

**EAST VALLEY WATER DISTRICT**

# Keeping workers in the loop and in the groove

**By Fielding Buck**

*fbuck@seng.com*  
*@pefbuck on Twitter*

At the East Valley Water District, people's desire for flexibility in the workplace gets fulfilled. Literally.

The Highland-based utility has a stretching program for its employees, five minutes of "moving in the groove" to limber up the body and the mind. Field workers start their shifts with it daily. Office workers do it a couple of times a week.

The stretching sessions arose out of the utility's Leadership Academy, which gives employees skills to move into management roles.

"We get together a group of our future leaders for a six-month program," said Kerrie Bryan, human resources manager. "The employees get to come up with a real project that will better the district."

This is the third time the district has made Top Workplaces and the second year in a row it has been the No. 1 small company.

In the past year, the district has had success with its cross-training program, Bryan said, enabling an employee in customer service to transfer to the finance department.

The district was formed in 1954 to serve then-un-



PHOTOS BY JOHN VALENZUELA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

East Valley Water District staff member Alejandra Ronquill participates in team-building stretching exercises at its headquarters in Highland. East Valley Water District is the winner in the small businesses category of Southern California News Group's Top Workplaces in the Inland area.

incorporated Highland. It now provides water and wastewater services to more than 100,000 customers in 27.7 square miles that include portions of San Bernardino and unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County.

The district's mission statement calls for "world-class public service," Bryan said.

"Our employees live that day to day," he said. "They love giving great customer service and helping out our communities as much as they can. I think that's one of the things that makes it meaningful, but also the relationships that have been established."

In the survey, workers

**EAST VALLEY WATER DISTRICT**

**Founded:** 1954

**Sector:** Local government

**Headquarters:** Highland

**Inland Empire employees:** 66

**Website:** eastvalley.org

anonymously commented that they have creative freedom in a family environment.

"It is the best employer I have ever had," read one comment. "EVWD allows me to grow personally and professionally. They let me balance work and home life. My job duties allow me to learn everyday and my job is never stagnant. I love being busy, and this position is always busy."



East Valley Water District staff members, from left, Adrian Ramirez, Alejandra Ronquill, Kerrie Bryan and Shala Gerber participate in team-building stretching exercises at the district's headquarters in Highland. The sessions are part of its Leadership Academy. It gives employees skills to move into management roles.