmosis treatment facilities that are part of the Southwest Jordan Valley Groundwater Project, was constructed and will be operated by KUCC. The water treated at the plant will then be delivered to JVWCD, which will conduct a series of tests to ensure it meets all federal and state regulations, and then the District will pump, convey, store and deliver the water to the cities of West Jordan, South Jordan, Riverton and Herriman beginning in April 2006.

In a state that only receives 13 inches of precipitation each year on average, the 3,500 acre-feet of water that will be provided by the Bingham County Water Treatment Plant is a much-needed water supply. It is enough water to supply approximately 4,300 homes.

"After years of work, we are proud to begin operations at the Bingham Canyon Water Treatment Plant, which is the first of its kind reverse osmosis plant in the state," says KUCC XXXX XXXX. "The water produced by the plant will be of very high quality."

Reverse osmosis is a pressure driven process, where pressure is used to push water through a membrane, leaving salts behind. It is a proven treatment technology that meets the requirements of all federal and state drinking water standards.

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Although the Bingham Canyon Water Treatment Plant and the Southwest Groundwater Treatment Plant that JVWCD is planning to have operational by the Spring of 2009, are the first of their kind in the state of Utah, nationwide there are more than 300 of these plants that produce more than 1 billion gallons of water per day for drinking water use.

The water obtained through the Bingham Canyon Water Treatment Plant will be rigorously tested by KUCC before it leaves the plant. Once the water is delivered to JVWCD, the District will again conduct a series of tests to ensure it meets all federal and state regulations for drinking water and aesthetics. These test results will be reported to DEQ and then the water will be blended with the District's other water sources.

In addition to the two treatment plants that together will deliver 8,235 acre-feet of water per year, the Southwest Jordan Valley Groundwater Project includes 7 deep exploratory wells, 4 shallow production wells, and 7 deep production wells; more than 30 miles of pipeline; and 4 booster pumping stations.

"This is an important benefit for the community and the environment," says DEQ Executive Director Dianne Nielson. "I am pleased that the public will begin to receive quality drinking water from this project."

The water from this project will be sold by JVWCD to the four cities at a discounted wholesale price of about 15 percent to reflect the funding for the project provided by KUCC. KUCC paid $37 million to a natural resource damage trust fund in 1995. Since that time, the trust fund has grown to more than $62 million. JVWCD has assumed only those costs related to normal water development and treatment, which is projected to be $5 to $10 million in capital costs.

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