

Leisure Village recycled water project completed

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The 10-year, \$2.5-million project to outfit Leisure Village in Camarillo with a recycled water pipeline is complete.

"It means (residents are) going to have green grass in the future," said Robert Scheaffer, Leisure Village general manager.

Purple pipes jutting out of the ground and purple fire hydrants here and there are the only visible signs that the 415-acre retirement community is using recycled water to keep its 200 acres of greenbelt and 18-hole golf course green. The community began using recycled water through 15,000 feet of underground pipes last month.

The network connects to Camrosa Water District's reclamation facility.

The joint venture with Camrosa, Calleguas Municipal Water District and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is expected to save 180 million gallons of potable drinking water a year, Scheaffer said.

The retirement community depended entirely on potable water for its needs before the project. Using recycled water for irrigation has reduced the village's dependency on more expensive potable water by 70 percent, he said.

Potable or drinking water costs \$1.75 per hundred cubic feet, compared with 60 cents per hundred cubic feet for non-potable or recycled water.

In a drought, landscaping often suffers. Leisure Village residents have said they want to keep the community green, and using recycled water will help ensure that, Scheaffer said.

"Twenty-five percent of the property value here is the landscaping," he said.

The water project benefits other Camrosa customers and Ventura County as a whole by freeing up more of the limited potable water for those who don't have access to non-potable water, Camrosa General Manager Frank Royer said.

"I think that this is a step forward for building self-reliance," Royer said. "It shows what a partnership can do."

Leisure Village residents will see a "considerable" savings on their water bills in about seven years, Scheaffer said. The savings meanwhile will be used to pay for retrofitting the community to use recycled water. Scheaffer said he didn't know how much residents would save.

Recycled water is high-grade water that's safe for pets and vegetation but doesn't meet the same standards for taste and clarity as potable water, Scheaffer said.