



The Waterfront

El Dorado Irrigation District • November – December 2009

Message from the General Manager



Jim Abercrombie

In this my first message to you as EID's general manager, I thank the district's employees as well as my friends throughout El Dorado communities who have made me feel welcome. It's good to be home, working again in the same county where I live!

Here's my promise to you. I will manage EID's operations by my four principles: safety first, openness and respect for the individual, excellent customer service, and fiscal responsibility. I'm pleased to see these principles are firmly entrenched at EID, and I will do my utmost to make sure they stay that way.

Besides getting to know the district's employees, I am also interested in learning what you, EID's customers, have on your minds when it comes to our water and wastewater utility. So at the end of September, we sent anonymous surveys to about 20 percent—some 4000—of our water/wastewater customers and tallied the results.

More details are in the main article on this page, but in short you told us that water quality and reliability, along with costs, are the most important issues and that most of you are satisfied with the services we provide. The results also show that the majority of you find the rates reasonable, and many customers asked how we compare with other utilities. The charts on the back of this newsletter show how we compare.

To learn more about where your money goes and how we reinvest those monies into infrastructure replacement, I invite you to visit the EID website and follow the series of feature stories we are producing about what we do to keep your water quality high and provide reliable service.

I close by asking you to give us a call or shoot over an e-mail message with questions you have about our operations and services. We're here first and foremost to serve you.

Results of Customer Survey—Water Quality, Costs, and Water Reliability/Security Are Highest Ranked Issues

As general manager Jim Abercrombie writes in his column on this page, what district customers think is important to us. One of his first questions when he arrived in early September was, "When did we last send out a customer survey and what were the results?"

The answer is two years ago in the fall of 2007, and the results showed that water quality and reliability were foremost on the minds of customers.

Those two issues also ranked high in the survey we sent in late September this year to 4,000 randomly selected water/wastewater customers; that's about 20% of all EID water/wastewater customers. Of the 693 responses—a 17.3 percent return!—482 marked water quality as the top priority, followed by 194 who indicated costs are also very important and 162 who rated water reliability and water security as most important. Some customers rated more than one issue as their top priorities.

"I am amazed at the great response we received, and I thank our customers very much for the strong interest they take in the district," Abercrombie said. "A 17.3 percent return on a survey is outstanding."

Customers also indicated that they are satisfied with the district's services and that rates are generally reasonable. Here's the breakdown on the survey's questions related to those topics.

- 90.8% said they are satisfied or very satisfied with their water service.
- 89.6% said they are satisfied or very satisfied with the service they receive when they call the district.
- 91.2% said the district's field responses—compared to other utilities—are average to very good or excellent.
- 80.7% said EID's water rates are reasonable or very reasonable.
- 63% said EID's wastewater rates are reasonable or very reasonable.

The survey also asked how customers prefer to receive information about the district, and 567 marked "the newsletter."

In his October 26 presentation to the board of directors about the survey, Abercrombie said that the results will be incorporated into the district's long-range financial, capital replacement and improvement projects, and strategic planning processes. "We listen to our customers and take their comments seriously," he said. "This year's survey will be the benchmark for future surveys, which we intend to conduct annually."

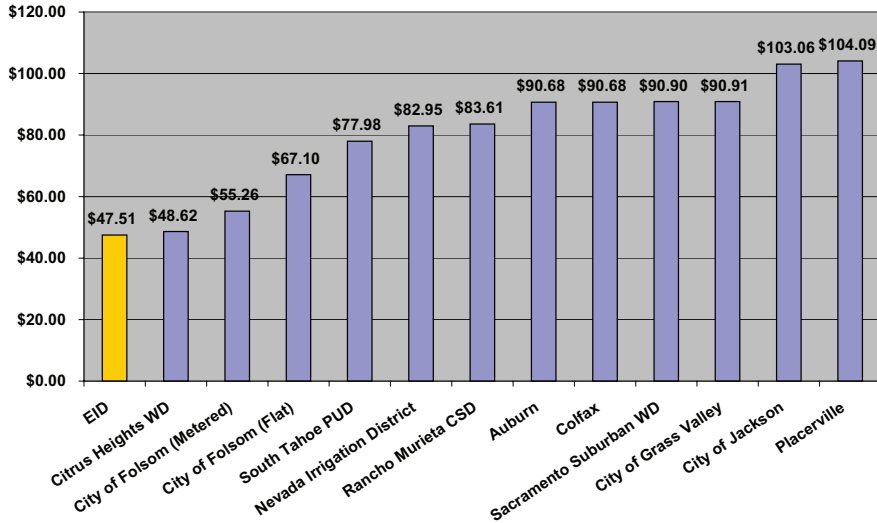
New Feature Series—EID at Work

We are pleased to announce a new series of articles about how your dollars are put to work at the district. The articles emphasize the many services the district provides and the people who make it all happen.

We began in early October with a report on the field crews who respond quickly to repair line breaks and other unexpected events. That was followed by a feature on our meter technicians and their important tasks of reading the meters, repairing aged or broken equipment, and alerting customers to potential leaks. The next article focused on EID's hydropower system and the employees who operate and maintain it. Coming up are stories about replacement of aging wastewater lines, office-based customer service, treatment plant operations, water efficiency programs, and much more. Take a trip to our website to read the articles, which will be posted regularly. Or call us and ask for copies.

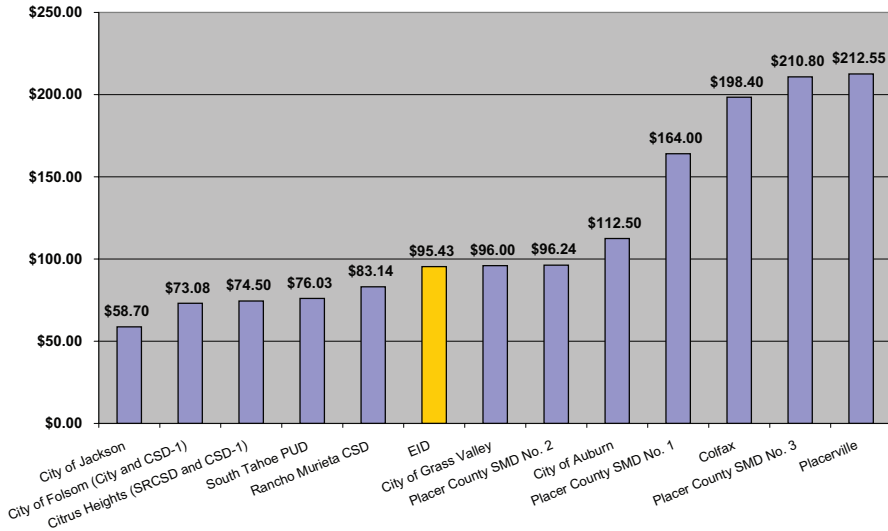
Regional Water Bill Comparison, October 2009

For Bi-Monthly Service, Single Family Residence, 27 ccf usage



Regional Sewer Bill Comparison, October 2009

For Bi-Monthly Service, Single Family Residence, 18 ccf of winter usage



These graphs show a comparison of EID's water and wastewater single-family residential rates with other agencies in our region. The 2700 cubic feet usage for water and 1800 cubic feet usage for wastewater are fairly typical of the average amount our residential customers consume.

EID will soon launch a new toilet voucher program, thanks to funding received from the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation's Water Conservation Field Services Grant Program. Although rebates have been available for some time from EID for new high-efficiency toilets, eligible customers can now apply for a voucher that can be redeemed at a local retailer for a new high-efficiency toilet—1.28 gallons or less per flush. Applicants must be EID or City of Placerville residential water service customers, and the new toilet must replace an older, high-volume flush toilet (3.5 gallons or more per flush) in a dwelling constructed prior to 1992, which is the year the uniform plumbing code was updated.

The toilet vouchers are only available for single- or multi-family residential customers, but there is no limit on the number of toilets that can be replaced—as long as the older toilets meet the above requirements. A multi-family customer can include both apartment complex owners and mobile home park individual owners. The vouchers can be used the same as cash at participating retailers for pre-selected high-efficiency toilets. Customers are responsible for paying the sales tax.

A new irrigation system rebate program for EID and City of Placerville water customers is also coming soon. In partnership with the Sacramento Regional Water Authority (RWA) and three other local water providers, EID applied for and was awarded new grant funding for weather-based irrigation controllers, or "smart" controllers, and also incentives for improved irrigation efficiency. During a complimentary landscape water survey, EID's water efficiency technician will inspect your irrigation system and make recommendations for improvement.

This new program will include a rebate of up to \$500 for the purchase of a qualifying smart irrigation controller that replaces an automatic timer or clock, and a subscription service to receive a broadcast weather signal, if desired. There is an additional \$150 reimbursement available if the smart controller is professionally installed and programmed by an RWA-trained landscape professional.

The program also has incentives to improve irrigation efficiency on currently irrigated landscape. Up to \$200 per customer will be available to reimburse up to 50% of the cost of recommended equipment purchases. Based on the landscape water survey, improvements may include the replacement of existing fixed spray heads with new high-efficiency "rotator" or low-flow rate sprinkler heads, retrofitting with a low-flow drip irrigation system, additional new high-efficiency sprinkler heads for more uniform coverage, and the replacement of leaking or malfunctioning control valves.

The grant program is funded through 2010, but because funding is limited, call today to schedule your water survey.

You can get more information about both programs by contacting EID's office of water efficiency at 530-642-4126 or officeofwaterefficiency@eid.org.

EID online billing: www.eid.org

Remember, EID's new Online Billing: View and Pay offers you a convenient and secure way to access your account online.

- Pay your EID bill with a Visa or MasterCard.
- Receive an email notification when your statement is available.
- Choose to automate by signing up for recurring payments.
- Choose to receive bills or go entirely paperless!

Visit **SLY PARK RECREATION AREA**
Recreation for the whole family!

2010 annual passes are available now.

Visit the recreation website for the application.

They make great holiday gifts!

www.eid.org

2009/2010 regular board meetings

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
9	14	11*	8*
23	--	25*	22*

Board meetings generally occur on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

* tentatively scheduled