

March 13, 2013  
Agenda Item 13c

## Lafayette-Orinda fire station idea scrutinized

By Jennifer Modenessi Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times  
Posted:

Thursday, February 14, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

MARTINEZ -- County supervisors this week authorized talks between the Contra Costa and Moraga-Orinda fire districts to build and operate a joint station on the Lafayette-Orinda border but not without hearing some stinging criticism of the proposal.

County leaders took turns addressing ConFire Chief Daryl Louder on Tuesday following his request for formal discussions with MOFD Chief Randy Bradley to enter a partnership in which both districts would operate a joint fire station. If approved, the station would replace ConFire's Station 16 in Lafayette and nearby MOFD Station 43 in Orinda.

Supervisors ultimately decided to let Louder discuss exploring a potential partnership with Bradley, but Supervisors Karen Mitchoff and John Gioia indicated anything formal should be part of future comprehensive talks between the county and other cities. MOFD directors approved the consolidation talks at a meeting Feb. 6.

Under the plan proposed by the chiefs, ConFire would tap its capital funds and reallocate money used to operate Station 16 to the new station, whose construction and operating costs would be shared evenly with MOFD. Both districts say the move could help them save \$1 million each in annual operating costs.

However, the savings would materialize for ConFire only if Station 16 were operating; because it isn't, the new station would actually increase costs for the district.

ConFire took that aging facility offline last year because of a rat infestation and mold-contamination issues. The station officially closed Jan. 15, along with stations in Martinez and Walnut Creek, following the defeat of a parcel tax measure last fall. Service in Clayton was also reduced.

District II Supervisor Candace Andersen, who oversees Lamorinda, and Supervisor Mary Piepho, of Discovery Bay, supported Louder's request. But Supervisors Mitchoff and Gioia were less enthusiastic.

Mitchoff took Louder to task over an apparent lack of communication about the consolidation, saying neither she nor County Administrator David Twa were aware of the proposal. She also said the idea could raise expectations in other communities with closed fire stations.

"The money's not there," Mitchoff said.

Gioia called for more "thoughtful" talks. "The way this should be dealt with ... is for us to have a districtwide discussion about what opportunities exist rather than individual components brought to us," he said. "We're not getting a total solution."

MOFD Chief Bradley also addressed supervisors, taking some responsibility for the urgent consolidation talks hastened by Station 43's reconstruction, which is on hold. And he told the supervisors his board has requested that the new station be owned and operated by MOFD.

That news did not sit well with Mitchoff, who said if talks went forward and the idea were approved, the county could be putting money into a building it didn't own. She also reiterated calls for a broader discussion.

The board asked the chief for a status report within 30 days.

Supervisors also heard a report of a pilot program that would provide non-firefighter, emergency medical-only coverage at Station 11 in Clayton and in the area of Station 16 in Lafayette. They asked for a status report with a cost comparison between ConFire and the county's contracted medical transport services for such a program.

## **Contra Costa Times editorial: Leadership crisis mounts at Contra Costa fire district plagued by huge fiscal shortfall**

*Contra Costa Times editorial* © 2013, Bay Area News Group Contra Costa Times  
Posted:

Monday, February 18, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

Contra Costa supervisors, who serve as directors of the county's largest fire district, seem to be running out of patience with Chief Daryl Louder. The frustration led to a public dressing down Tuesday the likes of which we haven't seen in decades.

We can only wonder what took so long. It was justified.

As we've said repeatedly, Louder doesn't get it. In a fiscal crisis that demands sophisticated leadership willing to thoughtfully examine alternative service models for the Contra Costa Fire District, the chief remains a traditional fire executive unwilling or unable to think creatively.

The disconnect and his poor communication skills explain why supervisors, who have had to close four stations, went around Louder by directing County Administrator David Twa to lead studies on cheaper ways to deliver fire and medical-emergency services.

Yet, Louder continues to march to his own drummer, seemingly oblivious to the direction his board wants to go. While supervisors ask whether the district -- which serves much of Central County as well as Antioch, Pittsburg and San Pablo -- should continue dispatching well-paid firefighters to medical emergencies, Louder on Tuesday brought a proposal to raise revenues for the status quo by billing those who call for service.

Currently, the ambulance company that responds can bill, but Louder wants to also charge for firefighters who show up to help. There were no details of the billing plan and no cost or legal analyses, yet Louder asked the supervisors for authority to draft an ordinance to implement the idea. The board said no.

Louder also sought approval to conduct formal negotiations with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to jointly build and operate a new fire station on the border between the two districts. It would replace one operated by MOFD and one owned, but currently closed, by the Contra Costa district. In other words, this would require a staffing increase for the Contra Costa district.

To Louder, the issue was not whether this was a good idea; he just wanted authority to plow ahead. Again, there was no cost analysis or meaningful detail on which the supervisors could intelligently make a decision.

It would clearly put the cart before the horse to commit the district before examining how best to deliver services. And, while it might please Lafayette residents, how would it play in other communities that have experienced station closures?

Supervisors were annoyed, and let the chief know in no uncertain terms. They hadn't been given advance warning this was coming. Louder was pressuring them that MOFD needed an immediate decision. And he didn't tell them that MOFD intended to own and operate the station. They gave Louder permission to talk to the district but wisely made no commitments.

It not clear that Louder enjoys the full support of any of the five supervisors. They have each expressed frustration in the past few months. As Supervisor John Gioia told us, "I think there's a crisis of confidence."

One wonders when they'll finally do what's needed: Find another fire chief.

## Doctors Medical Center leaders seek to keep doors open at financially struggling San Pablo hospital

By Sandy Kleffman Bay Area News Group Contra Costa Times  
Posted:

Tuesday, February 19, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

Leaders of Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo plan to eliminate 16 positions and take other steps to cope with a nearly \$1.5 million monthly loss, but have no immediate plan to close the hospital, which is considered an important part of the health care safety net in the region.

Rumors have swirled that because of its financial difficulties, Doctors would shut down by June, but its leaders say those rumors are false.

"We're not in closure mode -- we're in survival mode," said Eric Zell, who heads the hospital's governing board.

Doctors, which has struggled financially for years, treats large numbers of uninsured patients and low-income people on Medi-Cal.

It operates the only full-service emergency department along the Interstate 80 corridor between Berkeley and Vallejo.

The hospital lost nearly \$19 million in 2011 and \$17.5 million in 2012.

Its budget for this year, approved by the board in January, includes a \$9 million loss. So hospital leaders are seeking ways to fill an \$8 million to \$10 million gap through a combination of layoffs, cuts and revenue enhancements.

"The hospital has to act aggressively to change its structure and model," said Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, vice chairman of the hospital board. "But we remain optimistic. The goal continues to be to bring the gap down far enough to make it easier to find partners."

Talks with one potential partner -- Avanti Hospitals in Southern California -- "have slowed down, but they haven't died," said Dawn Gideon, Doctors' interim chief executive officer. Avanti does not want to decide now, but it remains open to future discussions, she said.

Gideon has been holding town hall meetings with hospital employees to dispel some of the rumors, including that large numbers of layoffs are on the horizon.

About 22 people will lose their jobs, including three nonsupervisory registered nurses, among 1,000 full- and part-time employees. All of these positions "have been discussed with the unions," she said.

The hospital will also add six new positions, including a person to work with doctors on using electronic medical records. That will mean a net loss of 16 positions.

Gideon said hospital leaders are exploring new programs that might help increase the number of patients, including whether to set up an acute rehabilitation unit in an available space. "I'm looking every day for a way to close the \$10 million gap," she said. "I am talking with a number of area providers about how we can work together to gain greater efficiencies."

Gideon said she has contacted Lex Reddy, the new president and chief executive officer of St. Rose Hospital

in Hayward, another financially struggling hospital, to see if the two organizations might be able to team up on such needs as recruiting physicians.

Such discussions are preliminary, but Zell, who heads Doctors governing board, said he will recuse himself if an agreement involving Reddy comes before the board.

Reddy, the former CEO of Prime Healthcare Services in Southern California, hired Zell for about 30 days to introduce him to leaders in the Hayward area. Zell, a government relations consultant, declined to reveal how much Reddy paid him.

Zell issued a news release on Reddy's behalf earlier this month when the state attorney general approved Reddy's management-with-an-option-to-buy agreement at St. Rose.

Zell said he no longer works for Reddy and said he made it clear when Reddy first contacted him that he would not advocate on Reddy's behalf in any discussions with Doctors Medical Center.

Sandy Kleffman covers health. Contact her at 510-293-2478. Follow her at [Twitter.com/skleffman](https://twitter.com/skleffman).

## Discovery Bay reaches settlement on 2008 sewage spill into lake

By Paul Burgarino Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Sunday, February 24, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

DISCOVERY BAY -- The town has reached a settlement with its former wastewater collections operator over a 2008 malfunction that spewed 94,000 gallons of raw sewage into an upscale neighborhood's lake.

Discovery Bay's Community Services District will receive \$230,534.69 from an escrow account established by the town and SouthWest Water, along with \$35,000 from the water company, according to the Feb. 13 agreement.

That money covers the tab for the major spill at the Lakeshore subdivision, which included \$231,000 in fines last May and \$10,000 for three others in 2008 that the town paid to the state's regional water quality control board.

The town sued SouthWest in Contra Costa Superior Court last June, saying the company breached its contract by not paying the state penalties. SouthWest filed a cross-complaint against the town a month later.

"We're pleased that the lawsuit was settled and the town was made whole for the sewer spill," said Rick Howard, the district's general manager.

A SouthWest spokesman said Friday that the company does not comment on lawsuits or settlements.

The spill was caused by pumps failing to turn back on after the power went out when a bird landed on a nearby power line, forcing sewage to back up overnight. Lake fountains were left on a week after the spill, leading to additional concerns about possible illness and the spread of contamination.

After the spill, money to pay the fines -- some of which Discovery Bay paid to SouthWest -- was placed in an escrow account. But as the issue dragged on for years because of state staffing cuts, SouthWest's escrow company would not open the account.

After months of probing officials and district employees on the situation, district directors concluded SouthWest's negligence and poor operating procedures were to blame for the spill.

SouthWest parted ways with the town in late 2008, requesting the contract be rescinded before it expired. Discovery Bay has had Veolia Water as its water operator since.

Contact Paul Burgarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at [Twitter.com/paulburgarino](https://twitter.com/paulburgarino).

## Plans for new Orinda-Lafayette fire station drawing heat

By Jennifer Modenessi *Contra Costa Times* *Contra Costa Times*

Posted:

Sunday, February 24, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

LAFAYETTE -- A plan officials argue could save taxpayers up to \$60 million over 30 years by consolidating two fire stations in Lafayette and Orinda under a long-term agreement faced more scrutiny this week as city leaders got their first formal look at the idea.

Fire agency leaders voted last week to continue negotiations with the county on the consolidation plan.

Moraga-Orinda fire Chief Randy Bradley received approval Wednesday from his board to keep discussing the plan with Contra Costa Fire District Chief Daryl Louder. In it, MOFD would shut one of three fire stations in Orinda and jointly purchase land on the Lafayette-Orinda border to build and staff a new fire station with ConFire.

The districts began discussing the consolidation in January after ConFire shut the Lafayette station -- and stations in Martinez and Walnut Creek -- after budget cuts. Under the proposal, MOFD would close its station on Via Las Cruces and relocate to a site near Highway 24.

The chiefs say the move would save each district about \$1 million annually. However, the county's savings would come only if the Lafayette station were operating.

And while a majority of the MOFD board has approved further talks with ConFire, including nonfinancial negotiations with four property owners to purchase land near El Nido Ranch Road, board president Frank Sperling said he isn't confident the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors -- which oversees ConFire -- would greenlight the consolidation.

Sperling also questioned the wisdom of making an agreement with the county, from which Orinda detached to form MOFD in 1997, and said deeper analysis of the consolidation is needed.

"I look at this as a folly and I really don't want to spend another dime on this folly," Sperling said, alluding to the district placing the Orinda station's reconstruction on hold since consolidation talks began in January. MOFD has already spent about \$275,000 on Station 43's redesign.

About a half-dozen Orinda residents also spoke out against the station merger.

Lamorinda's fire service woes came up again Thursday during a meeting between elected officials from Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga. City and town leaders discussed the proposed station consolidation as a group for the first time, and asked questions about its impacts and financing, including where ConFire plans to get the money to pay for its half of the new station.

Louder said the district will look for other revenue sources and investigate how internal funds can be potentially reallocated. In a subsequent interview, Louder said ConFire has "several million dollars" in capital funds available for construction or land acquisition, but did not provide an exact amount.

As for suggestions raised at the meeting by MOFD board member Stephen Anderson, who said as a "private citizen" that Lafayette should detach from ConFire, Louder was more specific.

"I think Contra Costa Fire has provided excellent service and protection to the residents of Lafayette," he said. "We intend to continue doing that in the future."

## Antioch city manager to retire at year's end

By Paul Bugarino Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

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ContraCostaTimes.com

ANTIOCH -- After a decade of steep highs and lows while at the helm, the city's top administrator plans to step down.

Jim Jakel, Antioch's city manager since December 2003, is staying on until the end of the year while the City Council works on finding a replacement.

As part of Jakel staying on, City leaders Tuesday night will consider giving him additional pay during his last six months on the job -- \$2,750 per month in retention payment and \$3,533 in monthly deferred compensation payments.

The monthly payments would not be included in calculations of Jakel's retirement payment formula, according to a city staff report. Jakel's current base salary is \$200,628, which includes a 10-percent across-the-board decrease in city salaries since 2009 because of furloughs and a 3-percent raise all managers received on Jan. 1 in return for payment of 8 percent of their retirement costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Mary Rocha said after lengthy discussion, it was decided to keep Jakel on because of his knowledge of city affairs.

"He took the cuts himself and was willing to work with a city going down the drain," said Rocha, noting how managers in other cities were paid more the past few years. "In a way, it feels like we're making up for it."

A longtime public and private sector policy administrator, Jakel's career will end where it started.

"I guess there's some destiny in that," said Jakel, 57, who started in Antioch as a junior planner in 1980.

Jakel worked in Alameda and later Martinez, serving as that city's manager from 1990 to 1996. Before returning to Antioch, Jakel was executive director of the Contra Costa Council, an economic development advocacy group.

When Jakel started his second Antioch stint on Dec. 1, 2003, the city was nearing the apex of its growth. Property and sales tax were booming, setting record highs. New shopping centers were sprouting up on the southeast side of town while home prices soared.

"Every day I drive to work, and just think about progress I see on Highway 4 and eBART, those are the things I'll remember," Jakel said. "To have a community center that is now two years old. When I got here, it was just a goal and plans on a piece of paper."

Jakel's most trying time as manager came after the abrupt collapse in the nation's housing market sent city finances crashing into a tailspin. By 2010, Antioch's once-robust budget of \$47 million dropped to near \$34 million.

"It's been a pretty sobering tale," said Jakel, crediting the perseverance and dedication of city staff for helping the city survive.

Thrice forced to make the difficult decision to lay off employees, city staffing now has a vacancy rate of over 40 percent. Jakel also worked to help the city stave off bankruptcy by negotiating millions in concessions

from employee groups, including cuts to employee compensation and retirement benefits, and initiating Friday furloughs.

"Throughout his whole time, you really felt like he was giving straight answers, and handled everybody evenly," Rocha said.

Jakel has quietly mentioned for some time his plans to retire after the most recent election if it was the new council's desire -- offering to stay on so they wouldn't have to rush to pick a successor.

"Hopefully, the person that comes in as (the city) is coming off the bottom and can build up a strong team," he said.

Jakel plans to pursue some kind of "new adventure" while still healthy, likely in the wine or hospitality field.

City leaders will soon pick a consulting firm to help recruit manager candidates.

Residential input on what they would like to see in a city manager will also be part of the selection process,

Mayor Wade Harper said earlier this month.

Contact Paul Bugarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at [Twitter.com/paulbugarino](https://twitter.com/paulbugarino).

# Barnidge: Why calling for an ambulance means you'll also get a fire truck

[By Tom Barnidge Contra Costa Times Columnist](#)

Posted: 02/25/2013 05:20:44 PM PST

Updated: 02/26/2013 12:12:15 AM PST

There are three things you can generally expect from emergency medical calls in central Contra Costa County: 1) A fire truck, with three firefighters, will be dispatched to the scene; 2) a two-person American Medical Response team will arrive in an ambulance; and 3) neighbors will watch intently, wondering why both units are necessary.

Of all the proposed solutions to cut Contra Costa Fire District staffing costs, the most frequent is to eliminate medical response. Critics say leave it to AMR, the company the county contracts with.

Um ... it's not that simple.

Firefighter staffing needs are dictated by the manpower required to fight a major fire -- often units from several stations at once. Medical calls are a bonus, not the reason firefighters are on the clock. Besides, medical calls often require more than two sets of hands.

"If you respond to a cardiac arrest," said AMR General Manager Leslie Mueller, "it takes a large number of people to handle it."

She explained that one person applies the airway (forced breathing apparatus), while another administers CPR, a third reads the heart monitor and a fourth hooks up an intravenous drip. When a victim needs more treatment en route to the hospital, a firefighter climbs into the ambulance to help the AMR paramedic while his partner drives.

Similar teamwork is required for setting broken bones, preparing splints, administering pain medication, lifting and transporting victims. "We train together, we work together, we follow the same protocols," Mueller said. "It's a ... team of coordinated efforts."

Different communities have different first-response models, she said, with varying responsibilities falling on public and private entities. The ConFire model anticipates the most extreme cases. If a victim is unable to open the door, firefighters can make a forced entry. If he's trapped under a structure or inside a car, they perform extrication. If hazardous materials are involved, they know what to do. If bystanders are too close, they're trained in crowd control.

"There's some overkill for sure," said fire Capt. Vince Wells, president of local firefighters union Local 1230, "and efforts are being made to minimize it, but the system is designed to handle the worst-case scenario."

Another question is why firefighters arrive in fire trucks. It's the same reason police wear guns while directing traffic -- so they're prepared for other developments.

"If we go on a medical call, and it's under control, and there's a fire," Wells said, "we don't have to drive back to the fire station to get another vehicle."

Medical emergencies are automatically relayed to one of 24 strategically located district fire stations and any of 35 to 40 mobile units that AMR typically has on call. "We move the ambulances throughout the day, based on traffic patterns, supply and demand and where we anticipate volume," Mueller said.

Sometimes an ambulance crew is first on the scene. Sometimes firefighters are. Each team has a paramedic, so the order doesn't matter.

"The system is designed to get the appropriate resources where they belong in a timely manner," Wells said.

The recurring question is whether a less costly approach can achieve the same results. Mueller said new models are being explored, but one thing is certain not to change.

When callers dial 911, they can't afford to wait.

Contact Tom Barnidge at [tbarnidge@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:tbarnidge@bayareanewsgroup.com).

# Contra Costa Special Districts Association Newsletter

Contra Costa Chapter of the California Special Districts Association

Spring 2013

CCSDA

March 2013

## CCSDA Chapter Support Services

The West County Wastewater District (WCWD) has performed the support services task for a couple of years now. The work and effort that Maria Sena has put into all of our chapter functions, meetings, correspondence, and emails is certainly much appreciated.



Maria has done an excellent job in coordinating and setting up the meetings. Thanks to both Maria Sena and the West County Wastewater District.

The WCWD contributions to the Contra Costa Special Districts Association helps our organization be a success, we thank WCWD.

A summary of our CCSDA finances can be described as follows; we receive about \$1500 per year in dues and spend about that much on the newsletter and insurance costs. In the past we have made a few dollars on the meal function, but the trend lately has been toward losing money on meals. We did not have a meal function at our October 2012 or January 2013 meetings.

Currently we are not planning to have a meal function at our 2013 meetings.

## Send California Special District Association Photos from Your District!

Beginning in 2013, CSDA will begin highlighting photos from districts throughout the state in the California Special District magazine. Send CSDA interesting photos of your district sites and facilities, from events you have held, or of activities in which you take part. Any photos that make your district stand out - CSDA wants!

Send your digital photos to Nicole Dunn, editor, at [nicoled@csda.net](mailto:nicoled@csda.net) and you could see them in an upcoming issue of California Special District Magazine!

## New to Local Public Service?

The "New to Public Service" section of the Institute for Local Government (ILG) website offers resources for officials during the initial phase of elected office. The information provided will be beneficial as elected officials begin their role in local agency leadership. The comprehensive list of resources includes topics such as responsibilities and powers, budgeting, decision-making, working with staff, and more.

The "New to Public Service" section of the Institute's website offers orientation materials for newly elected and is a great resource for current locally elected officials. The navigation links include:

- Budgeting and Finance
- Land Use
- Leadership Skills
- Making Decisions
- Public Trust and Transparency
- Responsibilities and Powers
- When Bad Things Happen
- Working with Residents and the Media
- Working with Staff

For more in-depth information explore the website <http://www.ca-ilg.org>

## Central San Earns National Excellence Award Again!

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's Purchasing and Materials Services team recently won the National Purchasing Institute's Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for 2012.

The award – which CCCSD's purchasing team, has now won four times – recognizes organizational excellence in procurement, with emphasis on innovation, professionalism, e-procurement, productivity, and leadership.

Central San is one of only 29 special districts in the United States to win this award.

## California Special District Association Annual Awards

Do you have board members, staff, or a program that you feel deserves recognition? Now is the time to get in the spotlight!

Consider submitting for a California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Award. Individuals and districts both receive awards acknowledging their achievements in various areas including exceptional public outreach, leadership and innovations. The awards are presented at the CSDA Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase. Winners are selected from submissions from each the following categories:

- Board President of the Year
- General Manager of the Year
- Staff Member of the Year
- CSDA Chapter of the Year
- Innovative Program Award
- Exceptional Public Outreach & Advocacy Award

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the awards or the awards process, please contact Charlotte Lowe, executive assistant, at the CSDA office toll-free at 877.924.2732 or by email at [charlottel@csga.net](mailto:charlottel@csga.net)

## Special District Community Loss

It is with great sadness that the California Special District Association announces the passing of Glenn Reiter, one of the co-founders of CSDA. He passed away January 21, 2013.



Principal of Glenn M. Reiter & Associates one of the co-founders of CSDA, and the founder of the Special District Institute he had spent more than forty years working diligently for a variety of governmental agencies in California. It is said that he helped form CSDA in order to have a voice in Sacramento because at that time, the legislature was questioning the need for special districts. His commitment to the education and working together of special districts was instrumental in where CSDA stands today.

## DSRSD Board Creates the James B. Kohnen Scholarship



**DUBLIN SAN RAMON  
SERVICES DISTRICT**

*Water, wastewater, recycled water*

The Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) Board of Directors unanimously voted to create the James B. Kohnen Scholarship, an annual award of up to \$2,000 that will be given to a graduating high school senior planning to attend college to study a water resources related field.

Mr. Kohnen served two terms on DSRSD's Board. He also served on the boards of the Zone 7 Water Agency, the Alameda County Special Districts Association, the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District, and the California Special Districts Association.

Mr. Kohnen also taught at San Leandro High School, the University of Phoenix, and St. Mary's College. Creating a scholarship in his name seemed like a natural way to honor his memory.

The first scholarship will be presented in June 2013 to a senior graduating from a school in the District's service area.

It is the districts hope that this scholarship inspires young people to follow in his footsteps and make a difference in their communities.

## Legislative Conference to Focus on Local Revenue



CSDA has announced the theme for the 2013 Special Districts Legislative Days (SDL):

“Strength in Numbers – Adding Value to Communities.” This year's SDL, CSDA's annual legislative conference in Sacramento, will be held May 14-15 at the Sacramento Convention Center.

Be sure to register by Friday, April 26 to guarantee a spot in the scheduled legislative visits.

## Stege Sanitary District becomes Re-accredited as a District of Distinction

The Stege Sanitary District recently became reaccruited as a District of Distinction through the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF). The District of Distinction accreditation is one of the most prestigious local government awards in the state of California. This award clearly validates the Stege Sanitary District's commitment to good governance and to ethical and sound operating practices.



**David Aranda & Alan Miller**

Alan Miller, Director, and President of the Board for Stege Sanitary District, accepted the award at the California Special Districts Association Annual Conference in September 2012. The award was presented at the Luncheon awards ceremony by SDLF President David Aranda.

As of September 2012, the following three Contra Costa Special Districts are SDLF's Districts of Distinction, Kensington Fire Protection District, Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District, and Stege Sanitary District.

### Is your district interested in Becoming a District of Distinction?

Special districts provide the most efficient, responsive local services to California communities and yet they have been under frequent scrutiny by the media and Legislature, which allege that special districts are often invisible and unaccountable.

SDLF has developed the District of Distinction program to help correct these misperceptions by providing districts with a means for proactively demonstrating their viability as providers of essential public services.

This accreditation is designed as a way for districts to highlight their prudent fiscal practices along with other areas important to effectively operate and govern a special district.

### Why become a District of Distinction?

The accreditation criterion gets to the heart of best practices in public agencies, demonstrating that your district:

- Understands and respects the responsibilities inherent in providing essential public services.
- Has clean financial audits and operates in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner.
- Is conscious of the ever-changing operating environment by having current and relevant policies and procedures in place that conform to all statutes and regulations under state law.
- Places an emphasis on continuing education completed by having each of the district's board members and executive staff in ethics, governance and leadership training.
- Focuses on having sound policies in the areas of governance, board conduct, district finances, transparency and reserves.

Your district will receive a plaque honoring the district's accomplishments. SDLF will issue press releases and notify legislators on the district's behalf.

To become a District of Distinction submit your application or contact Charlotte Lowe, SDLF program assistant, at (916) 231-2939.

## More Special District Leadership Foundation - Congratulations



**Bette Boatmun, Dave Contreras, Sherry Sterrett**

David Contreras from the Ironhouse Sanitary District has received the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance. He has demonstrated his commitment and dedication to providing the best possible service to the community he serves by completing the CSDA Special District Leadership Academy and the other qualifications necessary to receive the Recognition in Special District Governance certificate. Congratulations David!

## Central San Wins Two Architecture Awards

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's new Collection System Operations (CSO) Headquarters in Walnut Creek received two awards for architecture from the Walnut Creek Action for Beauty Council at its 2012 Community Awards Luncheon on Oct. 16, 2012.



### Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Collection System Operations Facility

Opened in fall 2011, the new Collection System Operations Facility is the first building in Walnut Creek to have a green roof that uses drought-tolerant plants to help it stay cool during the summer and absorb rainwater to reduce runoff during the winter. Other energy-efficient features include permeable paving, automatic window shades, solar collectors that supplement water heating, and hydronic (circulating water) heating in the warehouse floor.

The CSO facility won the Sustainable Design award. The new facility incorporates efficient design with the latest 'green' technologies, replacing a 1956 facility which did not meet the District's current needs nor today's building and seismic codes.

The Action for Beauty Council, consisting of a group of citizens independent of the city's political structure, has been issuing design review awards for 40 years. The awards honor projects in architecture, landscaping, and public art. Prominent architects and landscape architects judged the design award nominees.

The facility also won the new "People's Choice" award. The award is voted on by local community members who nominated and voted online for their favorite local architectural design project. The award recognizes local projects that have improved the community through superior design.

## California Special Districts Association 2013 Executive Committee

CSDA is governed by an 18-member Board of Directors elected by mail ballots. The Board consists of three directors from each of the six regions throughout California. The Board meets bimonthly in Sacramento to guide the Association's legislative and member benefit programs.

At the September 25, 2012 CSDA Board Meeting elections were held for 2013 officers. The Executive Committee currently consists of:

- President - Stanley Caldwell, Mt. View Sanitary District
- Vice President - Pete Kampa, Tuolumne Utilities District
- Treasurer - Ginger Root, Country Club Sanitary District
- Secretary - Noelle Mattock, El Dorado Hills Community Service District
- Past President - Jo MacKenzie, Vista Irrigation District

Your Region 3 board members are Stanley Caldwell, Mt. View Sanitary District, Sherry Sterrett, Pleasant Hill Parks and Recreation District, and Vincent Ferrante, Moss Landing Harbor District.

## EBRPD Manager to get 5-year Contract Extension

Bob Doyle, East Bay Regional Park District general manager, has received a five-year contract extension to continue running the system with 112,000 acres of parkland. In a vote of confidence for its top executive, the regional park board voted unanimously to extend Doyle's employment agreement through the end of 2017. Doyle was promoted to general manager at the start of 2011 to succeed Pat O'Brien, who retired.

## Succession Planning

Many smaller public agencies can find themselves without critical staffing when someone quits, retires, or is out due to illness or other unplanned reasons. An agency unprepared for such unexpected absences is left with very few options.

***BHI Management Consulting Founder & President Brent Ives will be our October 21, 2013 speaker.***

BHI offers an analysis methodology that allows your staff to recognize this vulnerability and to identify those key positions. Everyone needs to see the dangers of ignoring what can become a crippling period of inefficiency for your agency.

## CCWD Reduces Energy Costs

The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) is now using water flowing through an existing pipeline in Antioch to generate energy. This new “green” project adds to the portfolio of alternative energy projects that CCWD has invested in.

CCWD has been working on various projects to reduce energy costs and recently completed construction of the Los Vaqueros Energy Recovery Project. This project is a hydroelectric generation facility, including a Francis Turbine and Generator Assembly, which will produce energy to offset up to ten percent of the nearby pump station load and reduce reliance on carbon-based energy.



The \$6.2 million facility captures excess energy from water flowing through the existing Los Vaqueros Pipeline and produces up to 1-megawatt of clean, renewable electricity.

CCWD's other alternative energy projects continue to generate energy including solar panels that have been installed on top of District facilities. CCWD also has agreements with various companies using windmills to generate energy. These projects all contribute savings which allows the District to control costs to the benefit its customers.

## Mark your calendar for the upcoming CSDA events

### Special Districts Legislative Days

May 14 & 15, 2013

### GM Leadership Summit

July 14-16, 2013

### CSDA Annual Conference - Monterey, CA

September 16-19, 2013

## MVSD Recertified in the Contra Costa County Green Business Program

Mt. View Sanitary District (MVSD) was proud that they were the very first publicly owned treatment works to be certified as a Green Business in the Bay Area. MVSD has now received its second recertification in the program!

The mission of the Contra Costa County Green Business Program is to strengthen and sustain the quality of the environment in Contra Costa County through a collaborative partnership of public and private organizations that encourages, supports, and recognizes businesses taking action to prevent pollution and conserve resources.

Environmental stewardship is a core MVSD value and MVSD believes in going above and beyond regulatory compliance to protect both human and environmental health. For more information on the Contra Costa Green Business program, please visit:

[www.greenbiz.ca.gov/AboutUsCCC.html](http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov/AboutUsCCC.html)



District Manager Mike Roe is congratulated by Pollution Prevention Specialist Claudia Pingatore on May 18, 2012 for MVSD's second recertification in the Green Business Program.



## CCSDA July 15, 2013 Speaker

District 5 Supervisor Federal Glover will be our guest speaker for July chapter meeting. Federal is current board chair with many years of experience in county and local government. The boundaries of District 5 were changed significantly in the last redistricting resulting in inclusion of many new constituents. He will be speaking on the topic “Representing the Northern Waterfront”.

## The Bay Area Consortium for Water and Wastewater Education

The Bay Area Consortium for Water and Wastewater Education (BACWWE) is committed to providing the best educational training for those interested in water and wastewater operator training available in Northern California.

The BACWWE Operator Training Program is currently sponsored by 19 Bay Area water & wastewater agencies, and has grown tremendously since first launched in August 2007. Since then, more than 700 students have enrolled in 35 classes.



This program is sponsored by Bay Area water and wastewater agencies to attract new people to the industry and to encourage current operators to continue their education and training to fulfill an urgent need to replace a retiring workforce.

For more information visit the WEBSITE - [www.bacwwe.org](http://www.bacwwe.org)

## BACWWE Internship Program

Rodeo Sanitary District (RSD) participates in the award-winning operator training program along with a group of public agencies. Rodeo San is currently enjoying a very successful volunteer intern program.

Rodeo San, in conjunction with the Solano Community College, brings in a few volunteer operators each academic semester. Solano has an Associates of Science degree in water and wastewater treatment. However, most agencies will not hire based on education alone, hands on experience is vital. Additionally, the state has strict guidelines for operators at sewage treatment plants and an individual must have 2,080 hours of experience before becoming certified to operate these plants. As a result, many agencies in the area formed the Bay Area Consortium of Water and Wastewater Education (BACWWE). The group is working with Solano to assist in funding and teaching the classes (free to the students) and provide training opportunities for the students.

Rodeo Sanitary District Manager Steve Beall is the volunteer intern committee chair for BACWWE. There have been a total of five volunteers for the District, and so far three have secured full-time jobs.

## Discovery Bay Community Services District



### The town's logo has a new, more vibrant look!

Discovery Bay Community Services District has changed its rope-trim insignia with a navy blue steamboat in the middle to a brighter-colored seal and logo with a gold and orange sunset scene, steamboat on sky-blue water and a silhouette of Mount Diablo.

Other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and real estate agencies use the old logo, board Vice President Kevin Graves said.

"(The original logo) has been adopted by everybody, so we wanted something that stands independently," he said.

"I think it gives us a bit more of our own identity, and more of a town logo," added director Jim Mattison. "It's not drastically different, but it's more colorful. We wanted to pizzazz it up a little bit."

The logo includes the phrase "est. 1998," which marks when Discovery Bay's community services district was established.

Graves said the steamboat on the logo likely comes from the Hofmann Development office being located on a vessel when it first started building homes in the Delta community. "We kept it because we didn't want to lose that tradition," he said. "At the same time, we're trying to move the image of the town forward."

## West County Wastewater District's Contribution to the Expansion of the San Francisco Bay Trail



*L-R: Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, East Bay Regional Park District Board Members Beverly Lane and Whitney Dotson, Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner, Trails for Richmond Action Committee Chair Bruce Beyaert, and West County Wastewater District General Manager E.J. Shalaby.*

On Saturday, September 8, 2012, more than 60 people, including local leaders, gathered to celebrate the opening ceremony of the latest addition to the San Francisco Bay Trail, the Wildcat Marsh Trail.

When completed, the San Francisco Bay Trail will consist of a 500-mile loop trail that will link the San Francisco and San Pablo bays. To date, about 340 miles has been completed.

West County Wastewater District, which owns the land the trail now occupies, gave the East Bay Regional Park District permission to build the path. The mostly flat trail leads past the District's Water Pollution Control Plant to the Landfill Loop Trail, which offers a panoramic view of the San Pablo Bay shoreline.

The District is pleased to be part of this important community project that gives residents shoreline access for walking or biking.

### Other West County Wastewater News

West County Wastewater District has been awarded the San Pablo Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year Award.



## Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District Senior Center Opens!

The new Senior Center Grand Opening & Open House celebration was held on Saturday, January 5th, 1 pm - 4 pm. The event started with the 1:00 pm - Ribbon Cutting followed by Presentations & Video.



The day also included a boutique sale, raffles, class registration discounts, live music, sweet treats, photo booth, and "mini fit" class demo's to join.



### Senior Center Grand Opening and ribbon cutting

The new senior center officially opened its doors for business Monday 1/7/2013!

## Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Seeking A New Manager

Ann Farrell retired as general manager on Monday January 14, 2013 just nine months after being named manager.

Curt Swanson, Director of Collection System Operations, and a 25-year district employee, has been named interim general manager while the board begins the process of selecting a permanent replacement.



## Goats Fight the War against West Nile Virus

Four-legged animals helped the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District get to the bottom of a source of mosquitoes.



During this past year's busy West Nile virus season, the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District focused much time and effort on finding the source of mosquitoes in Brentwood, because the majority of Contra Costa County's mosquitoes and birds that tested positive for the virus in 2012 came from the town. District employees provided inspections, treated underground catch basins, and canvassed neighborhoods by going door to door, but birds and mosquitoes continued to test positive for West Nile virus. The infected mosquitoes raised the possibility people could become ill, so the District fogged the area seven times in an effort to knock down the adult mosquitoes before they could transmit disease to nearby residents.

Inspectors suspected mosquitoes were producing in a storm water detention basin located near Heron Park in the eastern section of the town. The dense vegetation in the basin created a major challenge for district employees who had a difficult time accessing the floor of the pond to look for and treat any water. So, after multiple efforts to conduct efficient surveillance of the entire pond that instead produced limited results, the District turned to Brentwood officials, County Flood Control officials, and property developers to find a way to clear the vegetation.

Using machinery to clear the area was the first consideration, however the soggy ground made it likely the equipment could get stuck. That's when Flood Control officials called in the goats to clear the way. They decided to bring in Goats R Us.

Once the goats got to work they needed only seven days to clear the basin, before moving on to another detention basin nearby. The goats' efforts succeeded in making the area accessible to District inspectors. With easier access, district employees could treat the pond with a time-release bacterial public health pesticide that kills young mosquitoes in the water, but does not harm other insects or animals in the water.

The District is planning on getting a head start on 2013's West Nile virus season by encouraging officials to take necessary steps to maintain the detention basins to

prevent a re-occurrence of the same mosquito issues next year.

It just goes to show we are all in this war against West Nile virus together; a war that requires unique strategies and in this case even called for an army of four-legged goats to fight the bite.

The goats come from Goats R Us – an Orinda-based company that specializes in goat-powered brush reduction.

## The CCSDA Program Committee is looking for your feedback

Paul Soltow CCSDA Program Chair and Program Committee members John Wyro and Tom Williams would like to know what you would like to see for future programs.

A range of program topics were discussed including the following - invitations to county supervisors; accomplishments of some special districts, i.e. Las Vaqueros improvements, the Delta Science Center, energy programs at Central San and/or EBMUD; changes from the Pension Reform Act; media i.e. Mosquito Abatement District; water conservation and recycling.

Please provide the program committee feedback; we would like to hear ideas and suggestions from you!

## San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Appoints New Fire Chief

Chief Paige Meyer is currently the Fire Chief for the City of Vallejo and will join San Ramon Valley Fire on March 18. Chief Meyer fills the Fire Chief position which became vacant when Chief Richard Price retired in December 2012.

Prior to joining the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, Chief Meyer spent 15 years with the Vallejo Fire Department. He has over 20 years of fire service experience.

“Chief Meyer possesses a unique combination of skills,” said Director Stamey. “He has proven he can lead during economically challenging times and has demonstrated his ability to focus an organization around a core mission in order to best serve the community. We selected an exceptional leader for an exceptional organization.”



## Great News!

We now have 36 active and current members of the Contra Costa Special Districts Association!



### Our current members

Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District  
Ambrose Recreation & Park District  
Byron Bethany Irrigation District  
BBK Union Cemetery District  
Bethel Island Muni Improvement District  
Byron Sanitary District  
Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District  
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District  
Contra Costa Water District  
Contra Costa Resource Conservation District  
Crockett Community Services District  
Delta Diablo Sanitation District  
Diablo Water District  
Town of Discovery Bay Community Services District  
Dublin-San Ramon Services District  
East Bay Municipal Utilities District  
East Bay Regional Parks District  
East Contra Costa Irrigation District  
East Contra Costa Fire Protection District  
Ironhouse Sanitary District  
Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District  
Kensington Fire Protection District  
Knightsen Town Community Services District  
Los Medanos Community Healthcare District  
Moraga-Orinda Fire District  
Mt. View Sanitary District  
Mt. Diablo Health Care District  
Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District  
Reclamation District No. 800  
Reclamation District No. 830  
Rodeo Hercules Fire Protection District  
Rodeo Sanitary District  
San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District  
Stege Sanitary District  
West Contra Costa Health Care District  
West County Wastewater District

## What Distinguishes an Exceptional Board Member or Board President?

It takes more than just commitment. Your agency, and the Mission of it, relies on your board members to provide intellectual energy, passion, perspective, and leadership to champion the organization and promote its mission and values.

A truly valuable board member should understand that the focus is on strategy and leadership. Board members should be passionate about the Mission and apply their best efforts to improve and enrich their organization.

Here are several important criteria which should be considered by newly elected board members.

Board members should:

- Demonstrate a commitment to serving the public
- Commit to furthering the organizational Mission
- Act as an ambassador, promoting the agency for the greater good
- Use their valuable experience and perspective to improve the organization
- Create and protect a climate of trust within the board to best serve the public
- Work hard to establish and protect a trusting professional relationship with the CEO
- Apply advanced influence and articulation skills to moving their passions forward

## CSDA Chapter of the year!

Contra Costa Special Districts Association was named CSDA Chapter of the year on Thursday September 27, 2012 at the CSDA Annual Conference luncheon.



The CSDA "Chapter of the Year" award was accepted by Stanley Caldwell on behalf of Contra Costa Special Districts Association.

Your district should consider submitting for a California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Award. See the article on page 2 of this newsletter. Individuals and districts both are eligible to receive awards.

## Send us your District News and Press Releases!

Please send your district news releases to Stan Caldwell at [stan\\_caldwell@comcast.net](mailto:stan_caldwell@comcast.net) and keep us informed on all of the exciting things your special district is up to. We welcome your news contributions to our newsletter!

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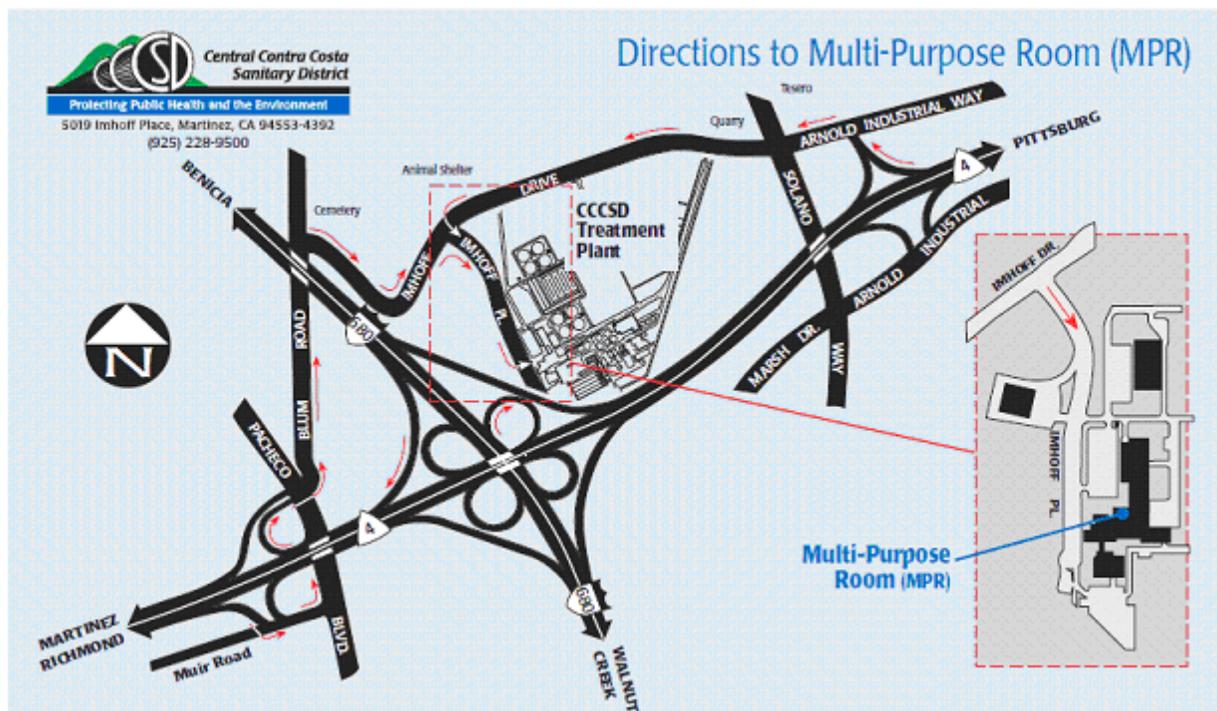
### Mark your calendars with our future Chapter Meeting Dates:

April 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, July 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, October 21<sup>st</sup> 2013

Meetings begin at 10:00 AM – we are out by Noon

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We meet at Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez, CA.



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### Contra Costa Special Districts Association

C/o West County Wastewater District  
2910 Hilltop Drive  
Richmond, CA 94806-1974  
Phone: (510) 222-6700  
Fax: (510) 222-3277

West County Wastewater contact Maria Sena Email [msena@wccd.org](mailto:msena@wccd.org)

Bette Boatmun, Chair - Email: [bboatmun@yahoo.com](mailto:bboatmun@yahoo.com) Mark Cornelius, Vice Chair - Email: [mark@markcorneliuslaw.com](mailto:mark@markcorneliuslaw.com)

Member at Large Stanley Caldwell & Newsletter Editor Email: [stan\\_caldwell@comcast.net](mailto:stan_caldwell@comcast.net)

California Special Districts Association – 1112 "I" Street, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95814 877.924.2732

[www.csd.net/contra-costa-special-districts-association](http://www.csd.net/contra-costa-special-districts-association)

*From the League of Cities, February 2013:*

## **Neglecting Annexation and Incorporation Will Not Serve the State's Growth Goals**

**By Kirstin Kolpitcke and Dan Carrigg**

Kirstin Kolpitcke is a legislative representative for the League and can be reached at [kkolpitcke@cacities.org](mailto:kkolpitcke@cacities.org). Dan Carrigg is the League's legislative director and can be reached at [dcarrigg@cacities.org](mailto:dcarrigg@cacities.org).

As California's Legislature emerges from a decade of severe budget deficits, many are celebrating the achievement of a balanced budget. Closing the state's massive deficit required severe spending cuts, a major boost from the taxpayers and a slowly recovering economy. But the desperate budget decisions made in recent years have policy impacts, whether it is the cost of attending public universities, potential increases in crime from realignment or the state's capacity to compete for jobs. Amid the budget wreckage, major questions also remain about the ability of cities to continue to grow and prosper.

Throughout history cities have served as centers of commerce and culture. This is certainly the case in California — the names of our major cities are known throughout the world. The Golden State's cities serve more than 83 percent of its residents and provide a range of municipal services including police, fire, libraries, parks and recreation, water, sewers and waste disposal. Cities also maintain a network of streets and roads.

State policies for achieving sustainability, greenhouse gas reduction, smart growth, infill and transit-oriented development and preserving farmland and open space have staked much on the role and success of cities. Yet the state's recent actions have signaled a lack of appreciation for the vital function cities serve as centers of commerce and providers of essential quality-of-life services for the vast majority of California's population.

The de facto state approach to cities appears to be one of neglect. When it comes to economic development, infrastructure and absorbing growth, cities are now on their own. The state discarded redevelopment — the most powerful municipal tool for upgrading urban cores, decontaminating brownfields, building affordable housing and transit-oriented development and countering urban sprawl. Revenues that supported new cities and cities that annexed inhabited areas were taken with no public process, leaving some cities on the verge of disincorporation. The message being sent is that

while growth will occur, the state no longer will expend the effort to support how and where it happens.

### **SB 89 Leaves Incorporation and Annexation Policies Upended**

As part of a push to close the budget gap in 2011, the Legislature passed SB 89 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2011) without a public hearing. The measure swept allocations of the Vehicle License Fee (VLF) from cities and Orange County as part of a scheme to fund realignment programs, which included grants for local law enforcement previously paid from the state General Fund. These local VLF revenues included special allocations dedicated by all other cities to assist newly incorporated and annexed territories. The allocations were established by League-supported legislation to compensate new cities and annexations for provisions of the 2004 VLF-property tax swap, which failed to include the in-lieu property tax adjustments that other cities receive. In addition, these VLF allocations supported state Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) policies that encourage service consolidation, including the annexation of islands of inhabited unincorporated territory. Incorporations also uphold state objectives to control sprawl, because LAFCO policies guide city growth but have less effect on unincorporated county growth.

The timing of SB 89 could not have been worse for Jurupa Valley, the state's newest city, incorporated on July 1, 2011. Before Jurupa Valley incorporated, the Riverside County LAFCO determined that county agencies could not provide services to the Jurupa Valley community "... in a more efficient and accountable manner. Incorporation will allow for increased local accountability."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of SB 89, the city lost more than one-third of its General Fund. According to an Oct. 25, 2012, article in the *Press Enterprise*, "Over the past two fiscal years, Jurupa Valley has lost more than \$13 million in state revenue. The city expects to run out of money by June 30, [2013], the end of the current fiscal year."<sup>2</sup> Without some sort of reinstatement of the lost revenue or having the county contribute funding, Jurupa Valley faces possible disincorporation.

Three other newly incorporated cities have also lost funding because of SB 89. Fontana, San Jose and many other cities that made the state-supported policy decisions to annex and serve inhabited unincorporated areas were undercut and lost the revenue they relied upon when making those decisions. The policy signals and future impact of SB 89 are obvious: Cities no longer have any incentive to annex and serve inhabited unincorporated areas. Furthermore, without the prospect of future incorporations the state will be faced with more unincorporated county growth patterns, which historically have been less dense than city-centered development.

### **SB 244's Leverage Will Reduce Other Annexations**

Another recent law with good intentions but unintended consequences is SB 244 (Chapter 513, Statutes of 2011). Inspired by advocates concerned about the poor services and infrastructure conditions for low-income people in county unincorporated

areas, this bill was designed to promote annexation by adjacent cities. The advocates sponsoring the bill observed that the quality of infrastructure and services in cities were superior and sought leverage to increase the likelihood of future annexation. The law requires that any area of proposed annexation contiguous to a disadvantaged unincorporated community must include an application to annex the disadvantaged unincorporated community as well. The bill essentially asks those who seek a financially viable annexation to annex an area that's less than financially viable in hopes that the monetary incentives of the first annexation are so beneficial that they can sustain the financial losses of annexing the disadvantaged unincorporated community.

However, while the intent is understandable, the additional financial burden of annexing a disadvantaged unincorporated community will stall other viable annexations. While the law is still relatively new and interest in annexation has slowed with the economy, one example illustrates its impact.

On Jan. 6, 2012, the Riverside County LAFCO denied a proposal to annex two unincorporated areas that included about 625 acres adjacent to the City of Desert Hot Springs. The LAFCO report states, "Most importantly, recently enacted legislation prohibits the approval of this annexation since it excludes an adjacent disadvantaged unincorporated community. As a result, staff recommends denial of Annexation 29 to the City of Desert Hot Springs."<sup>3</sup> The annexation will not be pursued any further.

### **Revenue Neutrality Compounds Incorporation Challenges**

Prior to the passage of SB 89, city incorporations were already significantly limited by the revenue neutrality law adopted in the early 1990s during yet another state budget crisis. As a result, jurisdictions fortunate enough to make incorporations pay their way, or "pencil out," were typically the exception rather than the rule.

"Revenue neutrality" essentially means that the incorporating city gets to keep only the amount of revenue that the county was spending in the area prior to incorporation, not the amount of revenue generated within the area. For example, the incorporation proponents for the City of Elk Grove agreed to give the county a percentage of property tax that would decline over 25 years while keeping other taxes, such as the sales tax and transient occupancy (hotel) tax. Under the revenue neutrality law, counties are in a position to drive hard bargains that limit the ability of new cities to pencil out. That is why in recent years the VLF allocations became so critical to helping cities like Jurupa Valley incorporate.

Some at the state level may view the incorporation question as making no real difference. That view has serious flaws.

California anticipates annual population growth of approximately 300,000 to 400,000 people in the coming years. These people will need essential community services and a place to live. What is the most appropriate land-use solution to meet the challenge of this growing population?

From a growth perspective, an area proposed for incorporation already has a level of development previously approved by the county; in many cases such growth was not subject to LAFCO review. Incorporation will ensure that future expansion complies with LAFCO policies, which reflect state priorities. City incorporation efforts are also one of the most fundamental expressions of democracy. Affected residents may be dissatisfied with growth patterns approved by the county, the remoteness of government offices, the quality of public services, emergency response times and the lack of parks or other desired amenities. Once a city is incorporated, public engagement often increases as more attention can be paid to local needs and desires. The thriving communities of Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova and Citrus Heights in Sacramento County provide examples of the community empowerment that incorporation can bring. Residents of East Los Angeles and Carmel Valley have long desired self-governance for the same reasons.

### **Going Forward**

It serves little purpose to rehash the past, but the future offers opportunities for change and rectifying the problems described here. As California's economy recovers, the challenges of growth will return. Where should this growth be directed? How will infrastructure and services to support growth be provided? If strong cities are truly important to the state's economic future and growth goals, then the broken policies affecting California's cities must be repaired.

## Vallejo fire chief will take charge of San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

By Jason Sweeney [jsweeney@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:jsweeney@bayareanewsgroup.com) San Jose Mercury News  
Posted:

Friday, March 1, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

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SAN RAMON VALLEY -- Vallejo Fire Chief Paige Meyer has been selected to lead the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

The fire district board announced Wednesday night that Meyer will take over the district's top spot on March 18.

Meyer, 43, will be paid an annual salary of \$235,000 -- 20 percent more than his Vallejo pay.

Meyer spent 15 years with the Vallejo Fire Department and has more than 20 years of fire service experience. He served as chief of the Vallejo Fire Department for 20 months.

He is replacing Chief Richard Price who stepped down in December.

Contact Jason Sweeney at 925-847-2123. Follow him at [Twitter.com/Jason\\_Sweeney](https://twitter.com/Jason_Sweeney).

## **San Pablo: Cash-strapped Doctors Medical Center could face closure within a year**

*By Rick Radin For the Contra Costa Times San Jose Mercury News*  
*Posted:*

Friday, March 1, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

SAN PABLO -- Fiscal matters have reached a crisis stage again for Doctors Medical Center, and employees and union leaders implored the hospital's board of directors Wednesday evening to find a way to preserve services and keep the doors open.

Unless it can partner or merge with a larger health care organization or raise more revenue, the hospital will likely close within a year, Supervisor John Gioia of Richmond told meeting attendees.

"It's hard for a stand-alone urban hospital to succeed with large numbers of low-reimbursement Medi-Cal and Medicare patients," said Gioia, a key player in saving Doctors in 2006. "We have a challenging payer mix."

The hospital, which was saved from bankruptcy in 2006, has a projected \$10 million deficit for 2013 and is running out of reserves to keep operating, according to interim CEO Dawn Gideon.

Although revenue from reimbursements rose, Doctors had a \$1.2 million deficit in January and \$16.4 million cash on hand, enough for 45 days of operations, according to a financial report presented at the meeting.

The hospital is taking additional steps to reduce the deficit by consolidating two patient care floors into one, saving about \$400,000, and laying off 22 of its roughly 1,000 employees.

Gioia said the board has commissioned a poll to determine whether West Contra Costa voters would support another hospital parcel tax.

Homeowners pay \$99 annually on two existing parcel taxes, accounting for \$10 million of Doctors' \$138 million annual budget.

Doctors has been operating for more than 55 years, but services have shrunk as its costs have risen, and reimbursements have not kept up.

The hospital has closed its obstetrics department, burn unit and other facilities, but the loss of its 25-bed emergency room if the entire hospital closed would create a critical gap in West Contra Costa, Gioia said.

Gioia said other hospitals in the county should share the cost of caring for low-income and indigent patients.

"Where (a hospital) is located should not determine how much it pays for charity care," he said.

Robert McCauley, an organizer with the National Union of Healthcare Workers in Emeryville, said he thinks Doctors needs to do a better job of enlisting help from elected representatives.

McCauley said he contacted Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez, Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley, and Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin about the hospital's financial plight and the danger it presents for critical emergency care and local jobs.

"Nobody knew anything because no one had reached out," McCauley said.

Board President Eric Zell disagreed.

"We've gone to everyone we can go to," he said.

Several hospital employees reflected McCauley's remarks, urging the board to reconsider the cuts and layoffs.

"DMC once stood for 'dedicated medical care,'" said Anthony Brown, an emergency room technician. "Now it stands for 'we need money.'"

In response to the complaints, Contra Costa Health Services Director William Walker said layoffs and cost containment are going on in medical centers throughout the country because of health care reform, "including hospitals that are not running \$10 million deficits."

"County hospital (in Martinez) consolidated wards and had good cost savings," Walker said.