

Mid Year Update

From Steve Jordan, President of the Board



Purissima Hills Water District

Recent actions and discussions taken by the Board of Directors have resulted in significant improvements to the safety and reliability of water service. We continue to work to secure our system against damage, and have summarized below some recent activities. Please join us at our regular Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm to learn more.

Preventing pipe damage caused by contractors taking water from fire hydrants

Significant repairs for main breaks required about \$500,000 of repairs in 2012-13. Two main breaks, repaired at total cost of \$130,000, were determined to have been caused by contractors who illegally accessed fire hydrants for water. In both cases, witnesses observed contractors connecting tanks to the hydrants along Fremont Road. It is very common when contractors illegally access a hydrant that they cause significant main breaks, due to water hammer when they turn the hydrant off. We have instituted several policies to prevent contractors from damaging our system (which compromises our ability to maintain fire flow):

- When the Town issues landscaping or building permits, the contractor must also get a PHWD permit which allows us to explain to the contractor that they cannot access the hydrants.
- We continue to offer contractors with valid permits free water at one location, a stand pipe on Fremont Road, just north of Alexander Place.
- We will pursue fines for contractors caught accessing hydrants, and property owners might be liable for damage caused by their contractors, so be sure your contractor gets a permit.

For the most recent episode, we have been able to identify the contractor in one case and are pursuing a claim for damages. These claims are hard to substantiate without evidence, so we ask for your help:

If you see a tanker truck or trailer accessing a **hydrant**, take a picture (including vehicle license and connection to hydrant) and email it to pwalter@purissimawater.org and call the District.

No one except fire and water district personnel is permitted to access the hydrants no matter what they say to you.

Capital Spending to secure you against fire, earthquakes, and other disasters

Capital improvements for the 2012-13 year were over \$1.5 million, with the largest projects having been La Cresta Tank improvements (both recoating and tank seismic modifications). Next year's largest project is our Neary tank improvement program, with a budget of \$2.5 million, funded 80% by Los Altos Hills County Fire District and 20% by PHWD. We anticipate voting on the 2013-14 proposed capital budget of about \$970,000 at our July 10 meeting. Our capital spending continues to focus on hardening our system against earthquake damage and replacing aging pipelines.

Keeping rates at current level: increase not anticipated in 2013

We will assemble a summary of rate changes in neighboring water districts later this summer, as most of the changes take effect July 1. It appears that many districts on the Peninsula are raising rates as they grapple with the previous annual rate increases of \$0.30 to 0.50 per CCF from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). For the Hetch Hetchy retail agencies, like PHWD, wholesale costs did not increase this year due to deferred spending at SFPUC. In addition, BAWSCA, an agency that represents the 24 member agencies that buy water from SFPUC, refinanced \$28.2 million in SFPUC debt which will provide a permanent reduction of approximately \$0.05 per CCF. While we expect the SFPUC's wholesale rate will increase next year when its capital spending catches up with plans, we do not believe a PHWD rate increase is justified this year.