

IN THIS ISSUE

Canal Maintenance

Oct. 12-Nov. 12

Page 3

Record Water Use

Page 4

PCWA UPDATE

Placer County Water Agency

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New Life Auburn Water Treatment Plant Gets a Makeover

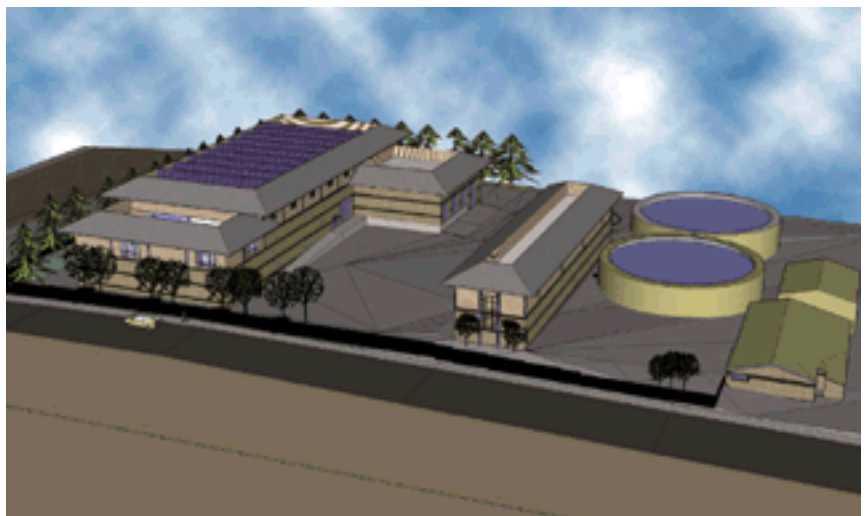
After nearly a half-century of service to the Auburn community, PCWA's Auburn Water Treatment Plant is getting a major facelift.

In a project set to begin in early 2005, the plant is being upgraded and expanded, using the latest technology in the water treatment field. Work is expected to take 18-24 months and cost about \$24 million.

PCWA Director of Technical Services Brian Martin said the upgrade is designed to improve plant reliability and serve growth in the agency's Auburn service area. Plant capacity is being increased from 6-8 million gallons per day (mgd) with an ultimate design capacity of 14 mgd.

Advanced Technology

PCWA is using the advanced Actiflo water treatment technology that has been installed in other recent treatment plant upgrades. The system uses a microsand filtering technique to accelerate clarification of the water supply.



Look of the Future

This artist rendering shows the planned expansion and upgrade of PCWA's Auburn Water Treatment Plant.

Actiflo uses factory-built modules that can be added to as needed. The Auburn plant will initially be equipped with four modules, each producing up to 2 mgd. The 14 mgd design includes space for three additional modules.

The new treatment plant, including a 500,000-gallon clearwell storage tank, will be situated near the west end of the existing PCWA Auburn Water Treatment Plant property. Once the new facilities are complete, the old treatment plant will be removed and replaced with expanded facilities for water treatment, a

water laboratory and other purposes.

Extensive landscaping, including visual and sound screening, is planned. The Auburn Water Treatment Plant is located immediately north of the PCWA Business Center.

The existing plant dates back over a half-century. It was first operated by the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and purchased by PCWA in the late 1960s. Area residents may remember the treatment plant as the location of PCWA's main offices until the adjacent Business Center opened in August, 1994.





General Manager's Report

By David A. Breninger

Rising Costs in the Water Business

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here is no question that water has become a more expensive commodity in recent years. This is true here in Placer County, across the state and throughout the water industry.

Water industry costs are driven by many factors, including compliance in keeping pace with ever-increasing public health regulations, environmental concerns and other governmental rules and regulations. Most of these increases and changes are beyond the control of the agency.

State Takes \$1.1 Million

In our last newsletter, we reported on the state budget deficit and its impact on the water agency. The state is taking from local government massive amounts of revenues to help offset the state budget crisis. The taking of local property tax revenues away from PCWA will occur over a two-year budget cycle, resulting in a loss to PCWA of \$1.1 million.

This loss of tax revenue along with overall increasing costs are being thoroughly considered by agency staff and the Board of Directors as part of the 2005 budget process.

Customers Pay For Service

First consideration in the budget process is always the PCWA customer. The operation and maintenance of the water system is paid by water ratepayers. Water rates must be carefully balanced with needs to assure a reliable water system that is safe and dependable. PCWA strives to contain costs and keep the price of water at affordable levels.

Rate adjustments are being considered as part of the 2005 budget process for the Water System. Three public hearings on the agency's proposed rates, charges and budget will be held this fall.

Board Hosts Public Hearings

The public hearing on water rates, fees and charges is scheduled for Nov. 4, a public hearing on the Water System, Power System and Agencywide budgets is planned for Nov. 18 and a public hearing on the water connection charge (WCC) is planned Dec. 2.

Each public hearing will be held during regular biweekly meetings of the PCWA Board of Directors, which begin at 3 p.m. in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue, in Auburn.

For more information, customers are invited to call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.

PCWA Supports Conservancy

The Placer County Water Agency became an early and strong supporter for the creation of a Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

The conservancy is a combination of bills introduced by two legislators, including Placer County's Tim Leslie (Tahoe City) and Assemblyman John Laird (Santa Cruz). Assemblyman Leslie worked to ensure that local Sierra communities would have a meaningful voice in the conservancy and its governance.

The California Assembly on Aug. 25, in a broad bipartisan vote of 54-12, approved legislation for the conservancy and sent Assembly Bill 2600 to the governor's office. Gov. Schwarzenegger signed the bill Sept. 23 in a ceremony along the Bear River near Colfax.

Value to Watershed

PCWA directors lent support to the bill, saying that conservation funding efforts would prove beneficial to the Sierra environment and economy, especially to key watershed areas that produce much of the state's water supply.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy now becomes the ninth conservancy in the state. Like the California Coastal and Lake Tahoe conservancies, the new conservancy will serve as a central forum for coordination and planning of conservation efforts throughout the Sierra, with a potential to fund conservation grants and projects across the region.

Not a Regulatory Body

In an issue important to many landowners, the conservancy has no powers to regulate land use or private activities, nor would it be allowed to exercise eminent domain.

2004 Canal Maintenance Scheduled Oct. 12 - Nov. 12

Delivery of summer irrigation water to PCWA canal water customers ends this year on Oct. 11 as the agency prepares for annual PCWA/Pacific Gas & Electric Company maintenance work.

Canal maintenance and improvement work is normally scheduled in the fall season when water demand drops and construction weather remains good.

PCWA Field Services Director Mike Nichol said this year's canal water deliveries would cease the week of Oct. 11 so crews from both utilities could prepare the canal system for fall maintenance which begins the week of Oct. 17.

During the scheduled four-week period, major maintenance is planned on the Bear River, South and Wise canals.

Alternate Day Water

Nichol said PCWA would bypass water around the PG&E construction sites when possible in an effort to make irrigation



Irrigation Season Ends

PCWA Canal Operations Supv. Tim Daniels checks an orifice on the Shirland Canal in Auburn as he prepares for this fall's canal maintenance work.

water available to as many customers as possible. Canal water availability will likely be on an alternate day, rotating basis, he pointed out.

"The agency will notify irrigation water customers whose service will be affected by the fall maintenance work," said

PCWA Director of Customer Services John Kingsbury.

Conservation Encouraged

All customers using irrigation water and treated drinking water are encouraged to limit use during the annual canal work as supplies of raw water into the system will be limited.

Electronic Bill Payment is Now Available

More than 1000 PCWA customers are taking advantage of the new automatic bill payment program introduced earlier this year.

Enrollment in the free program allows customers to have their banks transfer water payments to PCWA. Customers still receive statements and have time to call or cancel the bank draft if they have a question. The automatic bill payment plan eliminates the need to write checks, pay postage and worry about missed payments.

To participate, customers may download an application form from the PCWA website,

www.pcwa.net, or call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.



\$75 Rebates for Toilet Replacement

PCWA continues to offer \$75 rebates to customers who replace old, water-thirsty toilets with new efficient low-flow models. The newer models use 1.6 gallons or less per flush, compared to 3 gallons or more in older models.

Interested customers should call the PCWA Customer Service Center to reserve a rebate and obtain an application form. Once the toilet has been replaced, the customer returns the form with a new toilet receipt and will then receive a \$75 water bill credit.



Tests at Ralston Afterbay Dam

PCWA planned an October testing program to determine the cause of an electronic control malfunction that released water from Gates 1 and 4 (above, from left) into the Middle Fork American River on Aug. 5. The gates have since been operated manually.

IN BRIEF



New Deputy Field Services Director

Randy Cox has joined PCWA as Deputy Director of Field Services. Randy grew up in Quincy and was eager to return to Northern California after 15 years with the water department in the City of Beverly Hills.

In his new position, Randy will oversee and manage water flows in and out of the PCWA system along with grant application and administration.

Six Months of Record Water Deliveries

PCWA delivered a record 17,550 acre-feet of water during August, the sixth consecutive record-setting month of this year.

Through August, the agency supplied a total 101,500 acre-feet of water to domestic, commercial and agricultural water users in service Zones 1 and 5. This represents a seven percent increase over water supplied through August during the previous record year of 1999-2000.

PCWA Field Services Director Mike Nichol is projecting that the agency will supply a total 115,000 acre-feet of water this year. This amount includes 13,000 acre-feet supplied through the agency's temporary pumps on the American River.

PCWA Pushes for Completion of AR Pumps

Needing water to supply the demands of growth in western Placer County, PCWA is concerned that it could take three more years for the federal government to gain final funding for the American River pump station and river restoration project.

Completion of the Phase 1 pump station is still slated for late 2005 but the second phase of the project, river diversion and restoration work, may not be done until 2007, according to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The project is under the bureau's direction and designed to replace a PCWA pump station that was removed in the early 1970s for a planned Auburn Dam. Closure of the existing tunnel, river restoration work and recreational improvements also are included.

Temporary Pumps in 2005

Pending completion of a river diversion structure, PCWA anticipates using the existing temporary pumps in 2005 for a final summer season. The new pump station would open in 2006, using a temporary river diversion until the projected 2007 completion of the new river intake structure.

PCWA is relying on completion of the pump station to meet growing water demand. The pump station will allow the agency to supply up to 35,500 acre-feet of water per year from the American River.

Public Meetings

The Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors meets regularly the first and third Thursdays of each month at 3 p.m. in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue in Auburn. The public is welcome.

www.pcwa.net

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