

October 9, 2013
Agenda Item 14c

Thursday, August 15, 2013
ContraCostaTimes.com

Barnidge: ConFire needs to tailor staffing to when and where it's needed

By Tom Barnidge Contra Costa Times Columnist Contra Costa Times
Posted:

There were enough charts, graphs and statistics on display to conjure up nightmares of math classes past, but when consultant Jay Fitch wrapped up his progress report on a study of the Contra Costa Fire District for county supervisors Tuesday morning, there was no mistaking the direction in which his findings were headed.

Full-service, 24/7 fire-station operations throughout the district should be a thing of the past. Variable staffing to meet time and location needs is a more cost-effective use of manpower. Quick-service vehicles, smaller emergency units and faster call processing could shorten response time.

The supervisors, who double as the ConFire board, commissioned Fitch & Associates six months ago to undertake this study in search of a less costly operating model. Financial pressures, propelled by the twin demons of declining property taxes and increasing employee retirement benefits, have put such a stranglehold on the district that five stations have been closed in the past eight months.

ConFire is hardly alone, said Fitch, who has consulted on such problems for 30 years. "Many, many communities around America are having to look at what they're spending, what they can afford and how they can optimize public safety service."

Fitch, a one-time volunteer firefighter who formerly managed emergency medical services for St. Louis, said fire districts in Los Angeles, Oregon and Florida are already employing nontraditional operating models that reduce staffing needs.

One chart he shared, reflecting Contra Costa data gathered in the 2011-12 fiscal year, showed the vast majority of fire calls occur between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.; the preponderance of medical emergencies between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. In another graphic laid over the map of the county, he pinpointed where fire and emergency calls are most and least likely to come from, identified as high-, medium- and low-density incident zones.

No Ph.D.s were required to grasp his conclusion: If you can reasonably predict where and when resources will be needed, tailor staffing to those needs.

"The demand for service is not uniform," he said, "and there are different times of the day when demand differs. The concept is matching supply to demand."

One chart demonstrated how response times increase as the number of fire stations decreases. But those numbers can be mitigated, he said, by strategically locating stations. He seemed to anticipate the next question when he cautioned residents not to overreact to station closures.

"The public needs to understand that the service they receive is not station-dependent," he said. "The myth we sometimes hear is, 'My station closed -- I don't have fire protection.' The reality is fire resources and assets flow throughout the system and the district."

The public will have ample opportunity to express its sentiments at three town hall meetings where Fitch will appear next week, all beginning at 6:30 p.m. -- at the Pittsburg library on Monday; in the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building on Tuesday; and at the Clayton library on Wednesday.

Public feedback is among the elements he will incorporate in his final report. That will likely come five or six months from now, with specific recommended actions. No one will be watching more closely than district firefighters, who understand the simplest math of all.

Reduced costs = fewer firefighters.

Contact Tom Barnidge at tbarnidge@bayareanewsgroup.com.

Barnidge: ConFire's two-person medical response team is step in the right direction

By Tom Barnidge Contra Costa Times Columnist Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Monday, September 9, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

Contra Costa firefighters' support last week for the addition of a new two-person medical response team to Walnut Creek Station 1 might be more than just a boon for public safety. Maybe it finally signals their awareness of a need for change in the financially strapped district. Up until now, they've insisted on three-person companies.

The purpose of the 90-day pilot program, according to Fire Marshal Lewis Broschard, is to reduce workloads for the remaining engine teams in Walnut Creek and Lafayette, both of which lost stations to budget cuts. It also would test the effectiveness of a new approach and maybe even improve response times.

The new squad, including one paramedic, will respond to lower-priority, non-life-threatening calls in a more maneuverable pickup-style truck, outfitted with full medical apparatus and minimal firefighting equipment.

Firefighters have long argued against this approach because they'd need to return to the firehouse to get the engine if a fire broke out while they were on a medical call. Under this plan, the three-person engine team remains at the station except for high-priority emergencies. If there's a fire and extra help is needed, the medical squad can switch to firefighting duties after completing its call.

"The reason we supported this is our resources are depleted," said Vince Wells, president of firefighters union Local 1230.

The rationale matters less than the willingness to budge. In a profession in which tradition and protocol die hard, any hint of openness to new ideas indicates an awareness of the financial realities to be confronted.

"The firefighters' willingness to support this pilot program suggests they're willing to look at alternatives and support different concepts," Broschard said. "We think there's a niche within the fire and EMS response system for a vehicle crew like this.

"As we look at rebuilding the fire district, we're hopeful this kind of resource will play a role in addressing not only the community's concerns but the fiscal constraints we're facing."

Fiscal constraints have been the secret passwords to enter every recent ConFire meeting. Declining property taxes slashed the district's revenue. Growing retirement benefits increased its expenses. A parcel tax measure not only failed at the ballot box but aggravated (A) residents, who resented more taxes, and (B) firefighters, who were miffed at rejection.

One side felt overburdened, the other unappreciated.

In fairness, firefighters can't be blamed for the staggering pension mess that now drains the district's reserves. Fault lies with the shortsighted county supervisors of 11 years ago who rashly approved unsustainable retirement benefits. Nor can residents be blamed for balking at increased taxes at a time when the economy took a nose-dive, their property values plummeted and many of them found themselves out of work.

Besides, blame isn't the issue. A workable solution is.

That's why supervisors recently commissioned consultant Fitch & Associates to study the district and propose modifications. It's why the public has been invited to provide feedback at town hall meetings. It's one of the reasons why Chief Daryl Louder lobbied two months ago for the new two-person medical squads.

The status quo isn't working. Alternatives are required. It's promising to see that the firefighters' union budged enough to at least give this one a try.

Contact Tom Barnidge at tbarnidge@bayareanewsgroup.com.

Antioch deal keeps century-old water rights intact

Updated: 09/11/2013 02:02:49 PM PDT

Tuesday, September 10, 2013
ContraCostaTimes.com

ANTIOCH -- The ability to draw water from the Delta without state permits has been a liquid asset for this city for nearly a century.

Antioch leaders made sure Tuesday night to keep it that way.

The City Council agreed to an extension of its 1968 agreement with the state's Department of Water Resources allowing Antioch to draw water from the San Joaquin River 208 days a year for the next 15 years.

"This preserves and projects Antioch's rights as far as our water," Councilman Tony Tiscareno said. "We're hoping that we're able to preserve this for a lifetime, but this is a start."

Antioch has rights dating back to before 1914 to pump without the need for a state permit.

The amended terms come after five years of negotiations, and call for the state to pay one-third of Antioch's costs to purchase substitute water when its normal supply is not usable because of increased salinity.

The once-fresh water has become saltier over time as state and federal agencies moved water from the region to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.

Antioch is guaranteed water quality at or below 250 milligrams of salt per liter.

The amendment also sets when salinity readings are taken to two hours after daily high tide. It also expands the measured volume of substitute water to include Antioch's expanded boundaries and sphere of influence areas.

Those elements are "more favorable to (Antioch) financially," Councilman Gary Agopian said.

Additionally, the new agreement would wipe out all prior claims by both sides.

Antioch's approval is independent of Gov. Jerry Brown's plan to build a pair of tunnels to move water from the Delta to Southern California, meaning the city is not obligated to support the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, said Ron Bernal, the city's public works director.

"We should have the right to speak out, and we will," Councilman Gary Agopian said.

The Department of Water Resources hasn't finalized the agreement yet.

For updates, check back to ContraCostaTimes.com.

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

Barnidge: A firefighting veteran lays out his plan for how ConFire should change

By Tom Barnidge Contra Costa Times Columnist Contra Costa Times
Posted:

Thursday, September 12, 2013
ContraCostaTimes.com

When Bill Prather talks about fire protection, he speaks with a perspective gained over more than 50 years.

He was a volunteer firefighter in Pinole while in high school in 1959. He advanced to captain in 11 years with the Richmond Fire Department before an injury cut short his career. He's been a director for the Rodeo-Hercules fire district since 1994.

So when he called the other day to weigh in on the financial dilemma threatening the Contra Costa Fire District, his voice resonated louder than most.

Many factors have contributed to expenses outpacing revenues, he said, beginning with ill-advised increases to firefighter retirement benefits in 2002, but institutional resistance to change shares part of the blame.

Some stations are overstaffed for the preponderance of their calls. The \$700,000 pumper rigs regularly used are ill-suited for most missions. Staffing shortages filled with overtime shifts should fall to trained reserves. Prather began raising these issues long ago, after recognizing that medical and service calls dramatically outnumbered fires.

"You could see what the future was bringing," he said. "In 2000, I tried to push for smaller rigs that would take care of 98 percent of our calls. They'd be two-person units -- you don't need three on medical calls.

"If you came into our county and looked at it as a blank slate, you wouldn't choose the 2,000-gallon-a-minute pumper we're using as the vehicle of choice. It would be an attack-line fire vehicle with a small tank, medical and rescue equipment."

Instead of shutting down five stations to save money, as ConFire has done in the last year, Prather said it would have been wiser to study historic patterns and assign two-man teams to stations that handled mostly medical calls and full engine companies to strategic locations.

His most dramatic departure from the status quo is a proposed "Firefighter Temp Agency," to be built from an internship program. He said overtime expenses are a budget buster -- he put ConFire's at \$12 million last year -- because there are no reserves to fill unexpected manpower needs. Why not recruit young hopefuls and train them for those roles?

"You get kids out of high school, kids from a top-notch community college program and give them an 18-month internship with a stipend while they're testing. If you need an extra shift filled, you send someone who's been qualified in all areas. They get experience, and they give us manpower."

The idea is apt to meet resistance from the firefighters' union because it tramples on its terrain. But there's no better time to push for change than when financial solvency is at risk. On its current trajectory, ConFire will be bankrupt by 2016, according to County Administrator David Twa.

"It takes the right circumstance to make a plan like this kick in," Prather said. "You can't do it when there's lots of money. That's when people give away too much."

Prather has more to say. He thinks all firefighters should be paramedics ("The difference between a paramedic and an EMT is life and death"). He wants them highly trained and well paid ("If you have fewer people, you need better people, and their salary should reflect what they bring to the community").

The man has no hesitancy about sharing his opinions.

"The public isn't stupid," he said. "They see there's got to be a better way of doing things. We'd better sit down and find a solution."

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Moraga-Orinda Fire District budget woes continue

By Jennifer Modenessi Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Friday, September 13, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

MORAGA -- Despite a boost in property tax revenue and an influx of federal grant money to pay for hiring four additional firefighter/paramedics in order to reduce overtime costs, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District is expecting to end the next fiscal year \$1.25 million in the red.

Interim fire Chief Stephen Healy will ask directors next week to approve the final 2013-14 general fund budget that shows the district dipping into general fund reserves for the third consecutive year in order to avoid service cuts. The capital projects budget is also facing a \$574,376 shortfall.

"Over the past three years, the district has been negatively affected by the economic downturn," Healy wrote last week in a letter to MOFD's board of directors. "Although the district has exercised financial prudence and focused on cost-cutting measures, the district continues to deficit spend, negatively affecting ... long-term financial stability."

Staffers are estimating total general fund revenues of nearly \$19.3 million in 2013-14, and expenses of \$20.5 million, according to the budget.

The revenues include an additional \$325,586 in property tax income stemming from an increase in assessed property values calculated by the Contra Costa County Assessor's Office.

The general fund also includes more than \$443,000 in federal grant money, most of it from a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant awarded earlier this year that district administrators say will allow for the hiring of four firefighter/paramedics.

In his letter to the board, Healy said the hirings have decreased projected overtime expenditures. Those costs increased last year, said Administrative Services Director Gloriann Sasser, primarily due to the December 2012 Highway 24 accident in which three firefighters were hit by a car, resulting in overtime worked by other firefighters. Still, the district has budgeted \$1.5 million in overtime during the 2013-14 fiscal year.

Other expenses continue to rise. Permanent salaries are expected to grow to \$8.19 million, or 9.26 percent more than the previous year, according to the budget. Sasser says each new firefighter/paramedic will cost the district about \$141,000. Still, the increase comes despite a reduced administrative staff and continued contract negotiations that have frozen firefighter health care benefits and cost-of-living salary increases.

Rising retirement costs are also continuing to hammer the district. Staffers project an 18.43 percent increase in employer retirement contribution costs next year for existing MOFD employees because of lowered investment assumptions by the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association, which manages the district's retirement benefits. The district also recently saw unfunded employee pension debt to the retirement association grow an additional \$21.8 million.

The budget trouble also means MOFD is once again not planning to fund retiree health care debt, estimated at \$11.7 million; the district pays only its share of the current year's retiree medical insurance costs. Staffers have, however, budgeted \$2.6 million toward paying pension bond debt.

Should directors elect to use reserves for the general fund shortfall, the district will end next year

with a total general fund balance of \$886,805.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Mosaic Room at the Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive.

Moraga-Orinda fire officials adopt deficit budget, search for long-term solutions

By Jennifer Modenessi Contra Costa Times San Jose Mercury News
Posted:

Thursday, September 19, 2013
ContraCostaTimes.com

MORAGA -- Moraga-Orinda Fire District officials have adopted budgets that have the district ending the fiscal year more than \$1.8 million in the red and are reaching out to the public for feedback.

The district's five-member board of directors voted Wednesday to approve the 2013-14 general fund and capital improvement budgets. The move means that the district will finish the fiscal year with \$900,000 in general fund reserves -- or less than one month's operating expenses.

Directors also said they will address the district's deeper financial problems, including growing pension debt.

"I think that it's pretty clear that we adopt this budget, and then we are going to have to almost immediately go into a study of what it is that we are going to do to reduce the structural deficit," said Director Fred Weil. "There are a number of possible choices, none of which we have vetted yet in public."

Board President John Wyro said the current path "is not sustainable."

"We need to do something different to move the district forward," he said.

To that end, the board also decided to hold a public budget workshop to let residents share their ideas and thoughts on the district's finances. That meeting is scheduled for Oct. 2.

On Wednesday, directors also earmarked \$240,000 for repairs at two Orinda fire stations and froze a battalion chief position, saving the district about \$250,000.

Interim Chief Stephen Healy said administrators have also analyzed the district's long-range financial plan, a document unveiled last year that showed how the district planned to address its pension and health care debt, which was then more than \$60 million.

"What we found when we went from row to row looking at the different expenditures was that really the only two things that made a difference structurally were the staffing model and the cost associated with that and the personnel costs for the district," Healy said.

Directors didn't ask for further details.

The district continues to negotiate contracts with firefighters, whose salaries and health care benefits have remained frozen since 2010. Firefighters have not received raises since 2008, Healy said.

Administrators have suggested alternate delivery models, such as additional cross-staffing of ambulances, to address increasing costs and have remained adamant about maintaining service levels.

Still, the district is projecting personnel costs will grow about 9.26 percent more than the previous

year, which staff attributes to promotions and the hiring of four new firefighter/paramedics made possible by a two-year federal grant.

Directors said Wednesday that the hires had decreased overtime costs to \$1.5 million this year but acknowledged those costs could increase in two years when the grant money runs out.

TEMESCAL VALLEY: Commission staff don't support Corona's annexation bid

1 of 3



[BY JEFF HORSEMAN](#)

STAFF WRITER

September 20, 2013; 05:46 PM

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Corona's plan to annex part of Temescal Valley should be postponed to allow city and county officials time to work out fire-protection concerns, according to a government analysis.

In a report to the Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission, staff members said they cannot recommend the annexation unless fire concerns are resolved. The seven-member commission, which oversees annexations, is not bound by the staff recommendation.

The staff report recommends that the commission, which consists of county supervisors, elected leaders from various cities and a private citizen, postpone the matter until Dec. 19 so the city and county can work out an agreement on fire coverage.

Right now, the northern third of the annexation area is served by a Corona fire station through a county contract while a county fire station is responsible for the other two-thirds.

The city sought to preserve this arrangement through another county contract, but Corona and the county haven't been able to agree to terms, the report read. As an alternative, Corona wants to build a new fire station in the central part of the annexation area.

"This is a much less efficient configuration as it involves construction and staffing of an additional station and will likely require the County to close or relocate its current station, which could negatively impact service to other unincorporated areas," the report read.

Related: [LAFCO Report on Temescal Valley Annexation](#)

Corona's City Council in February moved ahead with a plan to add roughly 15.4 square miles of Temescal Valley to the city. More than 15,000 people live in the area. City officials say annexation will give it greater control over growth along Corona's southern boundary.

Annexation is opposed by a vocal group of Temescal Valley residents who say they prefer the county's public services. They fear they'll have to pay more for the same or an inferior level of services as part of Corona.

The commission will hold a public hearing on the annexation plan at 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26, at the County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon St. in Riverside.

The 21-page LAFCO staff report found that other than a business license tax, Temescal Valley residents would not be subject to new city taxes. The level of development also wouldn't change and city zoning for the area would be similar to the county's, the report read.

Police presence in the area would be greatly enhanced by annexation and street sweeping would be more extensive, according to the report. Landowners also would not have to pay California's \$150 fire assessment fee, the report found.

However, residents would have to pay an emergency medical response fee the county doesn't charge, business owners would face a license fee increase and the city doesn't offer senior discounts for trash collection, the report read.

Annexation also would mean a \$1.2 million annual hit to county coffers, with the loss increasing as time goes on, the report found. The county Board of Supervisors voted to oppose annexation.

Corona Councilman Eugene Montanez, a LAFCO commissioner, said the city's plan offers the same amount of fire coverage as what currently exists.

Perhaps that wasn't clear enough in the city's application, he said. "Our goal is not to diminish service for anybody," Montanez said.

Anti-annexation leader Jannlee Watson questioned the need for a continuance to Dec. 19. The city and the county have had months to work out an agreement on fire service, she said, adding the December meeting comes shortly before Christmas and is scheduled to take place at Eastern Municipal Water District headquarters in Perris.

Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez, R-Lake Elsinore, whose district includes Temescal Valley, opposes annexation. LAFCO received about 4,000 letters on the issue with almost all against annexation, the report read.

Montanez said the city held five to seven public hearings in the valley about annexation with no more than 50 people showing up at most of them. He said he's talked to valley residents who support annexation but aren't as vocal as opponents.

The councilman said he hopes LAFCO at least allows residents to vote on annexation. If LAFCO rejects the proposal, the annexation would fail.

If LAFCO approves it, residents would have 21 days to file protest letters and they could force an election with signed letters from at least 25 percent of registered voters. Residents could kill the annexation if a majority of registered voters signed letters.

Follow Jeff Horseman on Twitter: [@JeffHorseman](https://twitter.com/JeffHorseman)

ANNEXATION HEARING

The Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission will hold a public hearing on the city of Corona's proposal to annex about 15 square miles of Temescal Valley.

When: 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26

Where: Board of Supervisors chambers, 1st floor, County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon St. in Riverside.

Fire study misses key context for judging proposed changes

Sunday, September 22, 2013
Contra Costa Times

By Vince Wells

There is a perception by some that the Contra Costa Fire District is operating under an outdated service model. The Con Fire board of directors and even the consultant they hired acknowledge that our fire calls have not changed much over the years.

Yes, we are responding to more medical emergencies than we are fires. But our core mission is unchanged and the number of fire responses each year is not declining.

This is why firefighters have many concerns about the operational plan and potential deployment strategies to be proposed in the upcoming Fitch Associates study. A preliminary plan was unveiled last month.

Fitch is using incomplete data to support a faulty premise: that emergency calls follow a predictable pattern and the impact to services can be minimized by capturing inefficiencies in the system.

The "location" and "time of day" graphics mapping our calls in the Fitch presentations are incomplete. Obviously, every call is not the same. The study does not reflect the complexity of the calls, including how many were dispatched, the duration of the call, how many people needed aid, how many concurrent calls came in and which calls were for automatic aid.

For instance, the recent Morgan Fire on Mount Diablo, which included more than 1,000 firefighters from multiple jurisdictions and took six days to contain, would show up as one dot on the map at 1:50 p.m. on a Sunday. Data is useless if it does not offer context.

National standards recommend that 15 firefighters and one supervisor be able to arrive on scene within eight minutes to a standard residential fire. With our current staffing, this requires five fire stations to be emptied because we have three firefighters assigned to each station. This is known as a first alarm. Each additional alarm requires the same resources. A two-alarm structure fire in the middle of the night will have a significant impact on the number of resources that would be available for any additional emergencies.

Additional closed stations, as proposed in the Fitch presentations, have the potential to increase response times, and the increased risks are measurable. The projected two-minute delayed response time after closing more fire stations seems reasonable. However, the measurement for delay in response time is flawed. This two-minute delay assumes all of our engines/trucks are sitting somewhere strategic at the same time. That is unlikely. When an engine/truck responds to an incident, it leaves significant geographical gaps in coverage and results in a longer than two-minute delay in response time.

A final study should also look at "norms" around the Bay Area and around the country. The study should compare our personnel, resources, costs and performance against other fire departments and districts that serve a large suburban area that has similar dynamics, including an unpredictable wildfire season and large open space and major oil refineries and other industrial businesses.

The study should also include a baseline demand requirement that specifies the necessary personnel and resources needed for a fire district of this size and complexity. And, it should document the benefits and risks associated with the adoption of any new model for deployment.

Firefighters continue to work with the board to address declining revenue and the need to ensure the public's safety, including a pilot study at Fire Station 1 in Walnut Creek to run a medical squad for lower priority medical calls, which will help keep fire engines available for higher priority calls. However, a fire district of this size and complexity should not be a test lab for unproven and potentially dangerous deployment strategies proposed by Fitch. The public deserves to know the truth about what these proposed models really mean to their fire service. *Vince Wells is president of the United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County, Local 1230.*

Monday, September 23, 2013



Congratulations to the 2013 CSDA Award Winners!

Big congratulations to all of this year's CSDA Annual Awards winners. Individuals and districts both received awards acknowledging their achievements in various areas including exceptional public outreach, leadership and innovations. The awards were presented at this year's Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase held September 16 – 19 in Monterey.

Hollingsworth Award of Excellence

Bette Boatman, Contra Cost Water District

Board President of the Year

Lois Henry, Lompico County Water District

General Manager of the Year

Scott Carroll, SDA, Costa Mesa Sanitary District

Staff Member of the Year

Lidia Santos, Castroville Community Services District

CSDA Chapter of the Year

Gold Country Regional Chapter

Innovative Program Award (small district)

Port San Luis Harbor District, Cooperative Agreement Project

Innovative Program Award (large district)

Vista Irrigation District, Workplace Planning & Career Development Program

Exceptional Public Outreach & Advocacy Award (small district)

Los Medanos Community Healthcare District, Summer Intern Program

Exceptional Public Outreach & Advocacy Award (large district)

Midway City Sanitary District, Solid Waste Commercial Recycling Program

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Friday, Sep 20 2013 09:35 AM

[Economic Development Council stands beside Benz on Golden Hills trash issue](#)

By **BY MATTHEW MARTZ** Tehachapi News

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Controversy in the Golden Hills Community Service District is nothing new. The latest involves the district's action to assume authority over its solid waste management. The action prompted the Greater Tehachapi Economic Development Council to hold a town hall-type meeting last Monday evening, Sept. 16, at the Beekay Theatre to listen to the public before taking a position on the matter. Photo by Gregory D. Cook/Tehachapi News.

One by one more than a dozen people made their way to the podium to speak out in support of Tehachapi-based trash hauler Benz Sanitation, which would lose its sole right to pick up trash in Golden Hills since the GHCD has opted to take over the territory and make a deal with a trash hauler of its choosing.

Controversy has surrounded the district's action to give Benz a five-year notice and spend what may be up to \$100,000 to have a Bay Area firm handle the logistics of constructing a bid process and related matters.

So much so, that it prompted the Greater Tehachapi Economic Development Council to hold a town hall-type meeting on Monday evening, Sept. 16, at the Beekay Theatre to listen to the public before taking a position on the matter.

The meeting was moderated by third-party facilitator Gary Pearson, a retired engineering director and Tehachapi resident.

EDC President Nikki Cummings opened the meeting by telling the audience of around 40, that the EDC board had been asked to consider the controversial issue and take a stand regarding the situation.

"We decided there was a lack of information for us to make a decision," Cummings said. "So we postponed our decision to review the documents provided by both sides and to better educate ourselves about the issue."

Although both Golden Hills and Benz were given 15 minutes to make their presentations, representatives from the district were not present.

Instead, Golden Hills General Manager Bill Fisher released a letter earlier in the day, stating that the district would not be able to attend the public forum, just two weeks after Cummings said she received verbal communication from the district that it would participate.

The letter was attached to a notice mailed to residents in Golden Hills announcing the district's upcoming solid waste public workshop.

Fisher also stated in the letter that under other circumstances the district would have been happy to attend, but board members and staff had been sequestered during the RFP process.

The presentations commenced with Paul Benz Jr. who provided a timeline of the issue between his family's company and Golden Hills, and asked for the public's support in backing Benz's point of view that Golden Hills

misrepresented itself when defining its active and latent powers in a letter to the Kern County Local Agency Formation Commission in July, 2006.

Since then, in August of 2013, Benz has asked LAFCO to reverse its decision and is waiting for commissioners to come to a conclusion at its next board meeting on Sept. 25, in Bakersfield.

Further into his presentation, Benz accused Golden Hills of trying to quietly circumvent the will of its residents and the historical truth.

"We believe this is a clear effort by Golden Hills CSD to deceive LAFCO and begin a power takeover which is clearly unwanted by its residents as recently as 2010 in an advisory vote," he said.

During that Oct. 12, 2010 vote, Golden Hills asked its residents to choose whether they wanted the district to manage its own solid waste collection. Voters provided an overwhelming "no," with 235 in support and 558 against.

Benz also said that if the district's claim to save residents money was the deciding factor in its decision to change the way it collects its trash, then the district should forego the 10-percent administration fee that it is set to collect once a new trash hauler is in place.

Local business owner Buddy Cummings was one of those who spoke passionately in support of Benz. It was at his request that the GTEDC held the forum.

"If they [Golden Hills] were so proud of what they are doing they would be here supporting what they have done, and be excited to tell people about it," he said. "The fact that they are not here to explain that, scares me."

Cummings, who once served on a committee appointed by the EDC to attract small businesses to Tehachapi, said it's no small task to business to come to the area and this message of using an outside service, could have a ripple effect in persuading new businesses to come to the area in the future.

"To think we would disregard or look the other way of our number one small business that's been here for 40 years and act like everything is going to be okay is scary," he added. "We need to maintain our soul, and make a stand against a decision that can affect us with such a magnitude and in such a long term way."

Following a brief question and answer session and Benz's closing comments, the EDC board adjourned to an executive session to make its decision, and later released a letter to Golden Hills, LAFCO and the Kern County Board of Supervisors dated Sept. 18.

The letter states that it is the EDC's position that Golden Hills has ignored public intent and disregarded the need for public discussion on a crucial issue affecting its residents.

It also urges LAFCO to reconsider its decision regarding the designation of active powers of the CSD and until doing so, asked Golden Hills to postpone further action in moving forward in the process of changing the way it handles its solid waste collection.

"We hope the GHCSO board will thoughtfully consider the comments of their residents and suspend any RFP efforts until getting a better understanding of the desire of their community," Nikki Cummings said. "Even if that requires another vote."

Residents will get a chance to voice their opinion and to discuss the RFP process at a public workshop at 6 p.m. on Sept. 23 at the CSD building, 21415 Reeves St. -- just two days before LAFCO commissioners are expected to make a decision on whether they will reverse their prior decision to allow Golden Hills power over their solid

waste management collection.

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John P. Tarver • 3 days ago

Nikki Cummings had a meeting for Buddy Cummings over an issue EDC has no authority, for our local convicted felon's company? Were they trying to look sleazy?

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LOCAL ADVERTISERS

New fire chief named

Board of Supervisors appoints Roseville assistant chief to replace departing leader Louder; pay raise approved

By Jennifer Modenessi

jmodenessi@bayareanewsgroup.com

MARTINEZ — County supervisors have appointed Roseville Fire Department assistant chief of operations Jeff Carman as the new fire chief of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District.

The supervisors, who also act as the fire district board, officially appointed Carman Sept. 17. He starts his new job Oct. 21.

Carman replaces fire Chief Daryl Louder, who announced his resignation in April. Louder's last day with the district is Oct. 31.

Supervisors selected Carman in August from an initial pool of 42 applicants.

Carman's monthly starting salary is \$15,527.14. In October, county Human Resources Director Ted Cwiek will ask the board to approve reallocating the fire chief's salary to a higher step; Carman's base salary will be \$195,641.88 annually. That salary is 5 percent higher than the retiring chief's, according to County Administrator David Twa. The county, he said, increased the chief's salary range to make the recruitment pool "as broad as possible."

The overlap between the two chiefs will cost \$6,500, which will come from the fire district's operating budget.

Carman will also start his new posiSee **CHIEF**, [Page 2](#)



Carman

Starts as chief of Contra Costa County fire district on Oct. 21

Article Continued Below

[See CHIEF on Page B02](#)

Chief

Continued from Page 1

tion with a vacation credit of 80 hours and a relocation reimbursement of up to \$10,000. Twa told supervisors the new chief will be entitled to accrued vacation of 23.3 hours a month, which is what Carman receives in his current position.

"Traditionally, when we've brought department heads in, we've brought them in at the same level of benefits that they are receiving from their position," Twa said.

As a county employee, Carman's retirement benefits will be managed by the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association.

Because Carman was previously a member of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, he's not subject to new state pension reforms. Additionally, when he retires, Carman will receive retirement benefits from both agencies.

After approving his appointment, the board welcomed their new chief.

"We are looking forward to working together and resolution to a number of issues we face here in the fire district," said Supervisor Federal Glover.

Carman was not in attendance at that meeting.

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Officials craft wildfire scale

Wednesday, September 25, 2013
Contra Costa Times/AP

System would measure and predict damage

By P. Solomon Banda

Associated Press

DENVER — Federal researchers have been working on a system to measure and predict the destructiveness of wildfires — similar to the way officials use the magnitude scale for earthquakes and other tools to rate and evaluate tornadoes and hurricanes.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology hopes its Wildland Urban Interface Hazard Scale will tell residents the likely intensity of a wildfire burning into their neighborhood. The scale would allow city planners to assign better building codes for the millions of people who live in fire-prone areas in the West and would also measure how those homes could contribute to the spread of a fire.

The proposed scale would range from E1 to E4 — with E4 being a location's highest exposure to fire, be it from grasslands to a forest in a remote mountain canyon. Building codes and buffer zones between homes and forest could then be set accordingly.

Nelson Bryner, research engineer for the institute's fire research division, envisions the day when TV stations report that a wildfire is burning in an E4 community. But he said the scale is primarily meant to form the technical foundation for tougher building codes to be developed by states, cities and communities for high-risk areas.

"If you're going to build there, then you need to use the following designs," said Bryner, who introduced the scale at a recent International Association of Fire Fighters conference in Denver.

Insurers also are eager for results. Payouts after western wildfires have grown exponentially. In the 1970s, wildfires destroyed about 400 homes nationwide. Since 2000, wildfires have destroyed about 3,000 homes per year, according to NIST.

In Colorado alone, wildfires accounted for more than \$858 million in insurance claims in 2012 and 2013, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association. More than 1,100 homes have been destroyed in 2012 and 2013.

Alex Maranghides, manager of NIST's Large Fire Laboratory, and William "Ruddy" Mell, a combustion engineer for the U.S. Forest Service, came up with the idea, which would be applied to forest, grasslands and other wildland where homes have been built or are being constructed — a vast area known as the Wildland Urban Interface.

Researchers are analyzing building materials, grasses, trees, shrubs, topography, weather patterns and especially the behavior of wind-driven embers as ignition fuel.

Embers sailing up to a half-mile ahead of a fire destroy more than 50 percent of homes during wildfires, according to insurance and fire experts. But they have not been closely studied.

Several agencies and states already have fire prediction tools or maps. But Mell said those models are based on research conducted in the 1960s and only consider similar types of fuels — large stands of trees, for example. Most building codes are based on direct flame exposure and don't factor in dangerous ember showers, Maranghides said.

The NIST, which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, developed an ember generator it calls "The Dragon" that it uses to test the flammability of homes. It used the device in a test to shower a house with embers at the International Institute for Business and Home Safety's test facility in Richburg, S.C., and more tests are planned.

San Ramon Valley Fire District offers money to employees who get health coverage elsewhere

By Ashly McGlone amcglone@bayareanewsgroup.com Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Thursday, September 26, 2013

[ContraCostaTimes.com](http://www.contracostatimes.com)

SAN RAMON -- In an effort to further reduce its burgeoning health care costs, the San Ramon Valley Fire District will offer \$300 per month to employees who get health care coverage elsewhere.

The fire district's board of directors approved the health care opt-out incentive Wednesday night for the district's 40 unrepresented employees and 140 union-represented firefighters, captains, engineers, inspectors and dispatchers. The offer will take effect after review by the district's legal counsel and in time for open enrollment in other plans, including those through a spouse's employer, officials said.

Board President Matthew Stamey said the offer gives employees another option.

"The issue really boils down to: Can we provide the employee a benefit that also benefits the taxpayers?" Stamey said in an interview.

To be eligible, employees must opt-out of district-provided coverage entirely, including family coverage, if applicable. They must also show evidence of coverage with another medical benefit plan, according to the insurance waiver form. Employees who take the incentive can re-enroll in the district's health coverage plan upon retirement.

Under a labor deal reached this past spring, every employee began paying 8 percent of health care premiums on July 1, for an average of \$117.56 a month, according to union President Mike Mohun.

Total monthly premiums for the coming year could reach \$700 for individual coverage and \$2,000 for a family, leaving the district on the hook for at least \$644 per employee each month, district financial consultant Ken Campo told the board.

"I am not optimistic that we are going to see a big opt-out ... but we want good business practices that have been kind of left behind for awhile here," said fire Chief Paige Meyer, who joined the district in March.

Meyer said the \$300 incentive will not boost the pensions of employees subject to the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, generally 2013 new hires who enroll in a California retirement system for the first time. For others, "there could be an argument either way," but a court case underway may provide clarity once it concludes, Meyer said.

The fire district provides fire, rescue and emergency medical services to a 155-square-mile area of Contra Costa County that includes the city of San Ramon, town of Danville and the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, Diablo, the southern part of Morgan Territory and the Tassajara Valley.

Ashly McGlone covers San Leandro, San Lorenzo, San Ramon and the Washington Township Health Care District. Contact her at 510-293-2463. Follow her at [Twitter.com/AshlyReports](https://twitter.com/AshlyReports).

Barnidge: As legacies go, helping keep Antioch afloat isn't all bad

By Tom Barnidge Contra Costa Times Columnist Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Monday, September 30, 2013
ContraCostaTimes.com

Jim Jakel hasn't yet begun crossing off the days as his time as Antioch city manager ticks down, but he can see retirement beckoning at the end of 2013.

In 10 years on the job, he's been a skilled administrator, an ardent lobbyist for the city and a big reason Highway 4 is being widened through Antioch, but he suspects his legacy will be something else.

"When one of my colleagues heard about my retirement," said Jakel, "he told me, 'You know what you're going to be known for? You kept that city out of bankruptcy.' Isn't that a great thing to put on my tombstone: Antioch didn't go bankrupt under his management."

City managers, whose primary job is to oversee day-to-day operations, do not make policy decisions -- that's what city councils are for -- but the best ones provide guidance and advice to help council members make decisions.

When Antioch hired Jakel away from the Contra Costa Council in 2003, he quickly saw trouble on the city's horizon. Public retirement benefits had been dramatically increased since his earlier stint as Martinez city manager, and unfunded liabilities were coming around the bend. When a real estate bubble eroded property taxes and a sour economy crushed local business, Antioch was on the expressway to insolvency.

"I don't give him 100 percent of the credit for keeping us out of bankruptcy because it was a team effort," former Mayor Jim Davis said, "but I give him the majority of it. He was always there for advice. He got us through the hard times."

Long before the notion of pension reform caught on, Jakel pressed for reduced retirement benefits for new hires. ("We started with the rule of holes," he said. "The rule is when you're in one, the first thing to do is stop digging.")

He identified savings with furloughs, pay cuts and layoffs, even though they deeply pained him -- "He took those personally," Davis said -- and found new money from vendors by negotiating extended contracts.

Jakel credits most of his job skills to experience gained from managing a Bonanza steakhouse, beginning when he was 18.

"I learned about human resources, payroll, finance, budgets and customer service in that job. If I were to name equivalents, dishwashers and busboys are like public works, the police are similar to the chef, and the other personalities fall in between."

The most intriguing part of a city manager's job, he said, is its breadth of challenges: "One minute you have an HR issue, the next it's a police chase that results in vehicles being smashed, and you worry about your management-risk costs going up. Then there's a standing meeting you have to attend, or a reporter is on the phone."

He likened the job to a corporate CEO, with the city council as the board of directors, "but the twist is the residents are not only the shareholders but the customers."

His highlights in 10 years were lobbying and pressuring Congress for the \$36 million required to improve Highway 4; successfully pushing for eBART service, now scheduled for completion in 2017; opening a new community center; and, yes, staring down economic collapse.

"He was the right man doing the right job at the right time," Davis said.

If he's remembered only for helping keep the city stay afloat in the midst of a financial storm, well, there are worse legacies a guy could have.

Contact Tom Barnidge at tbarnidge@bayareanewsgroup.com.

Contra Costa Special Districts Association Newsletter

Contra Costa Chapter of the California Special Districts Association

Fall/Winter 2013

CCSDA

October 2013

CSDA Special Districts Mapping Project

California Special Districts Association (CSDA) is proud to announce the launch of a GIS site containing location points and, in many cases, boundaries for the independent special districts in California. Working closely with California CAD Solutions, CSDA staff has been gathering data from all over the state to develop a map that will help raise awareness of special districts. CSDA has taken the initiative in developing a comprehensive, online map of the independent special districts in California.



CSDA's ultimate goal is to have every special district headquarters and boundary lines represented on the map.

The map will serve as a tool in CSDA's campaign to raise awareness of special districts.

To move this ambitious program forward, CSDA has worked closely with California CAD Solutions in gathering, formatting and posting data to the site. CSDA's work is not yet finished. If your district's data is inaccurate or missing boundary lines, please let CSDA know. They would like to correct it. Contact CSDA Member Services (cathrinel@cstda.net) if you have any questions or comments.

To visit the interactive map:

<http://web.cstda.net:83/disclaimer.php>

Accept disclaimer and proceed to the map.



**California Special
Districts Association**
Districts Stronger Together

Contra Costa Resource Conservation District Welcomes New Manager



**Welcome Ben Wallace as
the new CCRCD
Executive Director**

Ben Wallace brings a wealth of experience to Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (CCRCD). Ben has previously directed conservation education projects at the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, served as project manager at the California Wilderness Coalition, and worked with the US Forest Service and environmental consulting firms in Oregon and Alaska on forestry, fisheries and stream survey projects. He holds a bachelor's degree from Reed College in Oregon where he specialized in population and conservation biology and public policy.

Ben came to the CCRCD from the Solano Land Trust (SLT) where he had worked from 2005 to 2013 as Conservation Project Manager. At SLT he provided oversight strategies and programs to conserve, manage and restore habitat on Solano Land Trust properties.

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Has a New General Manager



**Roger S. Bailey
has been
appointed as the
District's new
General Manager**

Mr. Bailey will succeed Curtis S. Swanson, who has been serving as the interim GM since January 2013. Roger assumed his duties on August 19, 2013.

Throughout his career, Mr. Bailey has led several major municipally owned utilities departments across the United States. He most recently served as the head of the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department, one of the largest and most complex water storage, treatment and delivery systems in the U.S.

Jersey Island Land Irrigation Permit to Reduce Water Quality Monitoring Costs

The new permit granted by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) makes it easier for the district to use its high-quality recycled water for farming operations on Jersey Island, where it is used to irrigate hay crops. Under the new permit, land irrigation will be for 334 acres.



The estimated annual cost savings comes from reduced water monitoring requirements imposed by the state, mainly because the district's recycled water achieves high standards for purity.

"Nobody else in the area has a facility like this," said ISD General Manager Tom Williams, speaking of the Water Recycling Facility. "It's rewarding for the state regulators to recognize our water quality."

The state-of-the-art plant employs advanced membrane bioreactor technology with UV disinfection, which does a more thorough job of making treated water environmentally safe.

This is important, as ISD sends a good portion of its recycled water to Jersey Island, a 3,500-acre island located between Oakley and Bethel Island. The rest of the recycled water is either stored on-site for later irrigation or released into the San Joaquin River.

Central San Receives National Award for Fifth Consecutive Year

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's (CCCSD) Purchasing and Material Services team won the National Purchasing Institute's Annual Achievement of Excellence Award again in 2013. This is the fifth consecutive time the team has received this award, which recognizes organizational excellence in procurement, with emphasis on innovation, professionalism, e-procurement, productivity, and leadership.

CCCSD is one of only 23 special districts in the United States to receive this award in 2013, only three of which are sanitary districts.

Solar Panels Expected To Save ISD about \$100K a year

RGS Energy, the commercial and utility division of Real Goods Solar Inc., is deploying a 1.1 MW solar power system at Ironhouse Sanitary District's water recycling facility and administration building in Oakley.

RGS Energy will design, install, monitor and maintain the system, which will use a 1 MW single-axis tracking system and 60 kW carport system. Construction will begin in the fall of 2013 and be completed in the first quarter of 2014.

According to a statement from Real Goods Solar, Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) will save a total of \$5.9 million for electricity costs over the next 25 years using the system.

ISD signed a power purchase agreement with Real Goods Solar in an effort to trim escalating PG&E costs over the next 25 years. With the panels, the district estimates first-year savings of about \$95,000, with greater savings in succeeding years.

After several months of investigation, the district decided to make available 5 acres of its land to Real Goods Solar and buy the power at a discounted rate rather than take on the burden of purchasing its own panels. ISD pays nothing to build or operate the panels. Real Goods Solar will install single-axis tracker-style panels that will help power the Water Recycling Facility, as well as mount them on a carport to provide power for the administration building.

Wastewater Treatment and Water Recycling Plant Tours

Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) offers public tours quarterly on the second Wednesdays of April, July, October, and January. Tours can be scheduled at other times for groups of six or more if staff is available.



The free tour lasts 60 to 90 minutes and is open to adults, teens, and children ages seven and up. The facilities are located at 7399 Johnson Drive in Pleasanton.

Reservations are required. For more information call the DSRSD public information office at 925-875-2282.

Mt. View Sanitary District Bird Walk

On July 6th, 2013 California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Staff joined MVSD Biologist for a Bird Walk at McNabney and Moorhen marshes.



Back Center MVSD Board member and CSDA President Stan Caldwell, front L-R Megan Hemming CSDA Professional Development Director, Kelly Davidson MVSD Biologist, Rick Woods CSDA Administration - Finance Manager, Catherine Lemaire CSDA Member Services Director.

Fifteen bird watchers came for the biologist led walk. Most of the attendees were novice or beginner bird watchers. We saw and identified over thirty different birds, deer, a jack rabbit and a red fox. It was warm but a nice day for bird watching. MVSD will be offering bird walks in October and November and would love to have you come!

See the district web page for more details:

www.mvsd.org

Sherry Sterrett Re-elected to CSDA Board Region 3



Sherry Sterrett, Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District was elected to another 3 year term as Director for the California Special Districts Association.

Congratulations Sherry! Sherry's hard work, dedication, commitment, and knowledge have enhanced her ability to be an effective and responsible board member. She promotes and encourages education for special district board members and managers. Sherry's legacy of involvement and participation has been an important part of the success of CSDA.

Los Medanos Community Healthcare District Awards Summer Grants

The Los Medanos Community Healthcare District (LMCHD) has awarded summer grants to 10 local agencies to help accomplish health-related goals that include reducing childhood obesity and promoting vitality in East County areas served by the district

The district, which is funded by a 1 percent property tax, distributes community grants to support health and wellness programs that serve residents of Pittsburg, Bay Point: Clyde, Clayton and unincorporated Antioch.

The grant recipients include All Star Cheer Reaction, Sports & Fitness for Kids, City of Pittsburg, Souljahs, APT Sports, and adult education services provided through the Pittsburg Unified School District.

"The Healthcare District's mission is to cultivate a community in which good health may flourish for all District residents. Our community and its residents rely on us to uphold this mission through diverse programs and resources," Bobbi Palmer, the district's chief executive officer said in a statement.

Contra Costa Water District Honored for Safety

Employee safety is a top priority for the Contra Costa Water District. So it's no surprise the District's safety efforts were recognized last fall when it received the 2012 Larry C. Larson Safety Award from the California-Nevada Section of the American Water Works Association.

In June 2013, those same efforts won the Association's national Wendell LaDue Utility Safety Award. These distinguished awards honor utilities that have made employee health and safety a main priority.



CCWD Board of Directors Left to right; Lisa Borba, Karl Wandry, Joe Campbell, John Burgh, Bette Boatman

Measure WW Bonds to be used for Ambrose Park Pool

Improvements are in store for the long-neglected Ambrose Park pool. The board authorized interim general manager John De Lorenzo to take the initial steps needed so that the existing pool and buildings can be repaired with available Measure WW funds.

"We've heard you loud and clear -- the pool needs to be reopened," Steve Hoagland, chairman of the park district's board of directors, said on how best to spend available funds on improvements to Ambrose Park. Building a children's pool fell through last year because bids were too high. The lowest construction bid came in \$700,000 higher than available funding.

Now the old lap pool, which was closed in 2009 for safety reasons, will be repaired and reopened under this new plan. "For the community, I believe a big pool is a lot better, because that's what Bay Point is known for," said Victor Ramirez, who like many locals swam in the pool as children.

While many details need to be worked out, the plan envisions dividing the 33-yard-long pool with a wall to create a 25-yard deep-water pool for lap swimming, with an 8-yard-long shallow pool to be used by young kids, seniors and for children's swimming lesson.

There is about \$1.5 million in funds available that could be used for the pool project. About \$1.1 million is expected to come from East Bay Regional Park District's Measure WW, a voter-approved bond measure.

De Lorenzo pointed out that revenues sources such as swimming lessons will have to be developed to help pay for the costs of operating the reopened pool, which in a best-case scenario could be open by the summer of 2014. "The pool is not going to pay for itself," he said. But, De Lorenzo said it "is going to generate a source and sense of community pride."

Tentative program for January 24, 2014 meeting to include a Central San Tour!

The program for January meeting will also include a tour of Central San Facilities. It will be imperative that we have an accurate head count for the tour by January 2nd, 2014.

Be sure to look at your email boxes in late December for the meeting agenda and RSVP.

East Bay Regional Park District Purchases Roddy Ranch Property

1,885 acres of open space known as "Roddy Ranch" in Eastern Contra Costa County, a key piece in the District's plan for the development of a new regional park in Deer Valle has been acquired. The property is located along Deer Valley Road in the City of Antioch and in the adjacent unincorporated area of Contra Costa County to the south of the city.

"This acquisition is extremely important to the creation of Deer Valley Regional Park. Today is a great day for East County residents who will get a future regional park in their backyard," said Robert Doyle, General Manager.

Envisioned along with the new park is a regional trail that would connect Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve to Round Valley Regional Preserve.

"The property is a beautiful, picturesque level valley flanked by prominent ridgelines on both sides. It will offer a great opportunity for the public to experience nature and see wildlife at its best," General Manager Doyle added.

Not included in the Park District's purchase but within the acquisition's property boundary are the 230 acre Roddy Ranch Golf Course and four other parcels of 280 acres total that are owned by either the Roddy Family or McCauley Investments.

"The Roddy Family are prominent and long-time ranchers with a vision to see this property enjoyed by future generations rather than be developed," added Doyle. "We can't thank them enough for their partnership."

The Park District will enter into an option to purchase the acreage for \$14.2 million which is the appraised fair market value. Up to 90% of the purchase price will be funded in partnership by the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy with grants from the California Wildlife Conservation Board and a private foundation. East Bay Regional Park District Measure WW land acquisition and capital funding, approved by voters in 2008, will pay for the balance.

Because of the site's important biological resources the Park District plans to place the new acreage into land bank status until a Land Use Plan can be completed for Deer Valley Regional Park.

State Recognition for Local Resource Recovery Agency

Delta Diablo Sanitation District (DDSD) is proud to announce that they have been selected by the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) as California's Mid-Size Treatment Plant of the Year for calendar year 2012. It is the second time Delta Diablo has received this award within the past five years which is unprecedented.



Left-to-Right Nancy Parent, Mayor of Pittsburg & DDSD Board Member, Wade Harper, Mayor of Antioch & DDSD Board Member, Steve Dominguez, DDSD Plant Manager, Federal Glover, District V Supervisor & DDSD Board Member, Gary Darling, DDSD General Manager, and Dennis Laniohan, DDSD Operations Services Manager.

This year's selection was extremely competitive due to the seven other Publicly Owned Treatment Works competitors which were very qualified for the award in the Mid-Size Treatment Plant category.



California
Water
Environment
Association

Recognizing operational and organizational excellence in the wastewater industry, this award also acknowledges the District's leadership in spearheading regional resource recovery initiatives. DDSD is the lead agency for the Bay Area Biosolids to Energy coalition, representing 19 public agencies and recipient of \$1M California Energy Commission funding, looking to maximize the energy available from Bay Area biosolids while minimizing Green House Gases.

Wade Harper, DDSD Board of Director's Chair, confirmed "We are extremely proud to receive this award again and believe it reflects the District's commitment to transforming a traditional local wastewater agency into a modern resource recovery facility which benefits our customers, safeguards the environment, protects public health, and supports regional economic development."

The Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce's Special Recognition Award recognizes the District's commitment to Pittsburg through its wastewater resource recovery services and ongoing involvement in the Pittsburg community programs. Congratulations Delta Diablo!



Biosolids for Energy Research Project

Researchers from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Miami-based Chemergy Inc. will start studying a technology that converts biosolids, or remaining byproduct from wastewater treatment, into hydrogen gas to produce electricity.

The \$1.75 million public-private research project, which officials say is the first of its kind in the nation, will begin next month at Delta Diablo Sanitation District's facility in Antioch. The trial is funded by Chemergy and a grant from the California Energy Commission.

In about a year, it is anticipated Delta Diablo will be processing one ton of biosolid material each day and producing up to 30 kilowatts of electricity, Lawrence Livermore chemist Bob Glass said.

"If it works well, it could be the go-to solution for many wastewater agencies across the nation and the world," said Gary Darling, Delta Diablo's general manager. Historically, biosolids have been used for fertilizer or agricultural land or to cover landfills.



Converting biosolids to energy has long been a goal of the Bay Area Biosolids to Energy coalition, which consists of 19 Bay Area public agencies responsible for wastewater treatment. The group has been soliciting ideas for converting the biosolids into energy, seeing the Bay Area has a potential incubator for ideas.

"We want to use this as a model to encourage the widespread use of biosolids for energy production," he said. "It's a great opportunity for Lawrence Livermore to work with local industry."

CCSDA Newsletter & Chapter Email Distribution List



Your email address is the quickest way to receive important notifications and quarterly newsletters from the Contra Costa Special Districts Association.

If you haven't received your newsletter lately or know of someone who did not receive one, you now have the opportunity to change that!

Has your personal email changed? Please notify Stan Caldwell by email at stan_caldwell@comcast.net.

DON'T BE LEFT IN THE DARK *about what's happening at the local level, get your email on the chapter email list.*

Contra Costa Special Districts Association

**Important Meeting
10:00 AM January 27, 2014**

This will be our annual business meeting, including the election of officers.

Please let the nominating committee (to be appointed and announced at the October meeting) know if you are interested in serving on the chapter's executive committee, becoming an officer of our Chapter.

The officers of the Chapter are an elected President, an elected Vice-President, and an elected Member-At-Large. The treasurer is an appointed position.

Reminder:

Any member district that has not paid their annual dues shall not be in good standing and shall not be entitled to vote on matters before the Chapter.

Each regular member district shall be entitled to one (1) vote on all matters brought before the Chapter membership.

The governing body of each regular member district shall designate, in writing, to the Chapter Secretary (Suzette Crayton), one representative who shall exercise the district's right to vote, and one alternate who shall have the right to vote in the absence of the assigned voting representative.

Please be sure to provide an update if there are any changes before the January meeting.

CSDA William Hollingsworth Award of Excellence

Mr. Hollingsworth was one of the "founding fathers" of California Special Districts Association (CSDA) and was one of the foremost advocates for special districts in the Capitol in the 1970s. Special districts and CSDA would not be what it is today were it not for Mr. Hollingsworth.

In his honor, CSDA recognizes an individual who exemplifies what it means to go above and beyond the call of duty and advocate extensively both for CSDA and special districts. The William Hollingsworth Award of Excellence is not open for nominations by the membership, but is selected by the CSDA Board of Directors.



CSDA President Stanley Caldwell presented the Hollingsworth award on behalf of the CSDA Board of Directors to Bette Boatmun at the CSDA 2013 Annual Conference Luncheon

The Hollingsworth Award is awarded to the individual(s) who has been vigilant in his or her championing for special districts. This year's recipient was Contra Costa Special Districts Association Chair Bette Boatmun of the Contra Costa Water District.

As dedicated public servant, Bette has served with distinction on the Contra Costa Water District Board, and the Contra Costa Chapter of California Special Districts (CCSDA). Bette is the rare impartial and unbiased public official. She has a well-deserved reputation for being thoughtful, measured and well-read on issues of importance to the State of California, the Contra Costa County Special Districts Chapter, California Special Districts Association (CSDA), and the local communities of Contra Costa County.

Bette has been the chairperson for the Contra Costa Chapter Special Districts Association since 1997. As the current chair of Contra Costa Special Districts Association she says "We started small and local, exactly following the premise that all politics is local, and after successfully defending our revenue, the association grew in size and influence. Today there is ample recognition that special districts are indeed the third leg of local government."

Bay Area Clean Water Agencies New Executive Director

David Williams President Pro Tem of Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's Board of Directors has been selected from numerous outstanding candidates to be the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) new Executive Director.



Mr. Williams is a well-respected, long standing member of the clean water community and has provided more than a decade of service to BACWA as an Executive Board member and alternate.

As the Director of Wastewater at East Bay Municipal Utility District he has managed a staff of approximately 300 professionals and technicians and has been responsible for operation and maintenance of the entire wastewater system. Mr. Williams has over 35 years of industry experience which includes working as a consulting engineer and serving the last 25 years in the public sector.

He is active in local, regional, state, and national professional organizations and sits as a Board member of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), and the San Francisco Aquatic Science Center. He earned his BS in civil engineering and MS in sanitary engineering at Purdue University and has an MBA from University of California, Berkeley.

DSRSD Celebrates Central Dublin Recycled Water Project

Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) celebrated its Central Dublin Recycled Water Project by turning on the new purple sprinklers at a city park retrofitted to use recycled water. The project extended recycled water pipelines by 1.5 miles and retrofitted irrigation systems at parks and schools in Dublin's oldest neighborhoods.

"Water recycling plays the leading role in the water conservation story in Dublin and San Ramon," said DSRSD Assistant General Manager and District Engineer David Requa. "Nearly 20 percent of all the water used in the District in the last year was recycled, and that number will only go up as we complete more

retrofits like the Central Dublin Project. Because our community has embraced recycled water, we are already meeting the state's 2020 goal to reduce potable water use by 20 percent per person."

More than 70 people came to the event, representing the employees, partner agencies, and contractors involved in the project. Dublin's mayor, two City Council members, city manager, and parks staff attended, as well as the Dublin Unified School District superintendent and several of his staff. Joan Buchanan Dublin's State Assembly member, and Dublin's U.S. Congressional Representative, Eric Swalwell, sent staff representatives to acknowledge the benefits of water recycling to the community.

Representatives of the California Department of Water Resources, US Bureau of Reclamation, and Zone 7 Water Agency also attended and were recognized for providing project funding. Grants paid about 25 percent of the project's \$3.9 million cost. Delta Diablo Sanitation District represented the Western Recycled Water Coalition, which was involved in obtaining project funding.



KGO Radio Reporter Leslie Brinkley interviews DSRSD Assistant General Manager and District Engineer Dave Requa about the benefits of retrofitting parks and schools to irrigating with recycled water, at the event celebrating the Central Dublin Recycled Water Project on July 29, 2013.

State, federal and local grants were obtained to fund the Central Dublin Recycled Water Project. The event took place at Kolb Park in Dublin, one of the sites retrofitted to use recycled water for irrigation.

Central San Accounting Team Wins 13th Excellence Award

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District has been awarded its 13th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada! This is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

Special District Leadership Foundation Scholarships

Are you or others at your district unable to attend CSDA professional development events and programs due to limited budgets? The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF), an independent, non-profit 501c3, formed to promote good governance and best practices among California's special districts, has created the new 2013 Educational Allowance Fund to provide up to \$20,000 in scholarships to individuals in special districts with annual operating budgets of under \$5 million. Scholarship funds are limited to a maximum of \$1,500 per district.

Applicants must submit a scholarship application along with a brief description of why they believe it would be beneficial to receive the scholarship and any additional special circumstances or items for consideration by the scholarship committee. Priority will be given to first-time attendees at specific events and programs.

The funds do not cover any travel, meals or lodging. Educational Allowance Funds can only be used for the fees associated with qualifying CSDA and SDLF events and programs.

For more information: www.sdlf.org or call Charlotte Lowe, 916-231-2939.

Update on West Nile Virus

Continuing to find dead birds is a reminder of disease threat for the West Nile virus, which is still active in Contra Costa County with high infection rates also being found in neighboring counties according to the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District.

"Dead birds testing positive for West Nile virus indicates that virus is still active in the area," said Deborah Bass, public affairs manager for the District. "Several nearby counties have high infection rates at this time. Clearly it's a reminder to stay diligent in the war on mosquitoes by dumping out standing water and wearing mosquito repellent from dusk and into the evening."

Since 2005, 44 people in Contra Costa County have been diagnosed with West Nile virus. In 2006, two people died from the disease. Recent studies have shown that the majority of cases are not diagnosed and grossly under reported. For 2013, a total of 12 groups of mosquitoes, 62 dead birds and five chickens have tested positive for the virus.



Reflections on the CSDA General Manager Leadership Summit

Bobbi Palmer, CEO of Los Medanos Community Healthcare District had the opportunity to attend the CSDA General Manager Leadership Summit in July on a scholarship. Bobbi learned about the SDLF Scholarship program while attending CSDA's Legislative Day in Sacramento where it was announced there were grants available to attend General Manager Leadership Summit through the Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF) and a grant from Wells Fargo. Bobbi indicated to qualify for a grant it was a very simple process; she filled out an application that was straightforward and quick.

When asked about a highlight of the conference she said she found the workshop entitled, "Effective use of Social Media for Special Districts", quite helpful. She was able to utilize the information once she returned back from the conference to start thinking about the effectiveness of creating a Blog.

One of her favorite speakers was Martin Rauch. His presentation on "How to Build and Maintain Community Support" really inspired her as a CEO to view how she communicates in a slightly different way. The piece about how best to identify your stakeholders as well as building coalitions and support hit home. Bobbi said "Our district is in the process of expanding our stakeholder base and this valuable information was "spot on." I used the information to create a need for conducting an environmental scan as part of my 2014 Management Plan".

When asked what do you think makes the GM Leadership Summit different from other events? She responded "The vast and divergent special districts represented provided me with a wealth of information. Los Medanos Community Healthcare District is a healthcare focused organization. To hear what my colleagues contributed to the conversation whether sanitary or water gave me a different perspective of core services. I truly enjoyed interacting with other special district leaders".



When asked would you attend again? The response was "Absolutely! I feel I've gained more friends and look forward to the next General Manager Leadership Summit".



Pollution Prevention Billboard

Mt. View Sanitary District (MVSD) and Central Contra Costa Sanitary District have teamed up to sponsor a pollution prevention billboard. The billboard could be seen going northbound on 680 freeway just prior to Marina Vista exit.



Pollution Prevention Week is the third full week in September each year. This time is an opportunity for individuals, businesses, and government to emphasize and highlight their pollution prevention.

Exploring innovative means for public outreach, MVSD has leveraged its highly visible geographic location and negotiated with ClearChannel for the annual use of the billboard as part of the contract to install billboards on MVSD's plant site. This public-private partnership enabled MVSD to expand its public outreach beyond its service area at no additional cost and to partner with other agencies about pollution prevention (P2) efforts.

Each Spring MVSD puts up a billboard in May during American Wetlands Month the spring 2013 billboard is shown below.



If you print this please recycle later!

Pleasant Hill Parks & Recreation Bond Project Updates

The Community Center is progressing well. Bob Berggren says "The new Community Center is very exciting...I just toured it the other day it's going to be a fantastic facility! If all goes well it should be completed in late December, with the grand opening in January of 2014".



Pleasant Oaks Park work is also progressing well.



Photo progress of the new Community Center and Pleasant Oaks Park projects can be seen as weekly updates on the districts website under the tab Bond Info > Construction Updates.

District Website <http://pleasanthillrec.com/>

Thank you Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSA) for continuing to host the Contra Costa Special Districts Association (CCSDA) and agreeing to provide administrative service and support to CCSDA.

We greatly appreciate the work and services that Central San provides.



Please send your district news releases to Stan Caldwell to keep us informed about all of the exciting things your special district is up to. We always welcome your news contributions to our newsletter!

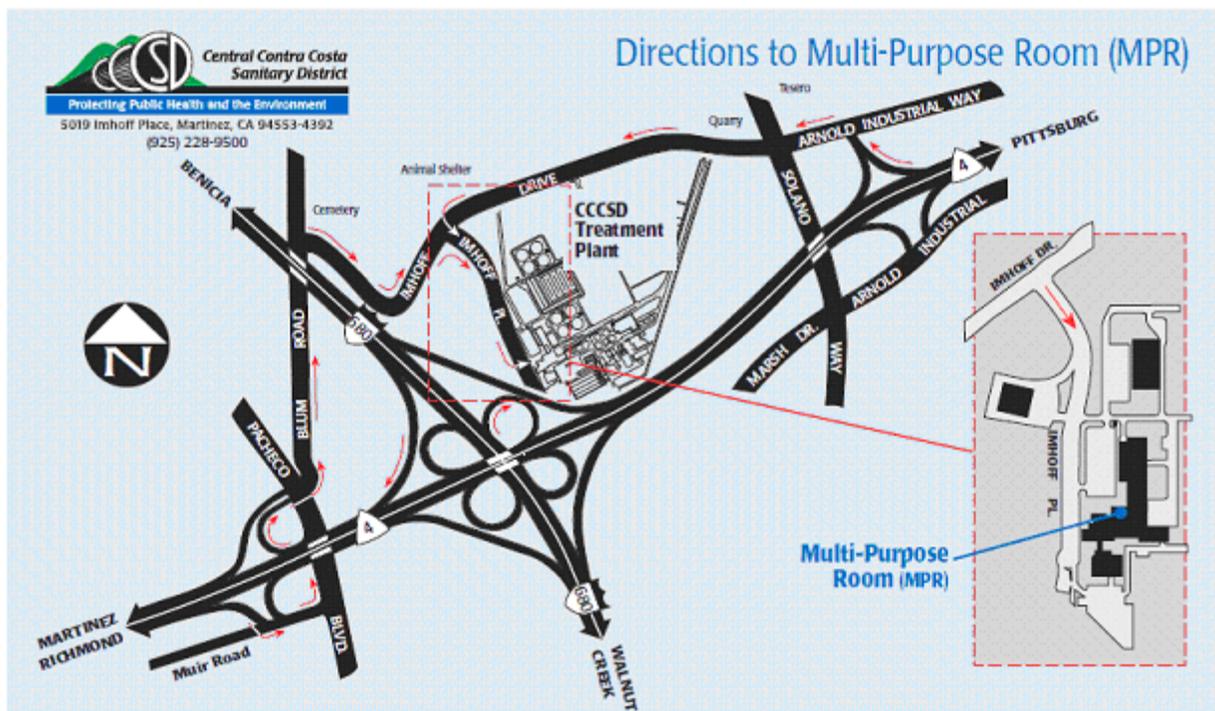
Newsletter Editor Email: stan_caldwell@comcast.net

Mark your calendars with our future Chapter Meeting Dates:

October 21, 2013 * January 27, 2014 * April 21, 2014 * July 21, 2014 * October 20, 2014

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

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



Contra Costa Special Districts Association

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