

Health district embroiled in controversy

By Sandy Kleffman
Contra Costa Times

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Rarely does a governmental body decide that taxpayers would be better served if it went out of existence.

But that is what two of the three board members for the Mt. Diablo Health Care District concluded last month when they voted to dissolve the organization, as recommended by two grand juries.

"It's just a district that has no purpose," said board member Dr. Michael Baker, who is the head of the surgery department at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek.

However, don't expect the district, which collects \$265,000 in property taxes annually from central Contra Costa residents, to vanish anytime soon. Board Chairwoman Grace Ellis maintains that the vote was illegal, and said she expects to join two new board members who will be seated in December in reversing the decision.

Ellis noted the organization recently helped train more than 3,000 high school freshmen in CPR techniques, has purchased and installed about a dozen defibrillators at schools and community sites, and has provided grants to local organizations.

"There is just a plethora of things we can get

involved in," she said.

The debate marks the latest chapter in the convoluted history of the district, which was formed in 1948 to oversee the construction and operation of the then-Mt. Diablo Medical Center in Concord.

The district encompasses Concord, Pleasant Hill, Martinez and portions of Lafayette.

In 1997, the board agreed to merge the hospital

with the private John Muir system, giving up control of the facility and much of its power.

Since that time, the district's continued existence has triggered heated debate.

Supporters such as Ellis note that it can serve as a watchdog to help ensure that John Muir leaders maintain full services at the Concord hospital and do not lavish all of their attention and resources on the Walnut Creek campus.

However, others view the district as more waste than watchdog. Contra Costa County grand juries in 2001 and 2003 recommended disbanding it, noting that its property taxes were spent mainly on supporting the board members and their benefits, including \$35,000 annually in medical benefits.

One of the biggest lightning rods for critics has been the lifetime health and dental insurance that Ellis and former board member and Concord City Council candidate Ron Leone will receive. This benefit, initially given to those who served at least 12 years on the board, has since been eliminated for future panelists. However, it remains a hefty expense for the district. A 2008 audit estimated it has created a \$650,000 unfunded obligation.

Regardless of what happens to the district, there will

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be no break for taxpayers. If the district shuts down, the property taxes would continue to be collected. The money that is left over after meeting the district's obligations would be redistributed to other tax-supported agencies.

The latest dispute over the district's fate ignited at the Aug. 12 board meeting after an announcement that two of the five board members had resigned.

Dr. John Toth wrote in his resignation letter that his goals as a board member had been met, including John Muir's decision to install a state-of-the-art cardiac center at the Concord hospital as well as new operating and patient rooms. That demonstrated John Muir's commitment to maintain the Concord campus as a fully functioning hospital, he said.

Board member Linda Stephenson wrote that an unexpected change in "life circumstances" left her unable to fulfill her duties.

As the board began discussing spending \$80,000 on a November election to fill the open seats, Baker surprised his colleagues by questioning the district's existence.

Baker had been appointed to the board in March to fill a vacated seat. He said he thought he could help out because of his organizational skills, including heading the surgery department at the Walnut Creek hospital and serving as a rear admiral in the Navy Reserve medical corps. He retired from the Navy Reserve in 2005.

After attending several meetings, Baker said, he concluded that "everybody's heart is in the right place," but that the district's activities could be done by others at a less expensive cost. He said he saw no reason to have an agency with its own governing structure, equipment and election costs.

"This board has outlived its usefulness," he said. "The less boards and committees that we have spending money, it's going to be a lot better for taxpayers.

"The board was very dysfunctional," he added. "It was not getting anything done. The board could barely hold a meeting because there was so much bickering over Robert's Rules of Order."

Baker made a motion to dissolve the district, and board member Frank Manske quickly seconded it. Manske, a board member for 10 years, has long wanted to eliminate the district but could not garner enough votes.

"I don't think the district has a legitimate purpose for existing any more," he said. "There were lots of things we wanted to do, but the district is not really set up to fund those things and make them happen."

The board voted 2-1 to dissolve the district, with Ellis in opposition.

Ellis pointed to several district accomplishments in recent years to improve health in the area, including:

- In May, providing \$78,000 to buy take-home CPR kits and train nearly 3,000 freshmen in the Mt. Diablo school district in lifesaving techniques. The district teamed with the American Heart Association and Contra Costa County.
- Installing about a dozen defibrillators at schools and community meeting sites.
- Establishing a grant program that in 2008 provided more than \$200,000 to local organizations. The district kicked in \$133,000, and John Muir Health provided \$140,600.
- Making \$50,000 worth of nursing

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scholarships available at Cal State East Bay. After the closure vote, what happens next is an open question. Baker and Manske said they assumed the decision would be referred to Contra Costa's Local Agency Formation Commission to identify the next steps. A vote of district residents would be required to dissolve the district. But Ellis maintains that the board vote was illegal because the issue was not on the agenda. She also argues that at least four board votes are required for such a decision. Asked if she intends to refer the decision to LAFCO, Ellis replied, "absolutely not." Ellis said she does not plan to schedule any board meetings before December, when two new members will take office because they were the only ones who applied. Baker's seat also will open up because he has decided not to seek re-election. Baker sent Ellis an e-mail Sunday asking her to schedule a meeting soon, noting that she has canceled both the September and October meetings. Both candidates expected to take office in December -- Gregory Lemmons, a 60-year-old self-employed business consultant, and Roy Larkin, a 63-year-old retired chief financial officer -- said in interviews last week that they think the district should continue. "They are doing a service to this community and I want to keep that service going," Larkin said. "I think that once you get a totally active group in there, people will be pretty happy with what they see." Contact Sandy Kleffman at 925-943-8249.

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[Home](#) > Planning Commission 's look at North Pacheco annexation pushed to Nov. 23

September 28, 2010

Planning Commission 's look at North Pacheco annexation pushed to Nov. 23

By

Staff Reporter
September 28, 2010



[1]

The City's proposed annexation of North Pacheco was scheduled for review by the Planning Commission at this week's meeting; instead the agenda item was continued until November 23.

In the 1980s, Martinez was unsuccessful in annexing the area, according to a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) report on the renewed bid, but staff went ahead and pre-zoned most of the area "based on existing County zoning designations in an effort to convince property owners that nothing would change," states the LAFCO report.

Interspersed among the many commercial and industrial parcels of North Pacheco are a few residential parcels, including multi-family apartment buildings.

According to City planning staff, the zoning on these residential units would remain intact, with the addition of a Planned Unit, or P-1 designation, to allow for one or more new residential subdivisions.

The City also plans to increase the density allowed for multi-family residences – from the current County-designated "multiple-family residential-low density" of up to 11.9 units on each acre to 29 units allowed on each acre.

Whether or not the annexation goes forward, the area will remain serviced by Contra Costa Water District for its treated water, Mt. View Sanitary District for wastewater and reside in the Mount Diablo School District and ConFire.

The annexation area is a triangular-shaped grouping of properties bordered by North Pacheco Boulevard, Highway 4 and Interstate 680, encompassing mostly industrial and commercially zoned parcels.

In 2008, several North Pacheco property owners approached the City requesting annexation, citing as a chief reason their desire to be policed by the Martinez Police Department rather than the thinly stretched Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department.

Since there are several properties available for development in that area, the City responded by hiring two consultant companies, at a cost of over \$100,000, to analyze the annexation proposal and produce the necessary associated environmental and governmental documents.

"[The] City Council and staff also felt that annexing this area into the City of Martinez would enable the city to more effectively control and aggressively upgrade one of the main entrances into Martinez," said former Assistant City Manager Karen Majors in May of 2009.

Another positive outcome of the annexation cited by the City is that it would bring in property taxes used towards the repayment of Measure H park bonds, passed by voters in Nov. 2008.

The annexation area includes 62 acres divided into 61 parcels. As was true when the first reports on the effort were released almost two years ago, many of the buildings are vacant.

The total 2007-2008 assessed value of the area is just over \$20 million, according to City Manager Phil Vince, and while the area generated \$270,693 in property taxes during the 2007-2008 fiscal year, Martinez's share of that was \$32,000.

Because the area is currently designated as unincorporated Contra Costa County, the County receives the lion's share of the property taxes, and would continue to do so.

"According to Rich Seithel of Contra Costa County, the County

would likely look for tax sharing pursuant to the Master Tax Sharing Agreement which would likely reduce the above \$32,000 estimate. The County is fairly adamant in sharing 50 percent of any existing and future sales tax revenue generated," Vince told the Council.

First, the Planning Commission will review the overall concept and proposed amendments to the General Plan and zoning map to reflect new land use designations. The panel will also discuss the environmental documents, a negative declaration, and LAFCO application. The matter will then be included on a future City Council agenda for final approval or rejection.

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Rodeo-Hercules fire board passes budget with projected \$642,000 deficit

By Tom Lochner
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 09/27/2010 02:11:37 PM PDT

Updated: 09/28/2010 01:12:03 PM PDT

The Rodeo-Hercules Fire District board passed a 2010-11 budget this month, over the objections of two board members who thought the projected \$642,000 deficit is too high.

The board and the firefighters union, Local 1230 have agreed to continue talks about possible concessions to bring the deficit down.

Firefighters are slated to get a 1.5 percent raise in October and a 2.5 percent raise in October 2011.

Interim Chief Alan Biagi said that reducing or eliminating overtime -- currently projected at \$353,000 for this year -- would force the district to "brown out" one of its two stations, leaving it unstaffed during certain shifts, or to establish "some other change in service." Overtime pay last fiscal year totaled about \$560,000, or \$235,000 more than budgeted; Rodeo-Hercules got reimbursed \$124,000 by the California Emergency Management Agency for sending firefighters to out-of-area strike teams, Biagi said.

Board members Beth Bartke, John Mills and chairman J.R. Stafford voted Sept. 14 to approve the \$5.14 million 2010-11 budget, while Bill Prather and Wally Trujillo voted no. Trujillo then joined a 4-1 majority in voting to accept the district staff's 2010-11 revenue projections, with Prather the lone dissenter.

Officials had talked a month earlier about a potential deficit of as much as \$1.2 million, but they trimmed it to the current \$642,000 mostly by suspending what was supposed to be this year's contribution of \$440,000

to a trust fund that pays retirees' medical benefits; an additional \$104,000 savings is supposed to come from a reduction in payments related to group insurance.

Last year's deficit was \$733,000. District Administrative Assistant Donna Heymans said that under current projections, district reserves would be down to \$1.5 million at the end of the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Biagi also said that reducing overtime "will cause problems in the battalion." The district's two stations -- one in Rodeo, the other in Hercules -- are part of the three-agency, six-station Battalion 7. Battalion 7 also includes the Pinole Fire Department's two stations and the Contra Costa County Fire District's San Pablo and El Sobrante stations. One Pinole station currently is unstaffed every third shift.

From an operational point of view, Battalion 7 functions as one fire department, officials say. But administratively, Battalion 7 is composed of three fire departments, each with its own chief or interim chief, and its own bureaucracy.

Although represented by the same union, Local 1230, the three departments operate under separate

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memorandums of understanding with their respective boards -- in Pinole's case, the board is the City Council -- and with different retirement systems and different retirement formulas.

Contra Costa firefighters get the so-called "3-at-50" -- eligibility to retire starting at age 50 with retirement pay of 3 percent of their highest salary, not including overtime, for each year of service; Rodeo-Hercules firefighters get "2-at-50" while Pinole firefighters get "3-at-55."

Local 1230 President Vince Wells told Bay Area News Group that the discussion of the cost of fire service focuses too much on firefighter salaries, overtime and pensions, and that it should focus more on the redundancy of bureaucracies and management that comes with the current setup. Wells said he hopes that ongoing discussions at the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission will lead to a more efficient model of fire service for the future. He suggested consolidation of the Rodeo-Hercules and Pinole fire departments into the county fire department, or else a joint powers agreement between the three agencies.

Two-station, stand-alone fire departments are "past their time," Wells said.

The Rodeo-Hercules board also rebuffed calls to defer until after the November election the appointment of a new fire chief to replace Biagi, who formally retired June 30 but remains as interim chief. The new board will have at least two new members, with three seats at stake in November and only one incumbent, Prather, running for re-election. The other two incumbents whose terms expire this year, Stafford and Trujillo, are not running for re-election.

Wells, Prather, some members of the public, and at least one November board candidate, Bill Kelly, have

urged the board to postpone the hiring of a new chief until after the election, when a new board is seated.

Wells additionally told Bay Area News Group that a new fire chief, once signed to a contract, might resist a setup in which he or she would become, de facto, one of three rotating battalion chiefs in a larger department, and as a result might obstruct consolidation or formation of a JPA. Wells suggested having a Rodeo-Hercules fire captain act as rotating battalion chief in the interim.

But Stafford, the board chairman, said that the finalists for the chief's post being considered by the board all are fully aware of the department's realities and willing to do whatever it takes to fix problems.

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Contra Costa supervisors face cuts to fire service without added revenue

By Matthias Gafni
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 09/28/2010 04:19:18 PM PDT

Updated: 10/01/2010 01:25:09 PM PDT

MARTINEZ -- The Contra Costa Fire District expects to deplete its reserves by next fiscal year and is eyeing a June parcel tax to right its financial ship, the fire chief said Tuesday.

Without the added revenue, the county's largest fire department will face "draconian cuts to fire service," Chief Darryl Louder said.

As part of the chief's corrective-action plan presented to supervisors Tuesday, he proposed closing a Pittsburg fire station, using \$8.7 million in reserves, deferring \$4 million in workers' compensation and researching a parcel tax.

The board, acting as the Contra Costa Fire District Board, approved all the actions, except the station brownouts.

Originally, the chief recommended closing four stations, with each dark station saving the department about \$1.6 million. However, Louder said he found the public safety risk too high and instead recommended 1.5 station closures, which he said would put the district's fiscal picture at "pretty critical levels."

"I think I took a bigger risk than I thought I would in the beginning," he said of his decision to dip deeper into reserves. The chief recommended shuttering Pittsburg's station No. 87 and removing half of fire station No. 1 in Walnut Creek.

"I'm extremely concerned about the Pittsburg station," said Supervisor Federal Glover, whose district includes the East Contra Costa city.

At one time, Glover said fire officials clamored for the station and argued

that it was in the best interest of public safety.

"And now we're at the point where it's not as important somehow," the former mayor of Pittsburg said.

Lafayette residents voiced concerns over talks of closing two stations in their city. The supervisors postponed any brownouts pending study sessions on closure options.

"We don't support closing any stations," Contra Costa firefighters union President Vince Wells said. "We feel it's not the way to address budget issues. ... I hope between now and January we can find other ways."

The district already laid off eight firefighters in June, saving \$600,000.

The supervisors decided Tuesday to dip into the district's \$16 million reserves, acting against board policy of maintaining a 10 percent reserve. They also approved a \$4 million deferral from the workers' compensation fund to ease the pain. That money will eventually need to be repaid.

The department receives 88 percent of its revenue from property taxes, and with assessed valuations



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dropping the past two years, the district must find other revenue sources, Louder said. In addition, firefighters are due 2.5 percent wage increases July 1, 2011, and Jan. 1, 2012.

Also looming: a hefty Chevron refinery property tax reassessment, increased retirement expenses and pension reform.


The district will begin researching a parcel tax as a way to supplement revenue.

The county administrator's staff will look to contract a polling agency to gauge community support.


Contact Matthias Gafni at 925-952-5026.

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Firehouse closure plan has Pittsburg officials fuming

By Rick Radin
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 10/01/2010 02:29:29 PM PDT

Updated: 10/01/2010 05:44:31 PM PDT

PITTSBURG -- The potential closure of one of the city's three fire stations has officials concerned about longer response times to calls, increased danger from grass fires, and less-effective mutual aid.

The proposal is part of a strategy to cut the Contra Costa Fire District's budget that fire Chief Darryl Louder presented at this week's meeting of county supervisors.

The station targeted by the district is at 800 W. Leland Road, in the southwestern part of the city.

A Walnut Creek station at 1330 Civic Drive also would lose one of its two response teams under the proposal.

Pittsburg's two other stations are on Loveridge Road in the eastern area of the city and on East Sixth Street downtown. The Sixth Street station will be replaced soon by a station on Railroad Avenue that is under construction.

The supervisors, who serve as the fire district's governing board, tentatively approved the budget

plan, except for the closure and downsizing.

The district's staff considered wildfire danger, proximity to oil refineries and other fire stations, number of fire calls, and other factors in choosing which stations to target, Louder said.

It will be easier to cover the southwestern portion of the city from the new Railroad Avenue station than from the Sixth Street station, he said.

Supervisor Federal Glover, whose district includes Pittsburg, was unhappy with the proposal, saying the Leland Road station is vital to

public safety in the area.

He cited a recent major fire in Bay Point where firefighters from Leland Road backed up their colleagues from the Bay Point station.

"One of those things that you really need to be clear about in considering call volumes is mutual aid support," he said. "We need to look at how many times a station is called out to do backup, because that's important, also."

Pittsburg used more than \$6 million in redevelopment money to build the Loveridge Road station, which opened in December, and the new Railroad Avenue station, Assistant City Manager Joe Sbranti said.

Sbranti is upset that those sacrifices could be offset by the closure of another station within the city limits.

"We have positioned these stations so they can best cover the city geographically," he said. "Closing the Leland station would upset this balance."

A Pittsburg planning commissioner said the Leland



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Road station is vital because of the potential for grass fires in the city's southern hills.

"There's a much greater propensity to have an emergency situation because of the grass fire danger," said A.J. Fardela, who lives in the Oak Hills development south of Highway 4. "That Leland station is the closest thing we've got."

Even if all the cuts are carried out, the district will burn through half of its \$16 million reserves by the end of the 2010-11 fiscal year, and could consume the rest in 2011-12, Louder said.

The fire district has a \$95.2 million budget for 2010-11 and a \$8.7 million deficit, according to county Administrator David Twa.

"Without some significant change, they will be broke at the end of the 2011-12 budget year," Twa said.

The district is also studying the feasibility of putting a parcel tax on the ballot.

The district would save \$1.6 million by closing the Pittsburg station and downsizing the Walnut Creek station, Louder said. Glover said he wants to look closely at every alternative before voting to close any of the district's 30 stations.

"(Louder) mentioned two stations, and neither station should have been mentioned until the board had an opportunity to review all the data that's available," he said.

Supervisors asked the district to prepare a study session on the budget to be held later this month, Louder said.

He agreed that station closures should be a last resort.

"None of us are advocating for closing stations, and it's important that the public knows that," he said.

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Pittsburg may face obstacles in annexation of Seeno land

By Rick Radin
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 10/01/2010 08:03:49 PM PDT

Updated: 10/02/2010 05:27:57 PM PDT

PITTSBURG -- The city may have some major hurdles to overcome in persuading a key agency to allow it to annex 607 acres of hillside property.

West Coast Home Builders, an affiliate of Concord-based A.D. Seeno Construction, has asked the city to apply to annex the land through Contra Costa County's Local Agency Formation Commission, which oversees government boundary changes.

The land, which is owned by West Coast Home Builders, is now in an unincorporated area but within Pittsburg's sphere of influence, or its projected future boundary and service area.

Annexation would open the way for eventual development of the land under Pittsburg's jurisdiction.

The city is also applying to annex the site into the Contra Costa Water District and the Delta Diablo Sanitation District.

The local agency commission responded with a letter pointing out that its guidelines specify a specific development plan be in place and that there

should be the potential for development within five years for annexation to be approved.

"Without a project, an application would be premature because we won't know what we are evaluating," said Lou Ann Texeira, the commission's executive officer, who signed the letter.

The local agency commission gave the city a potential alternative on one count. If it is going to proceed without a proposed project, it could base its environmental review on the maximum development allowed under zoning rules.

West

Coast Home Builders project manager Louis Parsons did not return calls seeking comment.

The Pittsburg official who will shepherd the annexation application through the approval process said the city is complying by doing an environmental review based on maximum development, but the timing issue could be a bigger problem.

It probably will be hard to show that there will be demand for new housing at the site in the foreseeable future, said associate planner Kristi Vahl.

The local agency commission also looks at how much developable land is available within city boundaries before allowing annexation, Texeira said.

Pittsburg, with 16 square miles within its city limits, had 1,820 acres of vacant land, 328 of which was zoned residential, in 2008, the last time a survey was taken, she said.

Antioch, with 28 square miles, had 1,176 acres of



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vacant land, 324 zoned residential.

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The local agency commission prefers that cities develop land within their city limits first before considering spheres of influence, Texeira said.

A Walnut Creek-based environmentalist questioned the homebuilder's motives in pursuing the application without a proposed project, saying that it wants to fast-track approvals when it decides to build.

"Seeno has been pressing various people, on the cheap, to do this, without providing the required information," said Seth Adams, director of land programs for Save Mount Diablo.

"There will be an inadequate environmental document, and then what happens with that?" Adams said. "They need to provide details of their plans."

Pittsburg likely will file the annexation application with the local agency commission early next month, Vahl said.

The application process takes about six months, according to Texeira.

Vahl said Seeno wants the city to annex the land to fulfill the goals of Measure P. The 2005 initiative expanded the urban limit line and opened for development 2,200 acres in Pittsburg's southwest hills, much of it owned by Seeno.

Pittsburg Councilman Ben Johnson supports the annexation, saying that construction in the area will benefit the city's budget and the local economy.

"Right now, the sphere of influence is still the county, and the county gets the (property) tax on the raw land," Johnson said. "If it comes into our city, we get the tax."

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California Special Districts Association Contra Costa Chapter Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2010

October 2010

District of Distinction: Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District

The first ever such award to a Recreation & Park District

Senator Mark DeSaulnier presents District of Distinction award to Sherry Sterrett at CSDA Legislative Days in Sacramento May 11, 2010.



The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF), which CSDA co-founded and co-sponsors, recognized the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District which recently became the first recreation and park district ever to receive "the "District of Distinction" accreditation by the Special District Leadership Foundation. The accreditation, which is one of the most prestigious local government awards in California, recognizes the Districts commitment to good governance, as well as ethical and sound operating practices.

Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District successfully met a list of requirements involving, policies, procedures, continued education, and audit standards to receive accreditation. The Special District Leadership Foundation, a collaborative effort of eight special district organizations, developed the District of Distinction program to help special districts demonstrate to their communities, the media, and legislators their commitment to operate in a sound and responsible manner as providers of essential public services. All of the Board Members and the General Manager have completed education in governance and ethics compliance training. ***Congratulations Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District!***

Chapter Exhibit at CSDA Annual Conference

This year the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) devoted an entire meeting room to chapters so they could highlight what they have done in the past year and share information and activities they are currently working on.



Exhibitors from our chapter included Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, Contra Costa Water District, and Mt. View Sanitary District.

Contra Costa CSDA Chapter of the Year!

This distinguished award was presented at the CSDA Annual Conference to our chapter on Wednesday September 23, 2010 at the CSDA Chapters Reception. Contra Costa Chapter was nominated for this award by Chair Bette Boatman and CSDA board member Stan Caldwell.



Chapters are important and integral entities to the effectiveness of California's special districts. CSDA presents the award to the one chapter nominated for its effectiveness in outreach, its involvement and creativity with activities on behalf of all districts in the chapter's domain, and the chapter's ongoing commitment to continuing education.

“Cemeterian of the Year”

Primo Facchini, Trustee of the Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District

The California Association of Public Cemeteries (CAPC) awarded Primo Facchini of the Alamo Lafayette Cemetery District with their Cemeterian of the Year award. Primo Facchini received this prestigious award for outstanding service to California Association of Public Cemeteries. Past recipient Dennis Shepard, General Manager of the North County Cemetery District, made the presentation at the 2010 CAPC Annual Conference in Monterey.



The California Association of Public Cemeteries annual “Cemeterian of the Year” award is presented to an individual who has accepted responsibilities and performed services over and above the norm. In supporting the Association’s programs, he has continually maintained high professional standards; has been an outstanding contributor to the effective results for the Association; and has exhibited excellent qualities in the cemetery profession.

This year’s recipient, Primo Facchini, is more than deserving of this honor. While CAPC was doing research on this individual, the words used by his very close associates include: honest; forthright, proactive, caring, an unconditionally giving person, and deserving of peer recognition. He has served the Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District for over 30 years and has been instrumental in making ‘progress’ happen. He is budget conscious, focused on the district’s constituents, and makes sure funds are never wasted.

Primo was an active member of the re-write team working on the Health & Safety Code for “Public Cemetery District Law”.

Primo remains active as a Notary Public, Property Manager and a Real Estate Broker. He takes great pride in his hobbies -gardening and photography.

MVSD Welcomes New District Manager



District Manager David R. Contreras retired on June 30, 2009 after 36 years of exemplary service.

The Mt. View Sanitary District Board and staff welcome new District Manager Mike Roe. Prior to accepting this leadership role, Mike held the position of Assistant District Manager. Before joining MVSD, Mike worked for the City of San Diego for 14 years, managing the operation and maintenance of the City’s water reclamation plants.

With 28 years of experience in the wastewater and water reclamation fields, Mike is uniquely qualified to build on the District’s legacy of technological innovation and environmental stewardship.

Mike’s vision for the District further includes continuing the record of regulatory compliance and the proactive management of the District’s infrastructure. He takes a long-term financial view and is committed to prudent financial management, public education and the well being of the District’s employees.



Please join MVSD in extending a warm welcome to our new District Manager, Michael D. Roe!

Mark your calendars with our future Chapter Meeting Dates:

January 24th, 2011 - 10 AM

April 18th, 2011 - 6 PM

July 18th, 2011 - 10 AM

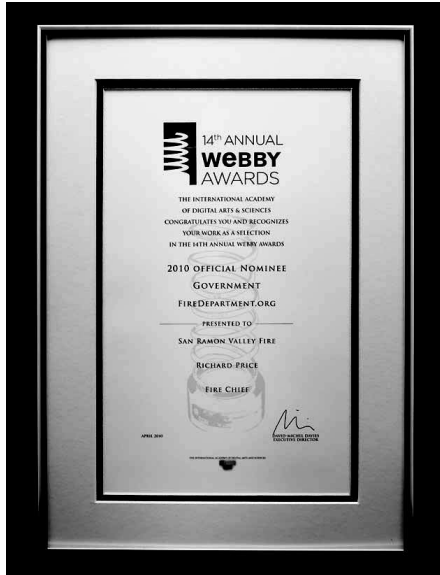
October 17th, 2011 - 6 PM

All meetings will be held at the Pleasant Hill Community Center, followed by optional lunch or dinner, depending on the time.

**Pleasant Hill Community Center
320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill**

Fire District's Website Nominated for Webby Award

The Webby is the leading international award honoring excellence on the Internet.



The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District's website, firedepartment.org, has received the prestigious honor of being nominated for best government website by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences. The nominations were announced Tuesday, April 13, 2010 in New York City. Firedepartment.org is among five government sites worldwide to receive this nomination.

"For firedepartment.org to be nominated in the same category as websites for the U.S. Census Bureau, NASA and the U.S. Air Force is quite an accomplishment for our District", said Fire Chief Richard Price. "We are honored by this recognition."

The SRVFD designed the website after surveying residents asking what they wanted and needed from the fire district's site.

Based on the survey results, the website includes emergency radio traffic, live dispatch logs and up-to-date information for residents and businesses.

San Ramon Valley Fire District's (SRVFPD) iPhone application

The first ever fire district application created.

By providing a virtual window into the District's 9-1-1 dispatch center, iPhone users now have real-time access to emergency activity occurring in the community. The application provides the District with a powerful new avenue to communicate with its mobile population during a disaster.



Users are able to view active incidents - including the current response status of dispatched units (enroute, onscene, etc.) and instantly pinpoint incident locations on an interactive map.

The application allows residents and other interested parties to be notified of incidents by category as they are dispatched. The District also uses the application to communicate with its more than 700 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members and to share information during disasters with all its citizens.

(Continued on next page)

(iPhone application continued from page 3)

“Using the iPhone and iPad for field-based command and control operations holds great promise for emergency service providers,” said Chief Price. “This consumer version of our development effort demonstrates the game-changing nature of these revolutionary handheld devices.”

The District partnered with students at the College of Informatics at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) for iPhone engineering and programming services. By working with the District, students received valuable intern experience in addressing real world business needs.

The application is available for free download from the Apple iTunes Store. For additional information see the video on the district website www.firedepartment.org narrated by Chief Price. The video provides a good overview of the main features and functionality of the application.

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District provides all-risk fire, rescue and emergency medical services to the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, the Town of Danville, Diablo, the City of San Ramon, the southern area of Morgan Territory and the Tassajara Valley in Northern California (Contra Costa County). The District's service area encompasses approximately 155 square miles and serves a population of 167,500.

Message from the Chair.....

Betty Boatmun announces that the Contra Costa Chapter will be celebrating our 20th anniversary at our April 2011 meeting.

As a reminder the **CCSDA 2010 Scholarship Award Program** is still open. There are three remaining scholarship awards of \$250.00 each which can be applied to CSDA programs or educational seminars. The award must be used by June 2011. Awards can be shared by District Employees. **Apply now!**

Wetlands Birding Field Trip

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2010 8:00 -11:00 AM

Join Mt. View Sanitary District Environmental Education Coordinator Kelly Davidson for a fun and informative hike around the McNabney and Moorhen Marsh system. This annual fall walk will introduce you to the diversity of resident and migrant birds found in and around these historic Contra Costa wetlands. We would love to have you join us!

- Meet at the observation platform just before the tunnel.
- Dress in layers and wear comfortable, closed-toed shoes.
- Bring binoculars if you have them; we have a few pairs to loan.
- Beginners are always welcome.
- Heavy rain cancels!

For more information contact: Kelly Davidson
(925) 228-5635 x19 kdavidson@mvsd.org

Plan to celebrate with Contra Costa Special Districts on our 20th Anniversary at our April 2011 Meeting!

See page 8 for details on how to apply for the CCSDA 2010 Scholarship Award Program. All applications must be submitted no later than November 12th 2010.

Recycled Water

**Antioch Recycled Water Distribution System
Dedication event on Monday, August 23,
2010**



"Purple is the new green," said Don Glaser, the regional director for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The City of Antioch and Delta Diablo Sanitation District (DDSD) have joined efforts to expand the water reuse system to provide recycled water to irrigation users in Antioch.

The Antioch Recycled Water Distribution System establishes recycled water services for use as landscape irrigation at municipal parks, medians and other green spaces along the pipeline alignment.

The initial phase into the City of Antioch creates a distribution system which will provide recycled water to four city parks, street medians, and the Lone Tree Golf Course.

Recycled water projects from urban wastewater are reliable long-term sustainable supplies and are the most drought-tolerant water supplies that can be developed.

The new facilities will include approximately 18,300 linear feet of recycled water main. The project will reduce dependence on Delta potable

water supplies, improve water supply reliability for irrigation customers, as well as reduce wastewater discharges to the Delta.

Delta Diablo Sanitation District's Recycled Water Facility now provides up to 8,600 acre feet per year of tertiary treated recycled water to two power plants and 20 acres of parks and landscaped areas. This project is one of the largest industrial recycled water projects in the State of California.

This Dedication reflects a successful federal, state and local collaboration directly benefiting our community and protecting the environment. It also reflects an innovative undertaking by the city of Antioch to secure long-term sustainable water supplies while protecting the Delta.

Working with Delta Diablo Sanitation District and the city of Antioch, this is another completed project for the Bay Area Recycled Water Coalition, a partnership of fourteen San Francisco Bay Area regional water recycling agencies. It was made possible with state grant funds, zero percent interest loans and Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funding. No ARRA funds were used to construct physical facilities upon any golf course.

Future planned phases will use the backbone pipeline to expand the system to serve other park and industrial sites. In addition to more than 30,000 feet of pipeline on major thorough-fares in Antioch, the project includes a 1.1 million gallon reservoir and pump station at the golf course.



News of our local districts is of interest to us all. Please send news stories to newsletter editor Stanley Caldwell. Stan can be contacted by phone at (925) 228-8922 or by email at stan_caldwell@comcast.net.

CCCSD Receives Prestigious Platinum Award

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's record of 12 consecutive years of 100% environmental compliance was recently recognized by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies with their Platinum-12 Peak Performance Award - a distinction earned by only a handful of wastewater agencies nationwide.

To receive this award, CCCSD met stringent federal, state and regional water quality standards when collecting, sampling, treating, testing and releasing an average of 45 million gallons of wastewater every day for the past 12 years - without a single violation of its EPA - issued National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit.

Diablo Water District Goats!



While driving along the Highway 4 bypass near Laurel Road, you will see two large steel reservoir tanks surrounded by three acres of grassy land. The grass must be mowed periodically for fire safety. The District decided to replace the power mower with goats and began saving \$3,000 annually.

Sherry Sterrett re-elected to CSDA Board Region 3



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

POLLUTION PREVENTION WEEK SEPTEMBER 20th - 26th 2010



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.

In addition to providing sewage collection and treatment services for 18,000 residents in the Martinez area, the Mt. View Sanitary District (MVSD) has, since the early 1970's, managed the McNabney Marsh and the Moorhen Marsh, 151 acres of wetlands and wildlife habitat alongside Interstate 680 in Martinez.

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.

Sherry advocates extensively for both CSDA and the Contra Costa Chapter of CSDA.

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. She currently serves on the CSDA Education Committee & the Membership and Recruitment Committee.

Sherry's hard work brings much to CSDA - her dedication, commitment, and knowledge enhances her ability to be an effective and responsible board member.

Mt. View Sanitary District Billboard highlights American Wetlands Month

In May 2010 MVSD hosted a Celebration billboard for the 20th anniversary of American Wetlands Month:

Wetlands.... where land and water meet where life and spirit connect!



Stege Sanitary District has moved!

Stege Sanitary District moved into its new administration building this past spring - April 2010. The District took advantage of a very favorable bidding climate and awarded a construction contract to the lowest bidder, Overaa Construction, in May 2009. The District first had a prequalification process to determine the viability of potential bidders, using State guidelines for this prequalification process. Total construction costs were about \$1.65 million, including change orders, for the new building. Additional site improvements were made to existing yard and storage areas as well.

An interesting aspect of the project was the site; Stege exchanged property with the City of El Cerrito to acquire the site on which the new building and maintenance yard is located. This exchange was accomplished as a "no cost exchange" with El Cerrito. El Cerrito obtained the old Stege site and in return, Stege obtained the City property on which it could build the new administration facility. The new site provides Stege with a property a few hundred feet from the previous site that is separate from City properties, giving the District better visibility and access to its customers and contractors.



7500 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537

Stege expects to obtain LEEDS (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) silver level certification in recognition of the environmental design of the new building.

CCSDA 2010 Scholarship Award Program

Goal:

To offer an incentive and encouragement for CCSDA members to increase participation in the programs offered by CSDA.

Awards:

Four scholarship awards of \$250.00 each, which will be applied to CSDA programs or for educational seminars.

Rules:

Awards may be applied to Legislative Day, CSDA Annual Conference, or any classes with the exception of mandated programs. Awards are open to all current paid CCSDA members. Award payment is made directly to CSDA. Entries to be judged by the scholarship committee.

Application (four simple questions)

Section 1: Your Name, Agency Name, your contact information, etc.

Section 2: What class, classes, or event would the award be applied to?

Section 3: What is the goal for making this choice?

Section 4: How would my district use this knowledge to benefit the people we serve?

2010 Scholarship Award Program Committee:
Matt Stamey Committee Chair, SRV Fire Protection District
Roxanne Lindsay SRV Fire Protection District
Darnell Turner Los Medanos Community Healthcare District

Send your completed applications to committee chair Matt Stamey by email at MattS@srvfire.ca.gov

**Applications to be submitted no later that November 12, 2010
Awards will be made by November 19, 2010**

Three awards are available & must be used by June, 2011.

**Contra Costa Special Districts Association will celebrate its 20th Anniversary in April 2011
Watch your inbox for additional information to arrive soon!**

California Special District Association Contra Costa Chapter
C/o Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District
155 Mason Circle
Concord, CA 94520
Phone: (925) 771-6109

Bette Boatmun, Chair - Email: bboatmun@yahoo.com Mark Cornelius, Vice Chair - Email: mark@markcorneliuslaw.com

Stanley Caldwell, Interim Newsletter Editor – stan_caldwell@comcast.net

California Special Districts Association – 1112 "I" Street, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95814 877.924.CSDA (2732)