

## Alhambra officials open new water treatment plant

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• **Photo Gallery:** [Groundwater treatment](#)

ALHAMBRA - Saying it will secure the city's drinking water supply for the future, officials Thursday held a grand opening for a new \$13.8 million treatment plant.

"It's really for sustainability - it assures Alhambra's water supply," said Dennis Ahlen, general manager of utilities for Alhambra.

The new plant, which debuted to the public exactly two years after officials broke ground on the project, uses a high-tech system of 14 filtration tanks, which line the inside of the plant.

Each tank uses different filtration processes to rid groundwater of nitrates and other "volatile organic compounds," Ahlen said. The new technology allows the plant to draw up and purify water from four different city wells.

Alhambra gets about 75 percent of its water from its wells. But when the San Gabriel Valley was still largely agricultural, much of the ground water beneath the city was exposed to nitrates - from pesticides - and other chemicals.

The new plant eliminates those toxins, officials said.

At full capacity, the plant - in the 500 block of Granada Avenue - can process about 7,000 gallons of water per minute.

Electronic monitors around the plant allow employees to check how much water is being processed, officials said.

"You have to design the science specifically to go after the (particular contaminant)," said Christine Montan, city director of utilities. "What we have is ion exchange technology and liquid phase granular activated carbon technology."

Water from other wells in the city considered safe - those not exposed to chemical contamination - are also rigorously monitored, Montan said. Water is tested every few days.

Alhambra used city funds to pair for the new treatment plant, but the city also received \$3.9 million from the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District Board, and \$1.4 million from the Board of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority.

State Assemblyman Mike Eng, who attended Thursday's opening ceremony, said, with the plant, Alhambra can increase its own resources, which can help ease the state's water shortage.

"The three important things are cleanup, conservation and community support," he said. "If we can get all of that right, this will be a crisis we can manage."