

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 27, 2022



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Big event marks FPUD turning 100 years old

Fallbrook Public Utility District has been providing water and sewer service in Fallbrook for nearly 100 years. Now thanks to a unanimous vote by the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCO, the process is moving forward for the district to be able to provide additional community services under the umbrella of parks and recreation services, streets and street lighting.

The Fallbrook Public Utility District turns 100 years old on June 5.

The district is celebrating its anniversary with a huge, open-to-the-public event June 4, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., to mark a century of supplying water to more than 35,000 residents in Fallbrook.

In its early years, the district served about 800 customers.

The free event will feature a petting zoo, horse-drawn wagon rides, face painting, water games and crafts, water/science labs for kids, and an old west theme and decorations. And giveaways.

There will also be hot rod and muscle cars, FPUD big trucks on display and open for children to sit in for photos. There will be antique tractors and vehicles, North County Fire Department will be there with a fun activity. The Sheriff's department will also be there with an interactive activity for adults and younger ones.

The Fallbrook High School cheerleaders will perform and Miss Fallbrook and her court will be there to welcome guests. Firehouse Que and Brew and Cali Food Truck's Mexican food will be available for purchase.

Back in 1922, the tiny Fallbrook Public Utility District, consisting of about 500 acres, was incorporated on June 5 to serve water from local area wells along the San Luis Rey River.

Fifteen years later, FPUD began to grow. In 1937, the Fallbrook Irrigation District voted to dissolve and a portion of the former Irrigation District became a part of FPUD, increasing the size of the District to 5,000 acres. FPUD responded to the growth by developing additional groundwater supplies from both the San Luis Rey and the Santa Margarita rivers.

When Colorado River water became available in 1948, water consumption gradually increased. By 1959, FPUD was consuming 10,000 acre-feet per year. (An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, or enough water to meet the needs of eight household people for one year.) And the area continued to grow.

Significant expansions of the service area took place in 1950 when it annexed the last remaining portion of the Fallbrook Irrigation District and in 1958 when the area to the north of town on both sides of the Santa Margarita River annexed to the District.

Use of Santa Margarita River water continued until 1969 when floods destroyed the district's diversion works. These facilities were not replaced because in 1968 a Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement was signed with the Federal Government to develop a two dam and reservoir project on the river for the benefit of FPUD and the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

This agreement was the culmination of 17 years of water rights litigation in the U.S. vs. Fallbrook case and the federally sponsored project was known as the Santa Margarita Project.

In 1978, FPUD began getting water from another source: the California State Water Project near Sacramento. The entire southern California region was growing and to meet that demand, Metropolitan began delivering water to San Diego County from the State Water Project as well as the Colorado River.

In 1990, the registered voters in the DeLuz Heights Municipal Water District, whose service area joins Fallbrook to the northwest, decided to dissolve their 17-year-old district and its entire service area was annexed to FPUD. This added 11,789 acres to Fallbrook's service area.

Then in 1994, FPUD's scope of operations grew one more time when the Fallbrook Sanitary District was dissolved and FPUD took over sewer service responsibilities within a 4,200-acre area of downtown Fallbrook.

In November 2021, FPUD celebrated the launch of the Santa Margarita River Conjunctive Use Project, some 70 years in the making. The district is now receiving, on average, approximately 50% of its water needs locally from the river's water.

The project essentially settles a lawsuit that was filed back in 1951 by the U.S. government on behalf of Camp Pendleton against Fallbrook over rights to the river.

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