

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

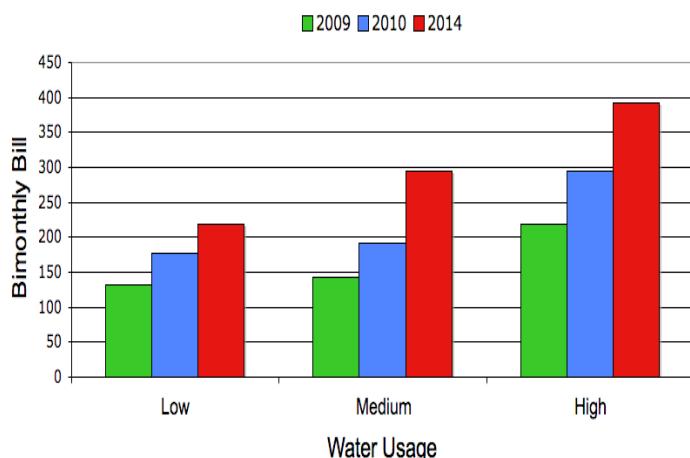
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EID PROPOSED RATE COMPARISON



EID PROPOSES 80 PERCENT RATE HIKE OVER 5 YEARS

El Dorado Irrigation District has adopted a \$43.3 million operating budget for 2010 that calls for rate increases that will hike customer's bills by eighty percent by 2014. EID officials propose to boost water and sewer rates 35 percent in 2010, 15 percent for 2011, and increase them 5 percent for each of the next three years, which, compounded, equal an eighty percent increase over the five years.

EID officials say the increases are needed to maintain the required debt service coverage. They say that to meet bond obligations, the district must maintain at least a 1.25 debt service ratio, meaning total revenues must equal at least 125 percent of operating expenditures, including debt payments. When the district issued bonds earlier this year, staff members anticipated rate increases of as much as 12 percent would be needed to meet the debt service requirements. But the decline in home construction resulted in a dramatic drop in revenue from new connections and shifted more of the burden to ratepayers. Also, retiree health care costs of \$627,000 are estimated for this year and may be more than \$1 million next year, a condi-

tion over which EID claims to have no discretion, according to EID officials.

Since late last year the district has reduced staff 17 percent and reduced its fleet by 15 vehicles. In the fiscal year 2009 that ends Dec. 31 the district's spending is projected to be \$18 million less than originally budgeted, according to EID Finance Director Mark Price. EID Director

George Osborne recently sought to cut an additional \$1 million from the district's budget, but only got the support of Director Harry Norris, as the vote went 3 to 2 against the cut.

Critics predicted that the proposed rate increases will present a real hardship to a certain portion of ratepayers and urged the board to offer some relief for people who can't afford the additional costs. They also pointed out that the district might fall short of its revenue projections if higher rates curtail water use. Others question why the district issued bonds when they knew that they did not have the money, and that they would have to raise water rates to pay for them.

The chart above illustrates the proposed increases for water and sewer charges, based on estimates of the 2009 average bimonthly water and sewer charges for low, medium and high-usage customers. According to the EID, residential customers in the low water-use category now pay \$37 bimonthly for water, those in the middle pay \$47 for water, high-use customers pay \$123 bimonthly for water, and the 2009 bimonthly sewer charges average about \$95.

EID customers can roughly estimate the effect of the proposed increase on their EID bills by multiplying the "Total due" line on their 2009 EID bills by 1.35 to arrive at the

proposed total due on their bills in 2010. Multiplying that 2009 amount by 1.8 will give the estimated total due on their bills in 2014. Remember that your water use fluctuates from winter to summer, while sewer charges are generally constant throughout the year.

EID customers who object to the increase can do more than just complain. Under the provisions of Article XIII (Proposition 218) as interpreted in the Bighorn water case by the California Supreme Court, the EID rate increase is subject to the approval of the EID customers. If more than half of the customers object, the increase cannot go into effect. A notice of the proposed rate increases and a protest ballot will be mailed out to all EID customers, who will have 45 days to object before the board implements the increases. In order to vote against the rate increase, customers must fill out the protest ballots and either mail them to the EID before the protest meeting, or bring the ballots to the scheduled protest hearing at the EID.

Recent legislation designated protest ballots public documents, open for inspection, and the EID is required to keep all of the ballots that are cast for several years. ~



**Merry
Christmas**



RANCHO CORDOVA CHP OFFICE RECEIVES COMMUNITY GRANT

By Kathy Prevost

The Rancho Cordova office of the California Highway Patrol, which covers El Dorado Hills to the west side of Bass Lake Road, has received a one-year grant for a new safety program called Community Involvement to Educate Drivers ("CITED"). This grant has allowed the CHP office to implement a program to improve the traffic safety environment through additional deployments to our area. Media outreach will use the Folsom Auto Mall sign, theaters, fair booths, flyers, and other community outlets.

In preparation for beginning the program, the CHP met with various stakeholders throughout the Rancho Cordova area, including El Dorado Hills, on November 18, 2009, and discussed the attendees' areas of concern. Several El Dorado community members, and representatives from El Dorado County DOT, local school districts, and Serrano were in attendance. As a result of these discussions, the CHP has begun to immediately address local traffic issues that include discouraging the passing of stopped school buses, increasing bicycle safety, increasing observance of stop signs, and combating speeding in and around neighborhoods.

In particular, the use of the left-hand turn lane in front of Madera, which is used by north-bound drivers as a passing lane to get around cars that are turning right off of Bass lake Rod, was brought to their attention. Other areas of concern that were addressed were the presence of bicyclists on the narrow portions of Bass Lake Road and traffic safety issues due to morning and afternoon congestion at Green Valley Elementary School on Bass Lake Road.

The CHP officers are also available to present programs to teens and adults through their Public Information Officer, James Young, who may be contacted at 916-464-2090. Additional information about other

programs is available on the web at <http://www.maketherightturn.org> and <http://www.chp.ca.gov/community/startsmart.html>.

Officer Young currently holds office hours every Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00AM to 12:00PM in the El Dorado Hills Fire Station # 85, 1050 Wilson Boulevard, in the Business Park. During those hours he can sign off on correctable citations, provide copies of traffic collision reports, release impounded vehicles, and answer your law enforcement questions. ~



HIGHWAY 50 HOV LANE WORK UPDATE

Those who drive Highway 50 in the El Dorado Hills area have experienced road construction for many months as construction continues in an effort to improve traffic flow along the highway. Highway 50, especially in the El Dorado County area, is experiencing an increase in commuter traffic and is an area expected to have significant residential and employment growth in the future.

The multi-phase project will construct high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in the eastbound and westbound directions by widening U.S. Highway 50 from approximately El Dorado Hills Boulevard to just west of Greenstone Road. The majority of the funding for the highway project is being provided by Proposition 1B approved by voters in November 2008. The project will ultimately extend the present HOV lane system to provide approximately 23 continuous miles of eastbound and westbound HOV lanes in Sacramento and El Dorado counties.

Phase 1 of the project, now underway, is not expected to be completed until December of 2010. Phase 1 extends the car pool lane on Highway 50 from its current termination location just west of the El Dorado Hills Boulevard exit to just west of the Bass Lake Road interchange. The Latrobe Road crossing that takes traffic over El Dorado Hills Boulevard is being replaced, as well as the eastbound Highway 50 off ramp there. In the eastbound direction, the HOV lane starts from the existing HOV terminus near the county line and extends east of Silva Val-

ley Parkway to the bottom of the Bass Lake Grade. The eastbound HOV lane will be built up the Bass Lake Grade to just west of the Bass Lake Road interchange. However, the new lane on Bass Lake Grade will not be opened until the completion of Phase 2 since CalTrans deemed it unwise to merge both the HOV lane and the truck-climbing lanes into the existing two lanes at the top of the grade. The lane will open when the extension of the HOV lane past Bass Lake Road is completed in Phase 2.

Phase 2 is expected to begin in late 2010, and will extend the HOV lanes from Bass Lake Road to approximately Ponderosa Road. The Phase 2 plans originally called for the replacement and enlargement of the over crossing at Bass Lake Road, but current plans call for the reinforcement and widening of the center of the present bridge structure. The design also calls for building sound walls on the north side of Highway 50 between Cambridge and Cameron Park Drives. Because of funding and construction delays, construction of Phase 2 may start in Summer of 2010 with completion in late Fall 2012.

Phase 3 will extend the lanes from Ponderosa Road to just west of Greenstone Road. Construction on Phase 3 may start in Summer 2012 with completion in late Winter 2014. Of course, construction delays and unexpected weather may delay the project further. ~



RECORD-LOW SUPPORT FOR STRICTER GUN LAWS

A recent Gallup poll found a new low of only forty-four percent of Americans saying the laws covering firearm sales should be made more strict. That is down five points in the last year and thirty points from the high of seventy-eight percent recorded in 1990, the first time the question was asked.

Today, Americans are as likely to say the laws governing gun sales should be kept as *(continued on page 3)*

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello All,

In the past I have written about the wonderful place in which we live. Today I would like to mention some of those people who make it such a nice place to live.

First I would like to recognize the members of Bass Lake Action Committee, especially those who have served on the Board of Directors and on the Steering Committee. Honorable mention also goes to the Friends of BLAC, who support us so generously every year.

I would also like to thank the public officials who have been so willing to come and speak at our meetings, and to meet with us about our concerns. A partial list includes Assemblymember Alyson Huber, State Senator Dave Cox, and county Supervisors John Knight, Ray Nutting and Ron Briggs.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention El Dorado Hills Fire Chief Brian Veerkamp, County Sheriff Jeff Neves, and Guy Gertch, Noelle Matlock, and their colleagues on the Community Service District Board, and of course, CSD General Manager Wayne Lowery.

A special thanks goes to Russ Nygaard, now Deputy Director - Facilities Engineering at El Dorado County Department of Transportation, who has graciously appeared at many of our meetings to update us on the activities at DOT as they affect Bass Lake Road and its environs.

It is my hope and expectation that, as we embark upon a New Year, we can all continue to work together to keep our community the great place that it is, and perhaps even improve things a bit.

May you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

John E. Thomson

President

GUN LAWS (continued)

they are now (forty-three percent) as to say they should be made more strict. Until this year, Gallup had always found a significantly higher percentage advocating stricter laws. At the same time, twelve percent of Americans believe the laws should be less strict, which is low in an absolute sense but ties the highest Gallup has measured for this response. These results are based on Gallup's annual Crime Poll, conducted October 1-4 this year.

Compared with views in 2000, each major demographic or attitudinal subgroup has shown a shift toward a more pro-gun stance on the question about whether gun laws should be more strict or less strict.

The poll also shows a new low in the percentage of Americans favoring a ban on handgun possession except by the police and other authorized persons, a question that dates back to 1959. Only twenty-eight percent now favor such a ban. The high point in support for a handgun-possession ban was sixty percent in the initial measurement in 1959. Since then, less than a majority has been in favor, and support has been below forty percent since December 1993.

The trends on the questions about gun-sale laws and a handgun-possession ban indicate that Americans' attitudes have moved toward being more pro-gun rights. But this is not due to a growth in personal gun ownership, which has held steady around thirty percent in this decade, or to an increase in household gun ownership, which has been steady in the low forty percent range since 2000.

The results are similar on the question of a ban on handgun possession, with nearly every major demographic group less supportive of a ban now than at the start of the decade.

Americans continue to trend toward holding attitudes that are more in favor of gun rights, and Gallup today finds new low points in favor of gun control on two separate measures dating back at least two decades. While solidly against a ban on handgun possession, Americans are nonetheless about equally likely to say they favor stricter laws on firearm sales as to say these laws should not change. Still, the current poll marks the first time Gallup has not found a significantly higher proportion of Americans preferring tighter gun-sale regulations. ~



TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE DECISION DISAPPOINTS EL DORADO HILLS

The El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) disburses state and federal funding for a number of transportation projects in El Dorado County. By state statute, the EDCTC is made up of six commissioners: three Placerville City Council members and three county supervisors, Jack Sweeney, John Knight and Ray Nutting.

The EDCTC has historically funneled the lion's share of transportation dollars to the City of Placerville and its environs, based on the dominance of the three Placerville city council members and county supervisor Jack Sweeney, whose district includes Placerville.

Seeking a better balance of representation on the board, representation that would include the 40,000 plus residents of unincorporated El Dorado Hills, Assemblymember Alyson Huber sought to change the makeup of the EDCTC through legislation. However, Huber agreed to consider the recommendations of an ad hoc citizens advisory committee set up by the EDCTC before proceeding with her legislation.

At their final meeting in November, the advisory committee by a 13-0 vote recommended providing representation for new cities, but it was divided over whether unincorporated communities such as El Dorado Hill should have representation. Since cityhood does not seem to be in the foreseeable future for El Dorado Hills, the advisory committee's report was a disappointment to El Dorado Hills community leaders.

Reportedly several members of the advisory commission expressed the concern that the committee's final meeting was adjourned by the facilitator before anything meaningful was accomplished. Other members of the advisory commission and members of the public in the audience expressed concern that the facilitator's report did not

(continued on page 4)



THINGS FOR US TO BE GRATEFUL FOR IN THE COMING NEW YEAR

When we look forward to a brand new year, most of us are optimists. Here are a couple of excellent reasons for us to be so.

Nearly 62% of U.S. adults said they were in excellent or very good health, along with 82% of their children, according to families sampled by the federal government for the National Health Interview Survey, which was conducted in 2007 and released this year.

The longer you live, the happier you are likely to be. Many older adults find that happiness and emotional well-being improve with time; they learn to avoid or limit stressful situations and are less likely to let negative comments or criticism bother them than young adults, according to research presented at the American Psychological Association conference in Toronto this year.

So life is getting measurably better for many people. Be sure to keep this in mind as you look forward to 2010, and remember it will be in many ways a Happy New Year. ~



I Heard a Bird Sing

*I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December
A magical thing
And sweet to remember.*

*'We are nearer to Spring
Than we were in September,'
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.*

— Oliver Herford

EDCTC (continued)

mention that the advisory commission was in agreement that a change in the EDCTC representation was needed.

Four Seasons Civic League Chairman John Raslear said that a promise that EDH would get representation when it became a city was too far in the future and was totally unrealistic .

A representative of Assemblymember Huber's office told the Bulletin that Huber will introduce legislation regarding the makeup of the EDTC in the 2010 Assembly session, but the final language of the bill has not yet been determined. ~



HOLIDAY TRASH PICKUP REMINDER

If you live in El Dorado Hills, and your regular trash pickup day falls on Friday December 25, 2009, which is Christmas Day, or Friday January 1, 2010, which is New Year's Day, your trash will not be collected on those Fridays. It will be picked up on the next day, on Saturday December 26, 2009, and on Saturday January 2, 2010.

No other pickup days are affected. These are the only holidays during the year that are treated this way. ~



Bass Lake Action Committee
501 Kirkwood Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

BLAC SETS MEETINGS, 2010 ELECTIONS, AND JANUARY BULLETIN

The December Bass Lake Action Committee was cancelled due to bad weather, it being felt that it was too cold and snowy for members to safely attend the meeting.

Therefore the election of officers for 2010 will be held at the January regular BLAC meeting, which will be held on January 11, 2010, at 7:00 PM at the home of Hal and Barbara Erpenbeck, 9045 Orchid Shade Drive, El Dorado Hills, telephone 530-677-5533. Note the meeting will be held on the second Monday of the month because of the New Years holiday. The speaker at the January meeting will be local public transportation advocate Judy Bakke.

The February meeting will be held on February 1, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court, El Dorado Hills, telephone 530-677-3039.

The January Bulletin will not be published until after the January meeting due to the holidays and the need to announce the 2010 election results in the January issue. ~

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John E. Thomson, Ph.D.
President and Editor
doctorjet@basslakeaction.org
530-677-3039

For additional information
see our website, basslakeaction.org
or contact
Vice President Kathy Prevost
kathyp@basslakeaction.org
530-672-6836