

AUGUST 2026

San Diego Chapter News

California Special Districts Association



Special District Spotlight

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY CELEBRATED 1,000 CUSTOMERS ENROLLED IN WATER AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM

Sweetwater Authority recently celebrated a significant milestone with the enrollment of its 1,000th customer in the Sweetwater Authority Water Affordability Program (SAWAP), underscoring the agency's ongoing commitment to helping customers manage water costs while promoting equitable access to essential public services.

SAWAP provides financial assistance to eligible households through bill credits, helping reduce the cost of water service for qualifying low-income customers and seniors. The program reflects a growing focus among California special districts on developing innovative solutions that improve affordability while strengthening community resilience.

To mark the occasion, Sweetwater Authority hosted a recognition event attended by local elected officials, regional partners, and community leaders. Among those in attendance were:

Quarterly Dinner Meeting

Thursday, August 20
5:45 pm - 9:00 pm
Dinner served at 6:45 pm

The Butcher Shop
5255 Kearny Villa Rd.
San Diego, CA 92123

[Click here for the Registration Form](#)

2026 Executive Board Meeting Schedule

- October 19, 2026
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2026 Quarterly Dinner Meeting Schedule

- August 20, 2026
 - November 19, 2026
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2026 Quarterly Water Utility Lunch Schedule

- October 20, 2026

- Cesar Fernandez, Deputy Mayor
- Jose Preciado, Councilmember
- Representatives from the Office of Congressman Juan Vargas
- Representatives from the Office of Supervisor Paloma Aguirre
- Delfina Gonzalez, Director of Otay Water District
- Representatives from the South County Economic Development Council
- Representatives from the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

The milestone highlights the collaborative efforts of public agencies, community organizations, and local leaders working together to expand awareness of customer assistance programs and improve access to essential water services.

As water providers across California continue to address affordability challenges, programs like SAWAP demonstrate how special districts can partner with their communities to ensure customers have access to critical resources while advancing long-term sustainability and public service goals.



MID-YEAR LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: KEY ACTIONS AFFECTING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SPECIAL DISTRICTS

The first half of the 2026 Legislative Session has been especially active for California special districts. By the Legislature's July 2 Summer Recess, CSDA had reviewed 2,178 bills and adopted priority positions on 235 measures.

Among the most significant actions were:

- **Local Revenue Protection** – CSDA successfully advocated for a compromise that protects voter-approved local revenue measures from retroactive invalidation while helping resolve competing statewide ballot measures related to local tax and fee elections.
- **High-Speed Rail Funding** – CSDA opposed proposals that would divert local property tax revenues through tax increment financing without the express consent of affected local agencies, helping keep the issue focused on protecting local government revenues.
- **CARB Advanced Clean Fleets Regulations** – CSDA continued advocating for greater flexibility in California's zero-emission vehicle mandates, particularly for emergency response and utility vehicles relied upon by water, fire, sanitation, and other special districts.

- **Affordable Housing & Infrastructure** – CSDA supported legislation that improves infrastructure financing and ensures special districts have equitable access to state funding needed to serve growing communities.
- **Brown Act & Governance** – The Legislature continued work on comprehensive Brown Act modernization, with several proposals intended to clarify meeting requirements and improve transparency while reducing administrative burdens on local agencies.
- **Legislative Deadlines Met** – Before Summer Recess, bills advanced through their policy committees and moved to fiscal committees or floor consideration. The Legislature reconvenes on August 3, with final action on bills scheduled before adjournment on August 31.

These issues remain particularly important for Southern California special districts as they continue investing in water reliability, public safety, infrastructure, and essential community services while navigating evolving state regulations and funding opportunities.

MEET THE 2026 CSDA VIDEO CONTEST WINNERS

This annual scholarship competition challenged San Diego County high school students to create engaging, 60-second videos showcasing how special districts provide essential services that enhance the quality of life in our communities. From water and wastewater to parks, fire protection, and other vital public services, students demonstrated creativity, originality, and a strong understanding of the important role special districts play throughout the region.



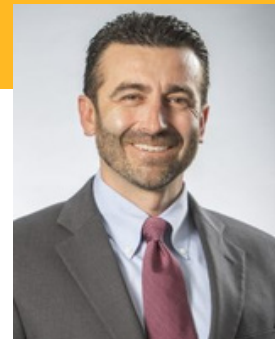
Congratulations to our 2026 scholarship recipients:

- **First Place (\$1,500):** Siena Innocenzi / Coronado High School
[Video – Sweetwater Authority](#)
- **Second Place (\$1,000):** Yamen Bani Khaled / Mira Mesa High School
[Video – A Deep Dive](#)

We applaud all of this year's participants for their outstanding submissions and thank the teachers, advisors, and families who supported them throughout the competition. The San Diego Chapter CSDA is honored to encourage civic engagement and inspire the next generation to learn more about the essential services provided by special districts.

Congratulations once again to our winners for their exceptional work!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



San Diego Chapter Members,

As the summer continues to roll its heat and humidity on us all, I wanted to remind you of a couple of “hot topics” for the “coolest chapter” in CSDA. As a warmup to the annual CSDA conference later this month, our next chapter meeting and dinner will be held on August 20th at The Butcher Shop where we will hear from Angela Shafer-Payne, Chief Development Officer with the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority giving us the latest updates on the Airport including “What’s New with T1”.

Next, With the start of fall just around the corner, I wanted to remind you all that at the November 19th chapter meeting there will be a call for nominations and elections for President, 1st Vice President, and Secretary. You can make your nomination in person or if you are unable to make the meeting you can contact Jack Bebee at jackb@fpud.com to submit your nomination ahead of the meeting. The term for these positions will begin at the start of 2027.

Lastly, I wanted to remind you that all these “cool” events are great opportunities to learn and network with your peers in air-conditioned spaces! I look forward to seeing you all at both the dinner and at the conference!

TREASURER'S REPORT



April 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026

Income for the period was from the May 2026 dinner meeting \$4,330.00 and 2026-2027 membership dues \$975.00 for a total of \$5,305.00.

Expenditures for the period included The Butcher Shop Restaurant for the May 2026 dinner meeting \$4,593.15; donation to the CSDA Special District Leadership Foundation \$2,026.00; and credit card processing fees for the quarter \$195.44 for a total of \$6,814.59.

The fund balances as of June 30, 2026 were as follows: the Grant Scholarship Fund balance increased by the 50% allocation of the annual membership receipts \$487.50 with an ending balance of \$30,827.44; the Speaker Program fund remained unchanged with a balance of \$2,500.00; and the General Fund balance after adjustments for income, transfer to Grant Scholarship fund, and expenses decreased by \$1,997.09 for an ending balance of \$7,473.03 for a total Fund balance of \$40,800.47. The bank balance as of June 30, F was \$40,800.47.

Rich Stevenson
Treasurer
CSDA San Diego Chapter

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