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MEDIA RELEASE

COTTONWOOD, April 10, 2013 – The City of Cottonwood has achieved impressive results in its water conservation efforts, creating an example for other municipal water providers in Arizona. These accomplishments are the result of a water management strategy that has included a mix of acquisitions, upgrades and conservation measures.

In 2005, Cottonwood purchased the private water companies that served water to the City and surrounding area. At the time, there was some criticism about this move, but from a water management perspective, it was a wise decision. Seven years later, these acquisitions and other measures have paid off. The City is pumping about 15 percent less water today than it did in 2006 and almost 20 percent less than what it was projected to pump in 2012. The City's total gallons per capita per daily (GPCD) use has been reduced by almost 30 percent. The City's continuous water delivery system maintenance and upgrade work has reduced system losses by almost 80 percent.

While these accomplishments already benefit Cottonwood's citizens and its natural environment, the City is looking toward the future and believes it will serve the community even better by meeting all of the conservation standards it has envisioned. Cottonwood will continue to honor its commitment to upgrade and improve the water delivery system and will also expand its water conservation, water reuse and recharge efforts.

Like many other cities and towns throughout the arid west, Cottonwood is developing and implementing public outreach programs, offering financial incentives, and passing ordinances designed to encourage and even mandate the conservation and management of water. The City recently adopted a water management strategy that outlines seven key policies rooted in smart relations and values. They include protecting the Verde River, conserving groundwater, relying on accurate hydrologic data, recognizing the value of surface water rights, maintaining good relations with neighboring communities, embracing opportunities and being fiscally accountable in its water management practices. Cottonwood also completed a proposed comprehensive conservation program that consists of education and outreach programs, incentivized rebates, and new policies and ordinances.

At the direction of the City Council, staff members have reached out to citizen and business groups throughout Cottonwood for input on the proposed conservation program. The response and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Later this summer, the City plans on formally adopting and implementing the comprehensive conservation program. When implemented, the conservation plan will reduce the City's already-low GPCD -- making it one of the lowest in the state.

The City is investigating the feasibility of increasing the current reuse of reclaimed water and recharging all unused reclaimed water back into the groundwater system. The completion of the new water reclamation facility will also allow the City to expand its use reclaimed water for irrigation in place of the currently used potable well water. The goal is to eventually reuse and/or recharge 100 percent of the reclaimed water. This effort, in conjunction with a comprehensive conservation program and the ongoing operation and maintenance efforts, will position the City of Cottonwood to be on the leading edge of water management and conservation in Arizona.

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