



## [The Great Comeback of the Public Drinking Water Fountain](#)

By Albert Rodriguez

Long revered as a symbol of health, civic pride and a champion of public space, the urban drinking water fountain has seen tough times in recent years. The advent and saturation of single-use plastic water bottles and sugary drinks has denigrated the once noble water fountain to a weathered, barely functioning object of curiosity in parks and schools.

Today, all that is changing, as LADWP moves forward with a multi-faceted initiative to make Los Angeles one of the most sustainable cities in the world. LADWP plans to install or refurbish 200 drinking water fountains, more recently referred to as hydration stations, citywide by 2035 for the enjoyment and health of all residents and visitors in the city. LADWP will partner with the City's Department of Recreation and Parks and Department of General Services to install, refurbish and maintain the hydration stations.

### **L.A.'s Tap Water, by the Numbers**

**1** state-of-the-art filtration plant

**2** aqueducts

**84** pump stations,

**118** tanks and reservoirs,

**328** pressure regulator and relief stations (controls water pressure)

**560** miles of trunklines (pipes greater than 20 inches in diameter)

**6,780** miles of distribution mainlines (20 inches in diameter or less)

**120,000** water quality tests performed on samples taken throughout the city!

This concerted effort to increase access to clean drinking water and decrease reliance on single-use plastic water bottles is one way LADWP can promote a more sustainable, healthier future for customers and the communities it serves. Nearly 50 million plastic water bottles are purchased and discarded every year across the U.S. with only 30 percent getting recycled. This is in addition to the

environmental impacts created and the resources used to manufacture, package, and distribute these bottles.

It is only fitting that a world-class city like Los Angeles promote its drinking water and public hydration stations in much the same way that Rome, Tokyo or Paris does. Locals in those cities use their *nasonis*, *mizu nomi ba*, and *fontaines d'eau potable* every day. In contrast, many people here in L.A. don't realize that bottled water is largely unregulated while LADWP's tap water meets all federal and state drinking water regulations.

"The new and refurbished hydration stations will remind Angelinos of the importance that clean drinking water plays in our lives, our health and our connection to the environment," said Razmik Manoukian, LADWP Director of Water Quality. "Thanks to LADWP's comprehensive planning, robust treatment and monitoring infrastructure, our drinking water is clean and reliable and should be a focal point of our civic pride as it is in many other prominent cities."



The new hydration stations will be placed at a variety of locations throughout the city where individuals can fill up their reusable water bottles with clean, refreshing tap water. All hydration stations will feature reusable water bottle filling stations and some outdoor stations will include spigots to fill water bowls for pets.

Stations have already been placed at Balboa Park, L.A. City Hall East, and at the John Ferraro Building. In addition to the installation at large municipal buildings and at parks, LADWP is working to install or refurbish hydration stations at our customer service centers and employee facilities. Older water fountains will be replaced with new stations at LADWP's Water Testing Laboratory, Water Quality Laboratory, L.A. Aqueduct Filtration Plant, Western Yard, East Valley Yard and the Surveyors Office.

As the city prepares for the 2028 Olympics, LADWP will be working to strategically place hydration

stations in areas that are anticipated to have large gatherings of spectators and participants. These stations will provide an alternative to sugary drinks and help promote the benefits of drinking water. LADWP counterparts at *Eau de Paris* (Paris Water) are currently preparing for the 2024 Olympics and have over 1,200 hydration stations throughout their city.

“We are working closely with our friends in Paris to learn from their experience and efforts,” said Serge Haddad, Section Manager in LADWP’s Water Quality Division. “The Olympics is a world stage where people witness the best athletes competing for medals and it is the perfect opportunity to put L.A. water on that highest podium and share why it’s the gold standard in quality.”

Moreover, LADWP is looking to expand the Hydration Station program by establishing partnerships with commercial customers and other agencies such as LAUSD. Educating children on the benefits of L.A.’s drinking water is critical to achieving the city’s sustainability goals for future generations.

L.A.’s drinking water is safe and treated to the highest quality. So drink up, and drink with confidence!



## [Tapping Into Excellence](#)

### **Water System Employees Take Part in Annual Competition**

By Albert Rodriguez

It was non-stop action as the best-of-the-best in LADWP’s Water System showcased their skills and talents during the exciting 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Sylmar WEST Tap Off competition on February 20. The annual competition brought in teams of water utility workers from LADWP’s Water Distribution Division district yards and other local water utilities to show off their skill in various water-related events.

Teams squared off in colorfully named, but technically difficult events, such as Pipe Tapping, Hydrant Hysteria, Hot Flare and Meter Madness. This year’s Tap-off event also featured a Safety Fair put on by Water Distribution Division Safety with vendors and water utility product exhibitions

The main Pipe Tappers competition entails a three-person crew drilling a hole and installing a valve into

pressurized cement-lined, ductile iron pipe using a heavy, hand-cranked tapping machine. Copper service lines are then quickly attached and run to a service meter all in about two minutes all while avoiding leaks as much as possible. The winning LADWP team this year was the “LA Tappers” of Trunk Line Construction featuring Jose Campos, Sr. Water Utility Worker; Mark Winkler, Water Utility Worker; Nick Castruita, Water Utility Supervisor and Coach Joey A. Castruita Jr. Water Utility Supervisor.

“We normally would use modern pneumatic machines, but if those go down out in the field, it’s important to maintain these skills,” said Tommy Gibbs, Water Utility Supervisor, Central District. “The competition brings us together. It’s good training and great for moral.”

The Hydrant Hysteria competition entails assembling a fire hydrant that is broken down into separate components and re-assembled as quickly as possible. The winning team was “Western Hydro Kings” from Western District comprised of Luis E. Zamudio, Water Utility Worker - Christopher Torres, Maintenance Construction Helper and Coach Cesar Barragan, Sr. Water Utility Worker.

The Meter Madness competition featured water utility workers putting together a water service meter from a bucket of parts. Winner of this event was Angus L. Hall, Maintenance Construction Helper of Western District.

In the Hot Flare competition, participants must skillfully remove a water meter from a pressurized water service line, cut the pipe, hammer in a new valve, shut it off and then install a new water meter, all while icy-cold water is splashing around. Their movements must be efficient and precise in order to minimize water loss and install a properly functioning meter. The winner of Hot Flare this year was Alan S. Verdi Maintenance Construction Helper and Justice Baldwin Water Utility Worker of West Valley District.



Justice Baldwin flares copper as he strikes an opening into a copper pipe.

“It’s important that our crews stay at the top of their skill set with events like this, especially during leak season,” said Donald Williams, Western District Superintendent. “Colder weather and colder water coming into the distribution system along with older infrastructure can keep our crews really busy during this time of year.”

The LA Tappers went on to take first place at the regional competition in Sacramento on March 27th vaulting them to the AWWA ACE19 national competition in Denver, CO June 10-12. LA Tappers were in the lead for most of qualifying rounds until being bumped out of finals in the last afternoon session by Birmingham, Alabama Water Works “Bama Boys” who went on to take 1st place. Undaunted, LA Tappers hope to return next year for what promises to be another tough, but exciting competition.