

EID Reports



June 22, 2009 EID Board Meeting

El Dorado Irrigation District — serving people, agriculture, businesses, and the environment in El Dorado County since 1925

For immediate release: June 23, 2009

Board Discusses Potential Property Tax Take-away

EID will apply for small hydropower project financing

Employees are recognized for outstanding service and GIS certification (next page)

Placerville, CA . . . State proposals to borrow local property tax revenues—or use them to cover the costs of shifting additional social service programs from the state to counties—appear to be taking a backseat to other ideas as the state legislature attempts to complete the budget process. “But the proposals could resurface over the next several days,” said Bob Reeb of Reeb Government Relations during a presentation to the El Dorado Irrigation District (district) board of directors. Reeb, the district’s legislative advocate, also said he is “keeping a close watch on the situation as the legislature races to complete a budget for the governor’s review.”

If the district were to lose all of its property tax revenues, as some state proposals suggest, it could mean a 30-percent increase in rates for drinking water, wastewater treatment, and recycled water services. The board adopted a resolution that opposes state borrowing of the revenues during a special meeting on May 27. In addition, board members and district staff have written to and met with legislators to urge “no” votes on any legislation that allows local tax revenue borrowing or shifting to help close the state’s budget gap.

Posted on the district’s website (www.eid.org) are the board resolution, a fact sheet explaining what EID has done to cut its own budget and why the district opposes the state proposals, and a sample letter to legislators.

District to pursue applications for “green” hydropower project financing

The board authorized staff to prepare applications for partial financing of potential small hydropower projects at District facilities. Sources for the financing include clean renewable energy bonds (CREBs), administered by the Internal Revenue Service, with electricity rates set through Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s (PG&E) feed-in tariff. The CREBs provide a 70-percent reimbursement on all interest paid to borrow money for the projects. The feed-in tariff guarantees attractive prices for energy produced by the projects for up to 20 years.

“Applying for the finance programs does not obligate the district to build the projects,” said district engineering manager Cindy Megerdigian. “But if we don’t apply now, we may lose the chance to obtain the favorable terms should the board vote later to pursue the projects.” Megerdigian also noted that the financing programs reduce the amount of time needed for the projects to pay for themselves. “For example,” she said, “the project at Reservoir B wouldn’t pay for itself until 20 to 30 years from now under conventional financing. But with CREBs, that time period is reduced to 13 years. Plus, we’d be producing clean, renewable energy and receiving an average of nearly \$300,000 a year for it.”

EID director Bill George said, “It’s imperative that we complete the application process. We need to get in line to make sure we don’t lose the opportunity to save money if we decide to construct the projects.”

The projects were identified as part of a study conducted by the district and the El Dorado County Water Agency to produce a hydroelectric options plan for the county. Doug Leisz, a member of the hydro advisory panel that worked on the study, told the board, “It makes incredible sense to take advantage of the gravity flow in the county for hydropower projects. This should be a priority over the next year.”

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In addition to Liesz, members of the hydro advisory panel included Jack Hannaford, Bob Harris, Bob Smart, and Fred McKain. Former EID general manager Harry Dunlop also provided expertise.

Other energy-efficient initiatives at the district include:

- The Project 184 hydropower plant, which produces 21 megawatts of state-certified renewable energy.
- Participation in PG&E's demand reduction program that saves, on average, a quarter of a million dollars per year on the district's electricity bills.
- The three-acre, solar photovoltaic facility at El Dorado Hills wastewater treatment plant, which produces enough energy to power most demand at the plant and also reduces the district's electricity bills.

EID employees earn regional awards and GIS certification

- Jody Allen, representing the California Water Environmental Association, presented the group's "pick" award to Mike Marchand, EID's collections supervisor, and the "sanitary sludge shovel" award to the district's lab supervisor Jerry Tamura during the June 22 EID board meeting. Jerry and the rest of the lab crew—including Janelle Sutphen, Jason Purdue, and Tina Saad—also received recognition from Elizabeth Betancourt, the district's watershed coordinator, for "maintaining their high level of service and going above and beyond in this time of low staffing and budget constraints."
- Guy Barritt, the district's drafting supervisor, recently obtained his Interdisciplinary Applications Certificate in Geographic Information Systems from American River College. Board president George Wheeldon commended Guy for his perseverance in attending night school over the past several years to earn the certification and for his 4.0 grade point average.



Above (l to r): Jerry Tamura, Jody Allen, Mike Marchand. Below (l to r): Tina Saad, Jason Purdue, Jerry Tamura, Janelle Sutphen. Below, left: Guy Barritt.



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