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The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

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El Valle de Los Ranchos Water and Sanitation District receives national EPA award for Clean Water State Revolving Loan project

RANCHOS DE TAOS — The New Mexico Environment Department congratulates the El Valle de Los Ranchos Water and Sanitation District, which is the recipient of a 2020 U.S. EPA Performance and Innovation in the State Revolving Fund Creating Environmental Success (PISCES) Exceptional Project Award for “Excellence in Community Engagement.” Of the 33 nominations from around the country, only five were selected by the EPA Office of Wastewater Management for recognition.

The award-winning project led by El Valle de Los Ranchos Water and Sanitation District resulted in sewer service being provided to multiple small communities, including Ranchos de Taos, Talpa, Llano Quemado, Cordillera and Los Cordovas through a partnership with the Town of Taos.

In rural New Mexico, many areas do not have the capacity to organize and gain community support to provide viable alternatives to septic systems and leach fields. By replacing individual sub-standard and failing septic systems and leach fields located in many of these communities with collection lines and centralized treatment at the Taos Valley Regional Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Facility, El Valle de Los Ranchos has protected precious groundwater resources. NMED’s Construction Programs Bureau has worked closely with the District throughout the life of the project to provide financial assistance through the state Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, as well as technical assistance. The Construction Programs Bureau nominated the District for this award.

“This could not have been done without developing and maintaining close connections with these communities and fostering meaningful community engagement,” said F.R. Bob Romero, Vice Chairman of the District.

“El Valle de Los Ranchos has demonstrated outstanding leadership in community engagement and fiscal responsibility,” said NMED Construction Programs Bureau Chief Judi Kahl. “We have worked with the District on several projects and they are a prime example of what a small system can do with great leadership.”

The phased project has used a variety of other funding sources as well, including from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state legislative appropriations. The District’s ratepayers have also contributed significant funds.

The PISCES program recognizes Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund recipients for exceptional projects and highlights them nationally. More information is available [here](#).

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