

City recognizes water-saving landscape project

By Deniene Husted

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MISSION VIEJO, Calif. – The City of Mission Viejo has awarded a Certificate of Commendation to a Harvest Landscape project that saved 108 million gallons of water and resulted in a two-year cost savings of more than \$251,000 to the Oso Valley Greenbelt Association.

The Oso Valley landscape maintenance program, featured recently in an article in the Rancho Santa Margarita Water District's "On Tap" newsletter, was coordinated by Orange-based Harvest Landscape Enterprises, Inc., Monarch Environmental Inc., and Professional Community Management (PCM), who were on hand to celebrate the award this month.

Oso Valley is just one of several sustainable landscape projects being implemented by Harvest. The rapidly growing, family-owned business has also been selected to manage and maintain Southern California Edison's sustainable landscape project planned at the Villa Park Substation in the City of Orange. Harvest is also a key partner in Coastkeeper Gardens, a project of Orange County Coastkeeper now under construction at Santiago Canyon College.

"Harvest strives to apply practical approaches to its projects in order to conserve resources, save money and enhance the beauty of the landscape," said President Steven Schinhofen.

At Oso Valley, Harvest worked with Monarch Environmental and PCM to upgrade the 25-year-old irrigation system, reduce passive turf areas, remove dead or dying plants, rejuvenate high-impact areas and replant designated areas within the community. Together, the measures saved the association 108 million gallons of water and more than \$251,000 in maintenance costs over two years.

"This wasn't a simple maintenance contract," Schinhofen said. "It was a systematic long-term project to fine-tune the efficiency and effectiveness of the landscape plan."

The 150-acre landscape had become wildly overgrown in 25 years. Much of the irrigation system had broken: Lines leaked and broken sprinkler heads had been capped off instead of repaired. Overgrowth blocked many of the lines that did work, which meant the irrigation system had to run longer – sometimes for as much as an hour – to make up for the lack of irrigation elsewhere.

The Certificate of Commendation, signed by Mission Viejo Mayor Trish Kelley, recognizes Oso Valley Greenbelt Association for its "significant water conservation efforts" and for "developing an efficient long-term maintenance plan for enhancing the beauty of the 150 acres of landscape throughout the community."

Harvest Landscape Enterprises, Inc., is one of Orange County's largest family-owned landscape maintenance companies, servicing more than 10,000 acres in the region. The company specializes in resource efficiency, sustainable landscape practices and systematic maintenance for long-term savings. For information, visit www.hlei.us or call 714-283-4298.

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