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NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers
of the Nevada Irrigation District

Volume 25 • Number 1 • Spring, 2004

Pride in a Good Water Supply

Residents of Nevada and Placer counties enjoy bountiful water supplies that set us apart from other parts of California.

We are near a mountain snowpack that feeds our reservoirs, carries fresh water to our water treatment plants and fills a web of irrigation canals that bring life to farms, ranches, orchards and vineyards.

NID has been meeting local water needs since 1921 when the district was formed by Nevada County voters. In 1926, voters in a wide area of Placer County chose to join.

The district purchased and inherited water systems built by gold miners and improved and adapted them for today's water needs.



NID Asst. Water Superintendent Larry Markey is pictured along the Chicago Park Canal off Lower Colfax Road in Nevada County.

Today, NID encompasses 287,000 acres in Nevada and Placer counties and a small area of Yuba County, supplying nearly 24,000 domestic and agricultural customers.

NID Snapshot

NID collects water on 70,000 acres of high mountain watershed, operates 10 reservoirs that store 280,380 acre-

feet of water and uses some 400 miles of canals and 300 miles of pipeline to transport water to users.

As water flows to customers, it is used to produce clean energy at seven NID hydroelectric power plants. The district also offers public recreational opportunities at its reservoirs.

Obituary

Ernie Bierwagen

1915-2004



Longtime NID director and community leader **Ernst L. "Ernie" Bierwagen** died Feb. 12 at the Nevada County farm where he was born and spent his lifetime. He was 88.

Mr. Bierwagen served 25 years on the NID board and was the second-longest serving director in NID history. Only Theodore Schwartz, Jr. (1921-47) served longer.

First elected to the Division II seat in 1977, Mr. Bierwagen took office in January, 1978. He was reelected five times and served six terms as board president before stepping down in December, 2002 for reasons of age and health.

Born Feb. 24, 1915 (six years before NID was formed), Mr. Bierwagen remembered times when local dry land farmers, including his own family, saw fruit die on trees and vines for lack of water. He became one of NID's most passionate and enthusiastic supporters.

Irrigation Season is April-October

With a good water supply flowing from the mountain snowpack, NID anticipates normal water deliveries this year to all irrigation water and treated water customers.

More than 5300 customers purchase irrigation water for the six-month irrigation season, which runs from Apr. 15 through Oct. 14. Another 550 customers purchase raw water on a year-around basis.

Irrigation water customers make up about 25 percent of NID's total customer base. Nearly 18,000 customers use treated drinking water supplied through the district's seven water treatment plants.

This year's good water availability forecast is based on Mar. 1 snow surveys which showed 131 percent of average water content in the mountain snowpack.

PG&E Flume Repairs Last Into May

The Pacific Gas & Electric Company's annual outage on the South Yuba Canal is scheduled Mar. 28 through May 2.

Although the South Yuba Canal is a main water supply for western Nevada County, NID does not anticipate service interruptions to customers, unless very hot weather places high demand on the system.

Operations Supv. Sue Sindt said that during the upstream outage, the district would supply customers through natural flows on Deer Creek and also could pump water between the D-S and Cascade canal systems if necessary.

PG&E has conducted spring outages the past few years in a continuing effort to upgrade the historic South Yuba Canal, which dates to the Gold Rush. The canal transports water from the mountains, through the Deer Creek watershed, to the Nevada City-Grass Valley area.

Local NRCS Assists Landowners

The Nevada County office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a branch of the USDA, provides leadership and assistance to private landowners.

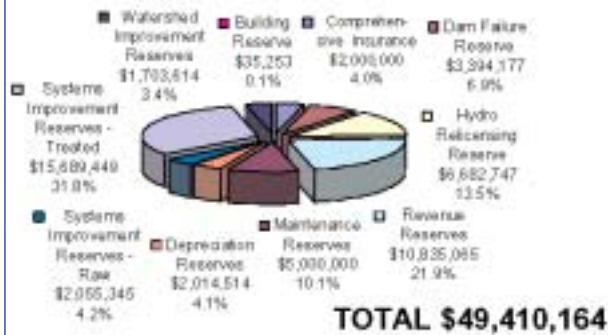
The NRCS assists farmers and ranchers with sound scientific conservation techniques on their lands. The service employs technical personnel who provide expertise in solving problems with erosion, drainage, water quality and irrigation. They can recommend plantings for pasture and wildlife habitat, reducing brush and woody fuels and improving forest health.

Services are provided at no cost to the landowner. If you are a landowner and would like to learn more about the NRCS, contact the local office located at 113 Presley Way in Grass Valley. Call (530) 272-3417.

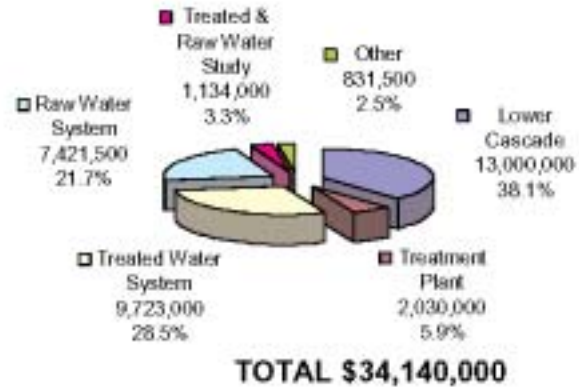
RESERVES, WORKING CAPITAL, COP



DESIGNATED RESERVES



PROJECT EXPENDITURES FOR 2004-2006



NID Reserves Will Help Fund a \$34 Million Project List

Since the record drought of 1975-77, when NID had little water to sell and even less money in the bank, the district has put a strong emphasis on being financially prepared for a rainy, or non-rainy day.

Today, NID is on solid financial footing, with funds set aside to take care of the many contingencies that may arise in the operation of a \$37 million-per-year, three-county irrigation district.

Self-Reliant Local Agency

“Over the years, our boards of directors and managers have seen that NID should be a strong and self-reliant local agency, here to meet the needs of our customers,” said General Manager Ron Nelson.

At end of the 2003 calendar year, NID retained \$62.6 million in working capital, designated reserves, restricted reserves and proceeds from sales of certificates of participation.

At the same time, the district is planning more than \$34 million in system improvements over the coming three years. This comes at a time when costs of doing business continue to

rise. More complicated planning, environmental studies and public outreach along with higher costs for materials and supplies add to costs.

Cascade Project Alone: \$13 Million

Take, for example, the Lower Cascade Canal/Banner Mountain Pipeline Project, an ongoing effort to supply more water to customers in south Nevada County. It is anticipated this system improvement will cost upwards of \$13 million over the next three years.

Another \$7.4 million in needed improvements to canal and raw water systems have been identified for the same three-year period.

NID continues to meet all state and federal public health standards in its drinking water supply, but it is increasingly expensive to do so. Water treatment plant and treated water system improvements are expected to total \$12 million between 2004 and 2006.

The accompanying pie charts show how NID reserves are designated and restricted for specific purposes along with project expenditures the district anticipates over the next three years.

2003 Water Quality Reports Distributed



NID's annual Consumer Confidence Report is being mailed this Spring to all treated water users. The report includes water quality data compiled in 2003.

As in previous years, NID's treated drinking water met and exceeded all state and federal public health standards. The district did not violate a single maximum contaminant level in more than 1800 tests for some 80 different contaminants.

Customers who do not receive a Consumer Confidence Report may request a copy by calling the district office. The report may also be seen at www.nid.dst.ca.us.

How to Contact Your Elected NID Directors

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

• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

Board Secretary Announcement

Carol Gates, longtime secretary to the NID Board of Directors retired in February, following an 18-year career with the district. She is succeeded as Board Secretary by Lisa Francis Tassone, a former administrative assistant with the City of Grass Valley, who joined NID on Feb. 17.



Gates



Tassone

Richerson Retires

Larry Richerson, longtime Hydroelectric Division operations and maintenance superintendent, and manager of the division since January, retires May 17 from a 34-year NID career. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Francis Richerson, who spent 39 years with NID and retired in 1982 as Placer County maintenance superintendent.



Richerson

Agreement With Lincoln

NID has supplied irrigation water to the Lincoln area since 1926 but the rapidly-growing city now requires treated drinking water. A memorandum of understanding adopted in February by NID and the city calls for cooperation on future water service and the potential building of a new NID water treatment plant in the greater Lincoln area.

Cascade Project

When complete, the Lower Cascade Canal/Banner Pipeline Project will supply more water to customers in south Nevada County. Draft environmental studies for the project were scheduled to be completed in mid-April and available for public review. Citizens interested in reviewing the draft may contact the NID Engineering Dept. The project is planned for 2005.

Raw Water Master Plan

The current update of NID's raw water master plan is scheduled for completion this fall. Studies are first examining water demand on the Cascade system, followed by demand studies for the balance of the water system and studies of overall water supply issues.