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# NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers  
of the Nevada Irrigation District

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## At Your Service NID's Service Crew Knows the Water System Inside and Out

**W**ith 330 miles of pipeline in the NID water system, foreman John Ottonello and his six-man Service Crew are always on the move.

They respond to emergencies, trace and repair pipeline and hydrant leaks and are called on to pinpoint the location of underground utilities. They install new water meters and retrofit older meters with new radio-read transmitters.

As they travel through the district's three-county service area, Ottonello and crew meet a variety of customers and provide an important element to the district's customer service program.

### System Grows Older

Ottonello, a 22-year veteran employee, says that as the water system gets older his



**Service Crew members John Ottonello and Eric Fassler check a meter box at a Lake of the Pines residence.**

crew is tending to more leaks. "We are using better materials and techniques than we did in the old days but there is still a lot of old pipe in the system," he said.

The Service Crew handles leak and small pipeline repair of the public water system. Crew members include Joe Gobert, John Mathe, Chris

Berg, Eric Fassler, Chris Hodge and Chris Thompson.

Main line breaks and larger pipeline repairs are handled by a separate pipeline repair crew.

When a leak or other problem is located on the customer's side of the water meter, it is the customers'

*(Please see Service, page 3)*



Pictured at the Alta Sierra collection site are, from left, Scott Rockholm of NID, Terry McMahan of the Consolidated Fire District and John Benzon of the Alta Sierra Property Owners Assoc.

## NID Supports Fire Safety Program in Alta Sierra

**NID** is working with the Alta Sierra Property Owners Association on a successful program to reduce fire danger in Alta Sierra.

Each year, two days in June and two days in September, residents are encouraged to remove fire dangers such as brush and yard waste from their properties and take the materials to NID's reservoir site on Francis Drive.

The vegetation management program is coordinated by Spike Newby, an Alta Sierra resident and battalion chief with Consolidated Fire District. Newby said the association notifies residents of collection days and arranges to have the materials hauled from the reservoir collection point. He said the program has been going for five years and has reduced fire danger.

"The reservoir site is almost three acres, it's fenced, and we have some extra space," said NID Asst. General Manager Ben Barretta. "This is a good way for us to support a worthwhile community program."

## Fall Season Water Storage is Above Average

**A**s of Sept. 15, NID water storage was measured at 187,500 acre-feet, or 111 percent of average for this time of year.

The good storage levels follow a 2002-03 rainfall season that brought 75.74 inches, or 109 percent of average precipitation to Bowman Reservoir (elev. 5650 ft). Rainfall is measured each year July 1 through June 30.

"We are projecting that we will end the irrigation season (Oct. 14) with water storage about 15,000 acre-feet above the historical average," said NID Operations Supv. Sue Sindt. "That will put us in a favorable position as we wait to see what kind of winter we will have."

NID has 10 mountain and foothill reservoirs that store a combined 250,280 acre-feet of water. An acre-foot equals one acre covered one foot deep.

**S**tudies are in progress for the current update of the NID Raw Water Master Plan and for a proposed new water line across the south side of Banner Mountain.

### Raw Water Master Plan

The update looks at available water resources, future water demand and what needs to be done to meet future demand. Kleinschmidt

## Planning Studies Move Forward

Energy & Water Resources Consultants of Sacramento expects to complete the update by next summer.

Information on the master plan update is available on the NID Web site:

[www.nid.dst.ca.us](http://www.nid.dst.ca.us).

### Lower Cascade Canal

The Lower Cascade Canal-

Banner/Cascade Pipeline Project is designed to increase the capacity of the Lower Cascade Canal water delivery system. It includes a new pipeline that would supply water treatment plants as well as agricultural water users.

Environmental studies are in progress for a draft environmental impact report scheduled for release in November. Information may be found at [www.lowercascadecanal.com](http://www.lowercascadecanal.com).

## For Cascade Shores

### **District Wins \$804,000 Recreation Grant**

NID has received approval for a state grant of \$804,000 to make recreational improvements to the Cascade Shores day use area at Scotts Flat Reservoir.

The grant was approved in early September in Sacramento by the California Boating and Waterways Commission.

NID Placer Office Administrator Peggy Davidson, who coordinates recreation programs, said the purpose of the grant is to improve boat launching facilities at Cascade Shores. Many of the facilities at Cascade Shores were built in the 1960s.

The planned improvements include a new boat ramp with boarding float, parking lot improvements, new beach area, new picnic area and new restrooms.

Davidson said the work is being planned for the fall of 2004 when water levels in the reservoir are at their lowest point of the year.

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responsibility to take care of his or her private water system.

### **Member of USA**

NID is a member of the Underground Service Alert (USA) system of California and Nevada, a service that provides information on buried utility lines to contractors and others before they dig in the ground. "Call Before You Dig" is the USA slogan.

Contractors are asked to call USA at 1-800-227-2600 two days in advance of their excavation work.

Otonello locates and responds to requests for location of NID facilities, often marking the surface above underground pipes with a temporary blue paint (blue is for water, red is for electric, orange is for communication and yellow is for gas and oil).

New service installations and meter relocations are handled by a two-man crew and can be as easy as dropping a water meter into an existing box or can involve complications such as road crossings, water outages and traffic controls.

A second two-man crew focuses primarily on retrofitting existing water meters with new registers that allow meter reading by radio from a vehicle or hand-held unit without opening the meter box. Retrofits have been completed on more than 75 percent of existing meters.



**Chris Berg prepares a meter for installation at Lake of the Pines**



## **Capacity Charge Up, Annexation Fee Down in 2004**

**B**eginning Jan. 1, it will cost more to connect to NID treated water supplies.

As recommended by an independent study, the NID Board of Directors in August increased the NID capacity charge. NID's total connection charge is made up of the capacity charge and the meter connection charge.

The capacity charge represents the individual customer's investment in the water treatment, stor-

age and transmission system.

The board approved new capacity charges for various size meters, businesses and dwelling units. The capacity charge for a standard residential 5/8-inch meter will increase 44.3 percent, from \$3295 to \$4755.

Finance Manager Tess Andrews said studies showed that the new rates, although higher, are still less than those charged by other water purveyors in the region.

### **Annexation Fees Reduced**

Directors reduced the annexation fee for owners of parcels within NID's 287,000-acre service area that have never been formally annexed. The fee was lowered from \$3100 to \$1175.

The fee and charge adjustments were recommended in a revised final report completed this year by Economic and Engineering Services, Inc., a Portland, Oregon-based consulting firm.

## Working for NID District is a Leading Employer

**W**orking for NID offers competitive wages, good benefits, a positive work environment and the satisfaction that comes with providing a needed public service.

The district employs 172 in a wide range of occupations, from entry level clerical and construction jobs to skilled technical, professional and management positions.

Camaraderie and teamwork are hallmarks of working for NID. It is not uncommon for employees to spend 25 or 30 years, even more, with the district.

Most of NID's work force is based at the district's Grass Valley headquarters. Fifteen employees are assigned to the Hydroelectric Division near Colfax. Another 15 work from the Placer County maintenance yard near Lincoln. Two



employees are assigned to the Placer Office in North Auburn.

Job information on any open positions may be found by visiting the NID Web site at [www.nid.dst.ca.us](http://www.nid.dst.ca.us). Openings are often advertised in local newspapers.

Visitors to the Grass Valley office can review job descriptions and fill out job interest cards for positions they would like to apply for, if an opening occurs. The cards are held by NID for one year.

## Personnel Notes

**G**eneral Manager Ron Nelson has named long-time Hydroelectric Manager Les Nicholson as a special assistant to the manager. Nicholson will be involved with special projects until his planned retirement in January.

Meanwhile, veteran employee Larry Richerson has been appointed as acting hydroelectric manager. He will head the 15-employee division while the district recruits a new manager.

Two longtime district employees are retiring. William



**Key**



**Paulus**

R. "Mike" Key, of Grass Valley, retires Oct. 28 after 33 years with the Maintenance Dept. Computer programmer Steve Paulus, of Nevada City, retires Dec. 1 from a 25-year NID career.

## • NID NEWS BRIEFS •

### New Pump Being Added at Banner Reservoir

This fall, NID is adding a new 100-hp pump at the Banner-Taylor Reservoir. The new equipment will allow more water to be supplied to Banner Mountain and Red Dog Road areas from the expanded Elizabeth L. George Water Treatment Plant.

### Board Meetings at 9 a.m.

After meeting at 10 a.m. for many years, NID directors now meet at 9 a.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Board meetings are held at the district office in Grass Valley and are open to the public.

### Assessment Rate Continues Downward

NID directors on Aug. 13 approved a 2003-2004 assessment rate of just under one quarter of one cent per \$100 of assessed valuation.

The \$0.0024 rate is down 48.9 percent from the 2002-03 rate of \$0.0047.

The assessments are collected as part of the property tax in Nevada and Placer counties and are used solely to repay NID's voter-approved debt. The assessments are based on land values only; homes and other improvements are not included.

NID Finance Manager Tess Andrews said the 2003-04 assessments would raise \$58,599, the amount needed for annual debt service.