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Cal Water's George Barber Honored with NAWC Living Water Award

National Award Presented to Barber for Leadership During Camp Fire in November 2018

SAN JOSE, Calif., Oct. 16, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- George Barber, District Manager of California Water Service's (Cal Water) Chico and Oroville Districts, was given the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC) Living Water Award at its annual Water Summit yesterday, for his involvement leading Cal Water's response to the devastating Camp Fire that destroyed Paradise, Calif., in late 2018. Cal Water is the largest subsidiary of California Water Service Group (NYSE: CWT) and serves the neighboring city of Chico.

While the Camp Fire—which burned more than 150,000 acres and 18,804 structures and is one of the worst wildfires in California's history—stopped at the eastern-most edge of Cal Water's Chico service area, it destroyed 13 Cal Water employees' homes in Paradise, almost one-third of the local employee base. Barber co-led Cal Water's Emergency Operations Center to make preparations to the water system, so it would continue to operate properly for firefighters if the fire entered Chico, and simultaneously worked to make sure his employees and their families had the support and resources they needed. At the same time, Barber was not immune to the fire's destruction; the Camp Fire destroyed his home, his daughter's home, and his parents' home. Barber worked tirelessly to both prepare the water system and keep morale high, according to Group President and CEO Martin A. Kropelnicki, during one of the hardest moments of Barber's own life.

"While George's own life was flipped upside down, he felt a calling to be there for his team, customers, and displaced members of his community, and take care of those around him who just needed a hand," Kropelnicki said. "From opening up the Customer Center so displaced employees' families could have a central gathering point to making changes operationally so that other employees limited their time working outdoors in the smoky air, to taking time to talk openly and honestly about the events that struck the community, to giving employees the time they needed to start the difficult task of putting their lives back together, George's employees are now closer than ever—and that's due to his leadership and compassion."

"George is the epitome of leading by example, and he embodies the spirit of the Living Water Award. I am proud to have him on the Cal Water team and pleased that he has been nationally recognized by NAWC for truly making a difference during a major crisis," Kropelnicki added.

The NAWC Living Water Award is presented annually to one regulated water industry professional nationwide who goes above and beyond to provide excellent service to customers or the community, to change how water utilities manage their resources sustainably, or otherwise "move water forward."

About California Water Service Group

California Water Service Group is the parent company of California Water Service, Washington Water Service, New Mexico Water Service, Hawaii Water Service, CWS Utility Services, and HWS Utility Services. Together, these companies employ 1,184 people who provide regulated and non-regulated water service to nearly 2 million people in California, Washington, New Mexico, and Hawaii. California Water Service Group's common stock trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "CWT." Additional information is available online at www.calwatergroup.com.