

Pouring Into the Next Generation

Behind every clean, safe drop of water that comes from your tap is the dedicated team of Mesa Water District (Mesa Water®) professionals working hard to keep your water system and infrastructure reliable and running smoothly. **The water industry is one of the most essential – and often overlooked – components of public infrastructure.** It's powered by skilled and hardworking individuals in a variety of professions from water operators and engineers to water quality specialists, finance experts, maintenance teams and more.



Like many industries across the country, the water industry is facing a unique workforce challenge: a generational shift known as the “silver tsunami.” This trend refers to the increasing number of baby boomers reaching retirement age.



Across the U.S., nearly one-third of the water industry workforce is expected to retire in the next decade, according to the Environmental Protection Agency and industry studies. Many of these workers hold highly specialized roles – operators, engineers and field staff who have spent decades building institutional knowledge that can't be replaced overnight.



At the same time, only about 10% of water industry workers are under age 24, and fewer young people are entering the field, according to a study by Brookings. This means many utilities are facing a double challenge: filling critical roles and bridging a growing skills gap in a younger workforce.

This growing need to inspire and prepare the next generation of water professionals was one of the driving forces to create the Mesa Water Education Center. The Center welcomes learners of all ages – from fifth graders discovering the fundamentals of water and the unique urban water system in north Orange County, to high school and college groups exploring hands-on lab demonstrations, career pathways and real-world applications of water management. The unique space is designed to spark curiosity, support STEM learning and provide insight into the many careers that keep our water systems running smoothly.

Now booking tours and field trips for 2026 at the Mesa Water Education Center.
To inquire, email Info@MesaWater.org or call 949.631.1201.



Flowing with Excellence

We are proud to announce that Mesa Water's Water Policy Manager, Stacy Taylor, has been recognized with the Blanche Vizzini Award by the California Association of Mutual Water Companies (CalMutuals)! Named after Blanche Vizzini, a trailblazing figure in California water management, this annual prestigious award recognizes an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to small water systems.

Stacy has been with Mesa Water for over 15 years, starting in public and government affairs and ultimately shifting to water policy. Her work includes securing grant funding for local water infrastructure, defending fair water rates and advocating for policies that protect the community's water supply. Congratulations, Stacy!

Staff Splash: Meet Nadia Boutros

Nadia is a civil engineer who keeps an eye on the big projects and small details, helping everything flow smoothly behind the scenes.



What is your role at Mesa Water and what does a typical day look like?

I'm a civil engineer in the engineering department. Most days, I'm coordinating projects that improve our water system's reliability and efficiency. If I'm not in the office managing consultants, budgets and schedules, I'm out in the field troubleshooting or finding solutions to construction or operational challenges. My work focuses on keeping projects moving smoothly by connecting technical details to the bigger picture of delivering reliable water service to our community.

Do you have any advice for emerging professionals pursuing a career in STEM?

Ask questions. Lots of them. Curiosity is one of the most valuable traits you can bring to the table. Engineering isn't about knowing everything; it's about problem-solving and collaboration. Don't underestimate the importance of communication - being able to explain technical ideas clearly is just as important as getting the calculations right.

If your job were a movie or TV show, what would it be called?

Mission Possible. Why? Because every project starts with a challenge, a deadline and a few good plot twists - but we always find a way to get it done before the credits roll.

Do you have a favorite part of Mesa Water's story?

I love that Mesa Water is 100% local. It's rare for a community to meet all its water needs from groundwater and it speaks to decades of smart investments in infrastructure and reliability. It's rewarding to be part of a team that continues to strengthen that legacy.

Is there anything behind-the-scenes about your work you wish more people knew about?

Engineering is a lot more collaborative than people think. Every project involves close coordination across multiple teams, both internal and external, to make sure everything works seamlessly once it's built. When people turn on the tap and clean water comes out, it's because dozens of people spent months or years planning and refining the details behind it.

Let's Talk Tap

Water Issues Study Group (WISG) is returning in 2026! Held at the Mesa Water Education Center on January 26 and February 9, 2026, WISG is a unique adult education program for Mesa Water customers and service area residents that provides invigorating group discussions about our 100% local, reliable, clean, safe water supply - and more.

RSVP today at MesaWater.org/WISG or contact us at 949.631.1201.

Good Clean Fun with Our Friends at CMSD!

Mesa Water had a great time joining our friends at the Costa Mesa Sanitary District (CMSD) for their annual Eco Expo! The event brought together local agencies, green businesses and community members for a fun-filled day focused on sustainability and all things eco-friendly.

We loved connecting with attendees to share how Mesa Water provides a 100% local, reliable water supply. From reusable giveaways to great conversations, the Eco Expo was a perfect reminder of how teamwork between local special districts helps keep our community clean, green and thriving.

Thank you to CMSD for hosting- we're already looking forward to next year!



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Produced by Mesa Water's Board of Directors, **News On Tap** is a bi-monthly publication to inform Mesa Water's customers and community about water issues and events.

BOARD MEETINGS

Mesa Water Board meetings are held the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at 1965 Placentia Avenue, Costa Mesa, and are open to the public. For more information, call 949.631.1206.

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