

MEDIA ALERT

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Satirist Will Durst Makes a Splash at Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards



Photos by Christen Creed, CPAU

L-R Clockwise:

- Will Durst uses comic inspiration to fire up water crowd
- PA Utilities Director Valerie Fong accepting award
- EarthCapades David Heartlife delivers conservation messages While juggling
- Award winners include Kathy Machado of the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Canopy's Catherine Martineau and CPAU's Director Fong.

Calling Silicon Valley the national "Petri dish" for innovative programs and forward-thinking initiatives, political satirist Will Durst kicked off today's sixth annual Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards ceremony with a lot of laughs about a very serious subject---protecting our water resources.

This year's awards honorees included the City of Palo Alto Utilities for having one of the most comprehensive water conservation programs in the state, which has resulted in savings of almost 300 million gallons of water in the last 10 years alone---enough to fill 12 Olympic-sized swimming pools!

"We're honored to be recognized---we know many other people and agencies are also working very hard on conservation outreach, especially in light of current drought conditions," noted Utilities Director Valerie Fong upon accepting the award.

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“Cyclical droughts are a fact of life in California, so Palo Alto’s attitude is we have no choice but to be water-efficient if we’re going to have a sustainable future. This award also belongs to Palo Alto’s residents, businesses and civic leaders who value the efficient use of water resources and are willing to walk the walk when it comes to implementing improvements,” Fong added.

The Palo Alto municipal water utility was established in 1896 and no doubt the founders would be very proud of what we have accomplished since then---both in terms of securing high-quality water resources for the community and managing those resources in the smartest way possible. For example, despite a population increase of 14% since 2005, Palo Alto’s water use has actually declined by almost 5% during that same time.

Palo Alto non-profit “Canopy” received an award for their promotion of drought-tolerant tree species and outreach to educate the public on how to protect all trees during dry times. EarthCapades, a troupe which won an award for their education of children about water conservation, sent their juggler-in-chief David Heartlife to demonstrate the entertaining techniques he uses to engage school audiences. NASA-Ames Research Center and Google were also among the award recipients.

The Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards coalition is spearheaded by former Palo Alto Mayor Peter Drekmeier, who now heads up the non-profit Tuolumne River Trust. More details on the awards program, winners and contact info are [here](#). (Footage from a video of the event may be available...contact Peter Drekmeier at 415-882-7252.)

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