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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT ANNOUNCES WATERSMART LANDSCAPE CONTEST WINNER**

*Heidi and Martin Leonard recognized for their water-wise landscape.*

Vista, CA—

The Vista Irrigation District board of directors recognized Heidi and Martin Leonard as the district's 2026 WaterSmart Landscape Contest winners at its meeting today.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard moved to their current residence in 2022. Being from the Las Vegas area, they recognized the importance of using water wisely in the landscape. The home that they purchased in Vista came with an unhealthy lawn and overgrown shrubbery, and upon moving in they knew they wanted to make a change.

The Leonards' neighbor mentioned the WaterSmart landscape rebate program, and they jumped at the chance to participate. They removed the unattractive lawn and outdated irrigation system in the front yard and replaced it with a new drip system and a whole new landscape design. What was once overgrown shrubs and boring lawn has been replaced by a crushed rock pathway bordered by colorful succulents and deergrass to add texture; the yard is anchored by three well placed fruitless olive trees that provide dappled shade.

"We love coming home to our home now, knowing that our landscape is good for the environment, and we get lots of compliments", Mrs. Leonard said. "It was an amazing experience and transformation".

The annual contest recognizes outstanding water-wise residential landscapes based on the criteria of overall attractiveness, appropriate plant selection, design, appropriate maintenance, and efficient methods of irrigation.

“Free regional WaterSmart landscape workshops are available online and in person to assist homeowners to upgrade their home’s landscape to reduce water bills,” said Sandra Sanchez, water conservation specialist. “Additionally, landscape conversion rebates, such as for turf replacement, are available to help with the cost.”

The district joined eleven other local agencies that held landscape contests this year, providing an opportunity to highlight water-wise residential landscapes throughout the region. Participating agencies (besides Vista Irrigation District) include Helix Water District, Olivenhain Municipal Water District, Otay Water District, Padre Dam Municipal Water District, San Dieguito Water District, Sweetwater Authority, Vallecitos Water District, California American Water, Rincon Del Diablo Water District, and the cities of Escondido and Oceanside.

For more information about the contest and to see more examples of WaterSmart landscaping, visit [www.landscapecontest.com](http://www.landscapecontest.com). Visit the district’s web site ([www.vidwater.org](http://www.vidwater.org)) or call (760) 597-3160 to find out more about free landscape workshops and incentive programs.

Vista Irrigation District is a public agency governed by an elected five-member board. The district provides water service to roughly 135,000 people in the city of Vista, and portions of San Marcos, Escondido, Oceanside, and unincorporated areas of San Diego County.

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