

## EASEMENT CLEARING PROGRAM UPDATE

The District would like to thank those homeowners who have worked to clear easements on their property in Squaw Valley.

The District began our easement clearing project several years ago by implementing a series of newsletter articles educating valley residents about utility easements. In 2007, the District notified approximately 225 homeowners of the easement(s) located on their property. In 2008, residents were notified of new regulations requiring that easement be kept clear. In 2009, the District began systematically inspecting, surveying, and notifying customers of encroachments on easements that had to be removed, often at great expense to our customers.

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We know that clearing the easement can be an emotional, frustrating, and expensive undertaking and we applaud those of you who have helped us maintain access to our facilities by clearing your easement. Due to efforts by homeowners on Tiger Tail and Forest Glen Roads, the District was able to complete a series of projects to rehabilitate over 1,800 feet of sewer main in that area. Additional projects are planned as aging sewer pipes in Squaw Valley reach their expected service life.

If you have an easement on your property and want to landscape, please call our office before you start, we will be glad to offer assistance. The District will remove natural growth on easements at no expense to our customers.



# SQUAW VALLEY PUBLIC SERVICE DISTRICT

## July 2010 Newsletter

### DISTRICT WORKED HARD TO REDUCE RATE INCREASE

On March 30, 2010, the Squaw Valley Public Service District's Board of Directors approved sending the legally required notification to all of its customers informing them that the District would be considering rate increases for water, sewer, and trash collection. Staff worked diligently to reduce the impact to District customers. The increases were capped at a worst case scenario of 15% for water, 10% for sewer and 3.7% for trash collection.

ing a vital loss of tax revenue due to reassessment of properties, foreclosures and bankruptcies within District boundaries, all adding to the rate increases. To date, combined property values in Squaw Valley have appeals

is to reduce services and operating costs, or raise fees. On a brighter note, it is anticipated that the cumulative financial impacts to the local community should turn the corner in two years, or less.

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Over the past year the District has taken significant actions to reduce costs, including staff reductions, lowered utility expenses, and extended vehicle replacements from 10 to 15 years. Training expenses for staff and board members have been minimized. Thousands of dollars have been saved by discontinuing or postponing annual studies, including the annual groundwater management plan annual report, and the water supply reliability study. The cost of stream gauging was also transferred to the Friends of Squaw Creek.

pending which could decrease assessed values by \$87 million. The District is at risk of losing a minimum of 7% tax revenue, equaling \$233,000, or more. This number is likely to increase as more tax assessment appeals are completed and property values decline. The only way to recover a loss of this magnitude

Increasing expenses include insurance, accounting and auditing expenses, compliance costs, and the need for asset replacement funds. Due to the national recession, a significant number of owners (both residential and commercial) are appealing their property valuations. This is creat-

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### TWO BOARD SEATS UP FOR GRABS



Are you interested in serving the Squaw Valley community? The District will have two seats on the Board of Directors up for election on Tuesday, November 2, 2010.

The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors who are elected to four-year terms. Directors are elected "at large" by the registered voters within the boundaries of the District. Monthly meetings of the Board are held on the last Tuesday of each month, at 8:30 a.m., in the District's Office Community Room.

Candidates may file Nomination Petitions starting July 12, 2010. In the Tahoe area, those papers may be obtained at the Tahoe City Library, 740 North Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, from Tuesday through Friday, Noon to 5:00 p.m., excluding holidays. The regular filing period closes on August 6, 2010.

If you are interested and would like to obtain further information regarding the District or the position of Director, please stop by the District office, or give us a call.

### WHY AN ASSEST REPLACEMENT PROGRAM IS IMPORTANT

A lot of people wonder what the Asset Replacement Program is. To put it simply, it is a method for funding the timely replacement of the District's water, sewer and fire department's assets as they reach the end of their useful life. Funds are accrued annually from service fees and tax revenues.

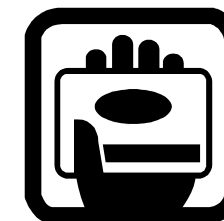
The reasons we created the replacement fund are:

1. To ensure that adequate funds are available to fund an asset's replacement when needed.
2. To promote rate stability by minimizing the associated burden on rate payers by spreading replacement costs uniformly over the useful life of an asset.
3. To promote rate equity by ensuring that future system users will not be unduly burdened by replacement costs as a result of existing system users not providing funds for replacement of fixed assets.
4. Minimize the need to borrow money and thereby reducing or eliminating interest payments.



The District started the asset replacement program in 1995. Since that time it has paid for the replacement of three wells, water lines, fire equipment, vehicles and rehabilitation of sewer lines without the need to borrow money. As a result of this program the District has saved thousands of dollars by not paying interest on loans and our infrastructure is in very good condition.

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS NOW ACCEPTED!



As a convenience to our customers, we are now accepting credit card payments (Visa, MasterCard, Discover). Enclosed in your annual bill is a form that allows you to choose from various automatic payment plans and a section to complete for credit card payments. Just complete the form and return it to the District in the envelope provided. It's as easy as that! If you have any questions regarding the payment plans, please do not hesitate to call the office.

# Fire and Safety Notes

July 2010

## PANCAKES!

The Memorial Day weekend community cleanup day organized by the Squaw Valley Property Owners Association has been a Squaw Valley tradition since the 1960's. The Saturday event kicks off with a pancake breakfast at the fire station. Despite the long, rainy spring, the weather broke for the pancake breakfast and sunny skies delighted both those who spent their day picking up trash and some who spent the morning taking a few last runs on the mountain. All were well fed by the fire department staff prior to starting their endeavors.

If you've never participated in the cleanup day or eaten breakfast at the fire station, we recommend both activities. The hearty breakfast can be rationalized with community service and roadside exertion and you'll have a chance to see old friends and make new ones. It's always the same day - Saturday of Memorial Day weekend at 8:00. It is FREE!

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

Firefighter-Paramedic John Rogers has been busy this spring training members of the North Tahoe Fire Protection District staff in swift water rescue. This sounds like a cushy, fun endeavor, but consider that the Truckee and Yuba Rivers are flowing mostly due to melting snow and that it was actually snowing on some of the days on which the in-water experience was being provided and you get the whole, chilly picture.

Firefighter-Paramedic Alex Calvillo and his wife Valerie are expecting, in fact by the time you read this, the new member of their family will have arrived.

**New, improved** web site!!

## Ambulance Issue in the Spotlight

If you pay attention to the local newspapers, you're well aware that the issue of ambulance service has been somewhat of a cause celebre recently. Here's the latest information and action taken.

Ambulance service to Squaw Valley has traditionally been divided between our neighboring agencies - North Tahoe Fire Protection District and Truckee Fire Protection District. In addition to North Tahoe's five fire stations on the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe, they provide staffing at the Alpine Meadows fire station 150 days annually by contract to Alpine Springs County Water District. Truckee Fire provides service from facilities throughout Truckee and Donner Summit.

Truckee Fire has applied to the State of California and the regional emergency medical services agency for an exclusive operating area (EOA) for ambulance service that includes the area served by our Department. If granted, an EOA would have a couple of important consequences for Squaw Valley:

- Squaw Valley Fire would be permanently barred from providing ambulance service to our community
- Truckee Fire would have the exclusive right to ambulance calls in the Valley, eliminating the use of the "closest resource" dispatch used at present

We believe that it should be up to our community to decide whether we should provide ground ambulance service at some point. We believe that it is even more important to maintain the ability to use the closest ambulance for our patients. Keep in mind that our Department provides advanced life support (ALS) care, so the Squaw Valley Fire Department Paramedic who arrives in a fire engine within minutes of your call will provide *exactly the same level of patient care* as the Paramedic in the ambulance.

The Squaw Valley Public Service District Board of Directors and the Squaw Valley Municipal Advisory Council have gone on record opposing the inclusion of Squaw Valley into an EOA that would limit our future options and eliminate the use of closest resource dispatching for ambulances.

Finally, even though this issue has received considerable attention in the local press and has been the subject of sometimes passionate debate at District Board meetings, the relationships between the staffs of the affected agencies remain positive and cooperative and emergency response is undiminished. The mutual aid system and interoperability between agencies in this area allows all of us to provide a very high level of service in a very timely and cost-effective manner. All of the agencies, Boards and staffs recognize and appreciate this and are committed to maintaining and enhancing it.

The ambulance issue has been an unexpected and rather turbulent event, but Squaw Valley's firefighters and their brothers and sisters at Truckee Fire and North Tahoe Fire are a dedicated, capable and professional group of people who will continue to serve their communities and one another to the very best of their ability regardless of any political wrangling.



Public water systems are required to meet state and federal standards for the drinking water we supply. Some citizens question the adequacy of those standards and whether the water is actually safe to drink. This is a good question since very little, if any, drinking water is pure or contaminant free, including bottled water. The water in Squaw Valley is tested regularly to ensure that standards are met and no standard has ever been exceeded. Hopefully the following information will help you to better understand the water you drink.

The water in Squaw Valley comes from underground. The Earth provides a very good natural filter so the water is free of any microorganisms or pathogens that may inhabit the watershed. However, as the water passes through the ground some minerals are dissolved into the water. Most minerals detected in the water are far below standards with the exception of Manganese (Mg). Mg is considered a secondary standard and is therefore not a health concern at low levels. Mg has been detected at or slightly above the limit of 50 parts per billion (PPB) in our old Well No. 1. The water from Well No. 1 has always been blended with water from Wells No. 2 and No. 3, both of which contain little or no Mg, so water at customer's taps has always been measured below the limit. District Well No.1 was replaced in 2005, and the new well has lower levels of Mg than the old well and blending is no longer required, but still takes place.

People hear a lot about cancer causing chemicals being found in drinking water. The District has performed hundreds of tests for chemical contaminants and only a couple of chemicals were found to be present, but not all the time. Most recently perchlorate was discovered in Well No. 2 at a level of 4.8 PPB. There is no set standard for perchlorate at this time; however the USEPA has set an interim Drinking Water Health Advisory Limit of 15 PPB and California EPA at 6 PPB. Perchlorate is most commonly found in aerospace fuels and explosives. Perchlorate can also be found in some chlorine supplies; however the District does not regularly chlorinate the water

supply. The District monitors quarterly for perchlorate and positive samples were found in June 2008, and again in June 2009, which may indicate some relationship to spring snow melt containing traces of explosives from avalanche control. The water from Well No. 2 is always blended with water from Well No. 1 and Well No. 3, therefore levels at customers' tap would be nearly undetectable. MTBE was once discovered in old Well No. 1, but that was a decade ago and it has not been detected again since.



People hear that drinking chlorine causes cancer. Cancer causing chemicals can be formed in drinking water that is chlorinated. When organic and inorganic matter comes in contact with chlorine, bi-products are formed called trihalomethanes. There are four trihalomethanes of concern including chloroform, bromodichloromethane, dibromochloromethane, and bromoform. Daily ingestion of these chemicals over a lifetime may cause cancer; however none of these chemicals have been detected in Squaw Valley drinking water and the District only chlorinates a few weeks annually.

The District tests regularly for radionuclides to include Gross Alpha and Beta, Uranium, Radium 226 and 228, and Radon 222. None of these have been detected at any level of concern except for Radon. Radon is a radioactive gas that you can't see, taste, or smell. It is found throughout the U.S. Radon can move up through the ground into a home through cracks and holes in foundations. Radon can build up to high levels in all types of homes. Radon can also get into indoor air when released from tap water from showering, washing dishes, and other

activities. Compared to radon entering the home through soil, radon entering the home through tap water will, in most cases, be a small source of radon in indoor air. Breathing air containing radon can lead to lung cancer. Drinking water containing radon may also lead to stomach cancer. If you are concerned about radon in your home, consider having it tested. Testing is easy and inexpensive. For more information call EPA's Radon Hotline at 800-SOS-RADON

The District tests for microbial contaminants monthly at various locations in the valley and we are happy to report that our tests show there is little risk of microbial contamination. However, microbes can form in stagnate water and in hot water heaters that are not used regularly. To combat this problem the District has an aggressive flushing program where we flush all fire hydrants annually and all dead end water mains twice annually. Out of town homeowners can help by draining your system when you leave and giving it a good flush when you arrive.

The water in Squaw Valley is acidic with a pH as low as 6.2. The low pH combined with low mineral content makes our water corrosive. In order to prevent the water from leaching lead and copper from service lines into your water supply, we treat the water by raising the pH. The water you receive at your tap will generally have a pH of around 7.8 and all of our tests confirm very low levels of copper and almost no lead in older homes. Newer homes, meaning those constructed since 1982, were constructed using tin solder to join the water pipes and have no detectible lead at all. In 2008, the District revised our service line ordinance to allow the use of polyethylene (plastic) pipe in new home construction.

Generally our water in Squaw Valley is considered to be of excellent quality and it poses no known health risks. For additional information, the District produces a water quality report annually. Copies are available at our office and on the internet at [www.svpsd.org](http://www.svpsd.org), or you may contact the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.