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New El Dorado Irrigation District board members target rate hikes

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Two new members have been elected to the El Dorado Irrigation Board and are set on putting a stop to future rate hikes.

“The most pressing task for me as an EID Board member will be preventing future rate increases,” said Dr. Dale Coco, who was recently elected to Division 4.

In Division 2, Greg Prada, a retired CEO beat retired analyst Richard Englefield, 59 percent to 39 percent. Coco won over attorney Jake Flesher, 58 percent to 42 percent.

Coco said stopping rate increases can be accomplished through a combination of “carefully evaluated and applied cuts to the budget, increased efficiency in operations and procedures, and increased revenue.”

“I have discussed cuts to the budget with Alan Day, the EID Director from Division 5. He proposed a \$2 million, or 5 percent cut, to the budget a year ago after carefully evaluating where cuts could be made without damaging EID’s functions or operations and making sure that quality was maintained,” Coco said. “That covers the first proposed 5 percent rate increase.”

Prada said he ran because he believes the concluding words of EID’s mission statement, “fiscal responsibility, ... need far more attention in EID’s decision making. EID’s rates, spending and debt have escalated beyond the financial capabilities and/or acceptance levels of the majority of EID ratepayers.”

“Top performing managers and boards know what gets measured gets done. And what gets talked about gets attention. In EID board meetings, I intend to measure and talk about the financial ramifications to ratepayers of each item brought before the board. In turn, my objective will be to influence EID board votes that result in less EID spending and less EID rate hikes,” Prada said.

Coco said his next step is an evaluation of all EID operations and functions with the goal of cutting cost, increasing efficiency and maintaining or increasing quality.

“This coupled with continued expansion of programs like creating a large cooperative to buy chemicals and supplies, along with a careful evaluation of the use of those chemicals and supplies should lead to further decreases in the budget. These decreases in the budget should cover the second 5 percent rate increase.”

Lastly, by making adjustments and tightening up how the rate classes are applied, “we can increase revenue. Furthermore, by the time for the third 5 percent increase, we should see further recovery of the economy leading to the exercise of building permits which have already been approved. That will produce revenue from the sale of FCC’s and the collection of EDU’s on those new homes. That should cover the third 5 percent rate,” he said.

Coco believes that his reviews and plans would give EID customers three years with no rate increases.

“After that more long term solutions can start to have effect on the need for rate increases,” he said. “That is the plan and those are the goals. The difficulty will come in applying the plan and achieving the goals.”