



Valley Center Municipal Water District

29300 Valley Center Road, Valley Center, CA

For Immediate Release

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Valley Center Municipal Water District Honors the Life and Legacy of Former General Manager Gary T. Arant

Valley Center, CA— The Valley Center Municipal Water District is deeply saddened to announce that former General Manager Gary T. Arant passed away on Thursday, July 16, 2026. Gary was a respected public servant, leader, mentor and friend whose extraordinary impact on the District and the Valley Center community will be remembered for generations.

Gary devoted 53 years of public service to California's water industry, including 36 years of exemplary service to the Valley Center Municipal Water District. He retired from the District on December 29, 2025. In recognition of his remarkable career and enduring contributions, the District's Board of Directors proclaimed December 29 as "Water Titan Day."

Throughout his decades of service, Gary was known for his integrity, steady leadership and unwavering commitment to the people of Valley Center. He consistently placed the needs of residents, ratepayers, employees and the community first. His work helped ensure safe and reliable water service, responsible stewardship of the District's resources and sound public governance.

Gary guided the District through complex regulatory, financial and operational challenges. His leadership strengthened the organization and helped position it to continue serving the Valley Center community for generations to come.

His influence extended well beyond the boundaries of the District. Gary represented Valley Center on the San Diego County Water Authority Board of Directors and provided leadership through the Association of California Water Agencies and the San Diego County Farm Bureau. Through these roles, he contributed to regional water reliability, thoughtful water policy and continued support for the agricultural community.

Gary was also widely respected for the professional relationships he fostered throughout San Diego County and across California. He built trust and collaboration among public agencies, elected officials, water industry professionals, employees and community members.

For those who knew Gary personally, however, his legacy cannot be measured only by years of service, professional accomplishments or the many challenges he helped the District overcome.

As General Manager Lindsay Leahy shared with District employees, many staff members had the privilege of working alongside Gary for years. He was not only a colleague and leader, but also a friend to many throughout the District.

Before his passing, Gary asked that employees know how much he loved his work, the District, its staff and the opportunity to serve the Valley Center community. He felt blessed to have spent his career going to a job each day that he truly loved.

Gary served as a mentor to many employees and water professionals throughout his career. His knowledge, guidance and commitment to public service helped shape the careers of countless individuals. The lessons he shared and the example he set will continue to influence the District and the broader water community for many years.

The Valley Center Municipal Water District Board of Directors, management and staff extend their deepest condolences to Gary's family, friends and loved ones. The District asks the community to keep them in their thoughts and prayers and to respect their privacy as they mourn this profound loss.

Gary's legacy will live on through the organization he helped strengthen, the people he mentored, the relationships he built and the community he faithfully served. He will be deeply missed and always remembered as a true Water Titan.

Valley Center Municipal Water District is a public agency governed by an elected five-member board. The district provides water service to more than 30,000 people in Valley Center, and portions of Escondido and unincorporated areas of the county of San Diego. For more information about the Valley Center Municipal Water District, visit www.vcmwd.org.

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