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NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers
of the Nevada Irrigation District

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Focus on Lincoln

*The Fastest-Growing
Part of NID*

The Lincoln area has been part of the Nevada Irrigation District since 1926. For nearly 80 years, NID has provided an important irrigation water supply to area farmers and ranchers.

Today, however, land use in and around Lincoln is rapidly changing from agricultural to urban. To meet demand for an average 1800 new homes being built each year, the city is looking less for irrigation water and more for treated drinking water.

Boundaries Overlap

With city limits that partially overlap NID boundaries, the City of Lincoln currently



City of Lincoln Public Works Director John Pedri, left, and NID Chief Engineer Tim McCall are working on future water supplies for the rapidly-growing Lincoln area.

uses a water connection with the Placer County Water Agency and four water wells to meet drinking water needs.

As the city continues to grow from today's 25,000 residents toward a projected build-out population of 105,000, city planners are working with NID to prepare

for the city's evolving water needs. Meetings with the city and Placer County Water Agency have been ongoing since 1997.

With obligations to serve land within its boundaries and with ample supplies of raw water to the area, NID has

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Water Rates Go Up in 2004

Faced with higher costs of doing business, increased fees and mandates and the need to improve aging system infrastructure, NID directors in December approved a 2004 increase in NID water rates.

Reserves Used

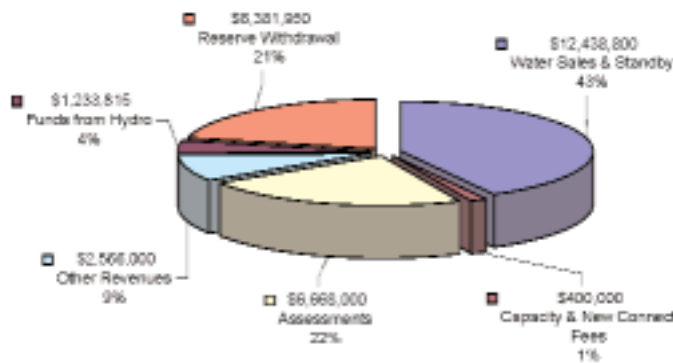
Revenues raised through the rate adjustments will be combined with the withdrawal of more than \$6 million in reserves to balance the district's 2004 Water Division budget of \$29.7 million.

monthly increase of \$2.51 to \$31.10 per month, an increase of 8.8 percent.

Irrigation water customers will see an across-the-board increase of 7 percent plus added fees to cover state and federal mandated programs.

The rate increases are much less than those recommended in 2001 by an independent consultant who found the district's average rates to be lagging 25 percent behind its costs in providing water service.

Budgeted Revenues for 2004



Customers will see average overall increases of 5-9 percent. Residential customers who conserve water and stay within the base rate will see the smallest increases.

Examples of how the increases will affect typical customers include:

- A low-use customer conserving water and using 5 hcf (hundred cubic feet) of water would see a monthly increase of about 80 cents, or 5.16 percent, to a monthly water bill of \$16.21.
- A more typical customer, using 30 hcf, would see a

For many years, NID has used the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a guideline for water rates. A summary of NID rate increases since 1977 shows average rates have increased by 288 percent, which is less than the 298.1 percent increase in the CPI.

The \$29.7 million Water Division budget is part of an overall 2004 NID budget of \$37.2 million. The overall budget includes a Hydroelectric Division budget of \$6.9 million and a Scotts Flat Reservoir recreation budget of \$550,000.

Water Storage Good as '03-04 Winter Begins

Early December brought good snowfall to NID mountain watershed, building the snowpack that will bring next season's water supply.

After a dry October and November, December's wet start boosted precipitation totals to 64 percent of average as of Dec. 10.

The precipitation year runs from July 1 through June 30. NID takes daily measurements at Bowman Reservoir, elev. 5650 ft.

As winter approached, NID water storage remained above average. Dec. 10 storage was 163,400 acre-feet, or 109 percent of average.

A member of the California Cooperative Snow Survey, NID conducts snow surveys in February, March and April to better predict the year's water availability.

Connection Fees Up

It is costing more to connect to the NID water system. Effective Jan. 1, the capacity fee for a standard 5/8-inch residential water meter is \$4755. Rates are higher for larger meter sizes.

Under NID's connection fee policy, developers and new customers "buy in" to the system. This prevents existing customers from subsidizing expansion and growth of the water system.

NID Begins Strategic Planning Process

To meet long-term challenges brought on by a growing and changing community, NID has launched a new strategic planning process.

The process is being facilitated by Christie Struckman, a professor at San Jose State University, who has organized a series of five monthly meetings with the NID board and staff. Thirty-one key personnel attended the Dec. 9 kick-off meeting.

New vision, mission and strategic goal statements are being developed and will be followed by action plans, evaluations and linking the strategic plan to the budgeting process.

The monthly meetings will continue through April with plan implementation anticipated this summer.

75 Years of Family Service

Like his father before him, Les Nicholson spent his career with NID. Water runs deep in the Nicholson family.

Nicholson, 55, retires Jan. 6 from a 35-year NID career. His dad, the late Orville "Nick" Nicholson, spent 40 years with the district.

Les's first memories of NID are of riding along in his dad's Model A Ford as Nick patrolled irrigation ditches. Later, in the 60s and still in high school, Les worked on the NID Yuba-Bear Project.

After U.S. Army service in Vietnam, Nicholson returned to NID and began a long rise through the ranks. He has served as water superintendent, manager of water operations and is retiring as manager of the NID Hydroelectric Division, with 16 employees and an annual budget of \$6.9 million.

Nicholson and his wife, Sheila, reside in Chicago Park. They have two children and a granddaughter.



Les Nicholson, left, is feted by Water Operations Manager Terry Mayfield at a recent Board of Directors meeting.

Lincoln Area is Growing: *Cont'd from Page 1*

concluded that a new water treatment plant north of the city would best meet future needs in the greater Lincoln area. An investigation of potential plant locations is in progress.

One-Fourth of NID is in Placer County

Nearly one-fourth of NID boundaries lie within Placer County. Of the total 287,000 acres in the district, 67,000 acres are in Placer County.

In 1926, five years after NID was formed by Nevada County voters, residents of Placer County successfully petitioned to join the district.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the North Auburn area began a transformation from irrigation water toward treated drinking water. A similar transition is seen for Lincoln in the years to come.

NID anticipates that any future expansion in the Lincoln area would be paid for by future customers receiving the benefit of a water supply, not by existing ratepayers.

District officials say the new plant could serve an area of approximately 1000 acres, which is larger than the current City of Grass Valley service area. Studies indicate the new facility could someday serve up to 14,000 homes and businesses in Lincoln and the surrounding community.

NID water flows to the area via the Bear River watershed through an extensive local canal system. At build-out, it is anticipated the greater Lincoln area would require peak summer flows of 20.3 million gallons per day, or about 11,000 acre-feet of water per year.

Water Quality

Flushing Program Keeps Pipes Clean

NID's annual water system flushing program began in November and is scheduled to continue through March.

During the winter months, NID crews open valves and hydrants to flush any possible residue buildup from treated water pipelines. The program is designed to ensure a high quality water supply.

Customers should not be inconvenienced except for possible momentary pressure changes. It is also possible that turbid or discolored water could be seen. This water can be cleared quickly by opening a faucet and letting the water run.

Two crews are conducting this year's flushing program. The Lake Wildwood, Lake of the Pines and Snow Mountain (near Nevada City) water systems were completed in November and December.

Work on the Elizabeth L. George (Banner Mtn.) and Loma Rica (Brunswick to Alta Sierra)



Working at Lake Wildwood

Cory Chapman, foreground, measures the flow as Nick Gemignani releases water from a hydrant on Thistle Loop at Lake Wildwood.

systems was planned in February and March while the North Auburn system was scheduled for March.

Customers with questions about the flushing program are invited to call the NID Operations Dept. at (530) 273-6185 or (800) 222-4102.

• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

ARE YOUR WATER PIPES

INSULATED? NID recommends that all exposed pipes and faucets be insulated against winter's chill. Inexpensive pipe wrap is available at local plumbing and hardware stores. Insulation can prevent frozen pipes, damage and expensive repair work.



CASCADE PROJECT UPDATE. The draft environmental impact report on the Lower Cascade Canal-Banner/Cascade Pipeline Project is expected to be available for public review in late January or early February. Information is available at www.lowercascadecanal.com.

LEARN MORE ABOUT NID. Information about NID including history and development, statistics, customer services, current projects, recent news releases and more may be found at the district Web site, www.nid.dst.ca.us.

Learn About Ranch Land Management

Would you like to learn more about ranch crops, soils, and irrigation systems and techniques?

Sierra College is offering a class, "Ranch Property Development and Management," especially for owners of small ranches (1-50 acres).

Taught by veteran instructor Keith Crabtree, the class is on Friday evenings Jan. 30-Mar. 12 at the Grass Valley campus and Apr. 16-May 21 at the Rocklin campus. The course is also planned for summer.

For more information, call Keith Crabtree at (530) 269-1217.

How to Contact Your Elected Board

DIVISION I, Nevada City Area
Nancy Weber, (530) 265-0424

DIVISION II, Grass Valley-Chicago Park
John Drew, (530) 272-5257

DIVISION III, Lake of the Pines-Alta Sierra
Dr. Scott Miller, call NID (530) 273-6185, ext. 222

DIVISION IV, Lincoln-North Auburn
R. Paul Williams (916) 645-8507

DIVISION V, Penn Valley-Lake Wildwood
George Leipzig (530) 432-2492