



NEWS

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FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE**

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**UCI to dramatically increase its use of recycled water
Campus partners with Irvine Ranch Water District to convert central cooling plant**

Irvine, Calif., April 5, 2017 — Aiming to greatly expand its use of recycled water, the University of California, Irvine is partnering with the Irvine Ranch Water District to convert the school's central cooling plant to an environmentally friendly system that will conserve more than 50 million gallons of drinkable water per year.

The central cooling plant is the hub of the air conditioning systems for 65 buildings at UCI. Recycled water will replace the potable water used in its 4.5 million-gallon evaporative cooling tower, which utilizes a process that drops water through the air to lower its temperature to 39 degrees Fahrenheit. This chilled water is pumped throughout campus in a closed-loop circulation system to cool various structures, thereby reducing the amount of electricity that would otherwise be needed for air conditioning.

“Recycled water is a key component of the IRWD's water portfolio. It helps ensure water supply reliability and promotes water resource sustainability,” said Douglas Reinhart, president of the IRWD board of directors. “We are pleased to partner with UCI on this groundbreaking project.”

Wendell Brase, associate chancellor for sustainability at UCI, said: “We're always looking for ways to strengthen the university's longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship. This opportunity is a huge step toward our campus goal of reducing the amount

of potable water used on campus, and we are pleased to have such a forward-looking partner in the IRWD.”

Once the project is completed, UCI will have slashed its per capita water consumption by 42 percent since 2007. This puts it well ahead of the University of California’s policy goal of cutting water usage by 36 percent by 2025.

Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin this summer and wrap up in early 2018, said Richard Demerjian, chair of UCI’s Water Resources Working Group and assistant vice chancellor for environmental planning and sustainability. When finished, the conversion will save enough drinking water to supply 300 households a year.

The water district and university are both longtime conservation pioneers. The IRWD is known for its innovative programs to reduce water use. UCI is at the forefront of environmental research and is the only campus in the nation to make *Sierra* magazine’s annual list of the top 10 “Cool Schools” seven years in a row.

The cooling tower conversion is the latest in a series of collaborations between UCI and the IRWD that began with the new campus opting in 1965 to use recycled water for landscaping. UCI currently employs recycled water for nearly all landscape irrigation and has implemented a number of measures – including plumbing fixture retrofits – to save drinking water in student housing, classroom buildings and laboratories.

About the University of California, Irvine: Founded in 1965, UCI is the youngest member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. The campus has produced three Nobel laureates and is known for its academic achievement, premier research, innovation and anteater mascot. Led by Chancellor Howard Gillman, UCI has more than 30,000 students and offers 192 degree programs. It’s located in one of the world’s safest and most economically vibrant communities and is Orange County’s second-largest employer, contributing \$5 billion annually to the local economy. For more on UCI, visit www.uci.edu.

About the Irvine Ranch Water District: The IRWD is the largest water district in Orange County, California. Established in 1961, it provides high-quality drinking water, reliable sewage collection and treatment, groundbreaking recycled water programs and environmentally sound urban runoff treatment for more than 390,000 residents. As an independent, not-for-profit public agency, the IRWD is governed by a five-member, publicly elected board of directors. To learn more, visit <http://www.irwd.com>.