

## **New Novato water recycling plant makes a splash**

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As water flowed through a purple pipe into a series of filters, a crowd of workers and officials gathered at the Novato Sanitary District on Thursday to dedicate its new \$6 million recycling plant.

The 1.7-million-gallon recycling center will treat wastewater from the community, and underground pipes installed by the North Marin Water District will take the water to landscapes including those of Fireman's Fund Insurance Co. in Novato. The two public agencies are partners in the project, financed by state and federal grants as well as ratepayer money.

"We will be making better use of our resources now," said Bill Long, chairman of the Novato Sanitary District board, to the crowd of about 100 that spilled out of the white tent set up for the occasion.

"There is more to do in the future, but this is a big step for the community," he said. Long said the ultimate goal is to eliminate all discharge of wastewater to San Pablo Bay.

"Reusing treated wastewater from homes and businesses makes good sense because it saves Novato's fresh drinking water for other important purposes and reduces the need for additional wastewater storage," said Beverly James, the sanitary district's general manager-engineer, speaking over the low hum of the plant's air compressor.

The plant will save Novato 150 million gallons of water a year, enough to supply about 1,400 single-family homes for a year. It will provide what is known as tertiary treatment. When someone flushes a toilet in Novato, the wastewater travels to the Novato Sanitary District's sewage treatment plant, where it receives primary and secondary treatment.

For some time, the district has had facilities that take raw sewage and treat it to the point that it is safe to put in the bay or use for pastures. The new plant takes that water and filters and disinfects it so it is safe to use in places like golf courses and country clubs for irrigation.

Water in those locations must be cleaner because, for example, a sprinkler might go off and douse a visitor, James said.

This is the second launch of a water recycling plant in Marin in less than three weeks. A plant that pumps water from San Rafael's Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District to irrigate schools, parks and fields in Novato was dedicated Sept. 25.

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