



## Message from the General Manager

### Looking ahead in 2009



**Tom Gallier**

Many of you likely read in the local papers about the rocky ending to 2008 here at the District. I want to explain what happened and also take a look forward into 2009.

In my November–December message, I wrote about the more than \$1 million of savings we achieved in early September by downsizing our management

workforce. At that time, the savings were enough to balance our 2009 budget. But then the meltdown on Wall Street commenced. Credit markets seized up. We recalculated our budget and had to find an additional \$5 million in savings, primarily because of irrationally spiking interest rates on our current and planned borrowings.

We eliminated remaining vacant positions, trimmed even more from our materials and services line items, and eliminated positions that will be vacated by mid-2009 as several employees retire. That left us with a little less than \$3 million still to cut—equal to 30 to 32 jobs plus benefits.

Given the other steps we had taken, it was clear that additional reductions would have to come from personnel costs. My primary goal was to avoid layoffs. So I proposed to eliminate 2009 cost-of-living allowances for all employees and 2009 merit increases for employees who qualified. I also proposed 10 to 12 days of unpaid leave for all employees. Unfortunately, we were not able to reach agreement with the employees association on this or other proposals to cut personnel expenses, and, as a result, 31 of our employees had to be laid off.

The negotiations process that ultimately broke down and led to the layoffs was difficult and divisive. That was clearly on the mind of our incoming Board president, George Wheeldon, who took office at the December 15 Board meeting—just one week after I announced the layoffs. He listed three priorities for 2009, one of which is to “renew cooperation among the Board, management, and employees.”

I am committed to working closely with the Board, our many fine line employees, and our management team to, as Director Wheeldon put it so well, “renew cooperation” in 2009 and beyond.

We must rebuild internal trust and initiate a truly collaborative approach to how we operate the District. We owe you, our customers, no less.

## Milestone regulatory success at Deer Creek



In an increasingly complex regulatory environment, when complying with regulations can sometimes mean costly additions to treatment processes, a successful collaboration that heads off those expenditures is an important achievement.

**Vickie Caulfield**, operations manager for the District’s recycled/wastewater division, and **Elizabeth Wells**, engineering manager for recycled/wastewater, led the team that—in December 2008—completed the laborious permit renewal process with for the Deer Creek wastewater treatment plant.

The EID team worked in concert with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) and developed a strong relationship over two and a half years of negotiation and collaboration.

“We are very pleased with the efforts of the Regional Board staff for this permit renewal,” said Caulfield. “The outcome saved ratepayers millions of dollars in additional treatment of wastewater. We especially thank Diana Messina, senior engineer of the Regional Board, for her outstanding commitment to a successful result.”

Deer Creek is one of the District’s two primary wastewater treatment facilities.

## Fewer fish in Jenkinson Lake and Forebay

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will not stock any fish in Jenkinson Lake and Forebay reservoir—as well as nearly 200 other California lakes and streams—through 2010.

A DFG news release states that in October 2006, the Pacific Rivers Council and Center for Biological Diversity sued DFG over fish-stocking programs it has engaged in for more than 100 years. The news release says that the suit claimed no Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had been completed for the programs.

The result of the case was a court order requiring DFG to conduct an EIR, scheduled for completion in January 2010.

For more information, visit the DFG website at [www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov).

## Conserving Water—How your water meter can help you save water and \$\$

All customers—excluding residential customers in our satellite area of Strawberry—have their water use measured by a meter. This system results in customers paying their share of operating the system based on the amount of water used.

A valuable first step toward getting a handle on water use in your home is to become acquainted with your water meter. Water meters do one thing very well—measure the amount of water used inside and outside of your home. Knowing how to read the meter can be valuable if you suspect you've got a hidden leak. Or, you may simply be interested in how much water you use every day. The first step is to locate your meter and learn how to read it.

### Where is my water meter?

Your water meter is located in the ground, usually at the front of your property, inside a rectangular box with a metal, plastic, or concrete lid marked "water."

Carefully remove the lid by using a tool such as a large screwdriver. Insert the tool into one of the holes and pry the lid off. Make sure to visually examine the area around the meter to ensure there are no harmful insects, spiders, or other animals.

### How do I read it?

The dial on the meter resembles the odometer in a car. Some meters may look slightly different, depending on the manufacturer, but they all work on the same principles.

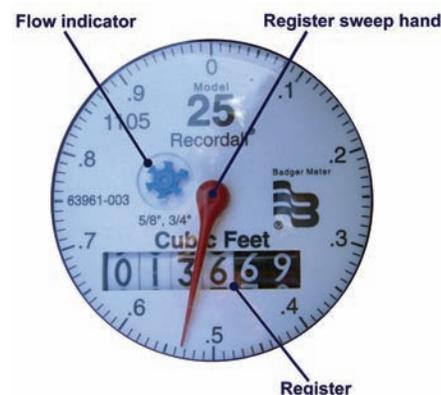
The **flow indicator** is usually a small wheel or triangle that rotates whenever water flows through the meter. Normal fluctuations in main line pressure can cause the flow meter to rock very slightly back and forth. But if the flow meter is turning in one direction when you know that all the water is off on your property, you may have a leak.

For most residential water customers (meters less than one inch in size), each full revolution of the **register sweep hand** indicates that one cubic foot of water—about 7.5 gallons—has passed through the meter. The markings around the edge of the dial indicate tenths and hundredths of one cubic foot. Charges for the amount of water consumed are based on 100 cubic feet of water used.

The numbers shown on the **register** keep a running total of all the water that has passed through the meter since the meter was installed. The register shown in the graphic above indicates that 13,669 cubic feet of water have passed through this meter.

### Using the meter as a leak detector

For leak detection, turn all water-using appliances off so that no water is being used anywhere in the house. Then check the position of the meter dial and wait. If after 30 minutes the dials haven't moved—congratulations! You have a relatively water-tight home. But if the dials have moved, start checking your connections, faucets, and especially toilets for water leaks. If you have everything turned off and are sure the toilets and connections aren't leaking and yet the dials are still turning, you may have a hidden leak in an underground pipe. If you believe this is the case, you may need to call a plumber for assistance.



## Wheeldon and Fraser elected as EID's 2009 Board officers



George Wheeldon (L) and outgoing Board president George Osborne

The El Dorado Irrigation District Board has elected officers for 2009—George Wheeldon, who will serve as president, and John Fraser, the new vice president. The two were elected during the December 15 Board meeting and began their duties immediately.

Wheeldon, a geologist by training and emeritus professor at Folsom Lake College, was first elected to the EID Board in 2001 and was reelected to a second term in 2005.

Fraser has also been elected to the Board twice, in 2001 and 2005. A lawyer, he was the executive director and general counsel of the statewide Association of California Water Agencies for 20 years.

## 2009 regular Board meetings

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	9	9	13	11	8	13	10	14	14(W)	9	14
26	23	23	27	--	22	--	24	--	26	23*	--

Board meetings occur on Mondays. The first October meeting will take place on a Wednesday. \* tentatively scheduled

Produced by the EID Communications Department

Vouchers are available for weather-based irrigation controllers. Apply for one now and have it installed before next spring!

officeofwaterefficiency@eid.org  
Phone: 530-642-4126