

Finance Department Customer Service

The members of the Finance Department are as follows:

Name	Position	Direct Dial Phone	Email
Cammie Morin	Finance Director	704-455-4008	cmorin@sidwater.org
Clarissa Lu	Senior Staff Accountant	707-455-4002	clu@sidwater.org
Destiny Vender	Accounting Tech	707-455-4005	dvender@sidwater.org
Veronica Sanchez	Accounting Tech	707-455-4004	vsanchez@sidwater.org
Lucy Garcia	Accounting Clerk	707-455-4003	lgarcia-flores@sidwater.org

Our department will be available between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM to assist customers, via the phone or at the front desk.

A DROP BOX IS AVAILABLE IN THE SID PARKING LOT LOCATED AT 810 VACA VALLEY PARKWAY, VACAVILLE.



Solano Irrigation District
810 Vaca Valley Parkway, Suite 201
Vacaville, CA 95688

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Contact Us

Solano Irrigation District
810 Vaca Valley Parkway, Ste. 201
Vacaville, CA 95688 (707) 448-6847

Visit us on the web at www.sidwater.org



SOLANO IRRIGATION DISTRICT

SID QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021

Preparing for Power Outages and Wildfires

By Cary Keaten, General Manager

Many of you have already been preparing for power outages and wildfires. Along with both, comes the risk of loss of water as well. Be assured we will do everything we can to maintain or restore water service. No amount of water, however, can stop a determined wildfire.

BE AWARE
BE PREPARED

The Solano Irrigation District (SID) purchased stand-by generators last year. These will help keep our pump stations and treatment plants running during PG&E outages. In the event of a wildfire, however, operating them will not ensure your safety. Setting up the generators can take time and, depending on the type of event, the systems may be down for a few hours. Therefore, your being prepared for such an event is critical.

Here is a link to PG&E's Wildfire Wood Management program that we received as a door-hanger on our office building. It's full of great information and recommendations. Take a look at:

<https://www.pge.com/wildfiresafety>

PG&E is but one of many sources of wildfire safety information. We encourage you to stay informed. SID is going to do all it can to remain operational during PG&E power outages. But nothing beats pre-planning, and we encourage you to do all you can to prepare for events.

SID Issues \$27 Million in Debt

By Cary Keaten, General Manager



Much of the Solano Irrigation District's (SID or District) infrastructure is approaching 60 years old. If the infrastructure is a canal, no problem – just repair the canal or canal gate. If the infrastructure is a buried pipeline, however, the repair is much more difficult. During the late 1950s, the District installed many miles of either cast-in-place concrete pipe or unreinforced concrete pipe. It is these pipelines that are at the end of their service life and the focus of the majority of a \$27 million debt issuance.

In late June 2021, the District issued Certificates of Participation (similar to tax-exempt municipal bonds). The total issuance was about \$27 million. This is an historically good time to issue debt, as the true interest cost the District will be paying is about 2.7% over a 30-year period.

Although about \$15 million is allocated to end-of-life pipeline replacement, \$10 million is set aside for electrical service upgrades and \$2 million for upgrades to the Gibson Canyon Public Water System (PWS).

The monies allocated to end-of-life pipeline replacement should cover up to 16,000 feet of 48" and 42" concrete pipe over the next three years. Also, the monies provide for the purchase of capital equipment so that the District can self-fund further pipeline projects from its annual rehabilitation and betterment assessment.

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The current plan calls for replacement of a total of 138,000 feet of 24" to 48" pipe over the next 15 years.

The monies allocated to electrical service upgrades are enough to upgrade 168 of the District's 200 remote electrical services over the next three years. The remaining 32 sites are planned to be upgraded over the following two years using annual rehabilitation and betterment assessment funds.

The \$2 million set aside for the Gibson Canyon PWS funds an additional 250,000 gallons of treated water storage at the treatment plant site. The project also funds the conversion of manual stand-by generator switches to automated switches, a requirement of the State's Division of Drinking Water. In addition, the project includes the repair of a retaining wall, pump replacements and system hardening.

Lastly, the repayment of the COPs is made from either the Ag or Gibson Canyon. If your property is not part of one of these customer categories, then your water rates were not increased or reallocated to fund repayment of the debt.

Conservation Tips and Rebates

By Matthew Hobbs, Water & Power Operations Manager



You may have heard that California is experiencing another drought and Governor Newsom has declared a drought emergency in Solano County. While Solano Irrigation District and other local water utilities anticipate having adequate supplies to meet water needs this year, we are encouraging everyone to use water efficiently, especially outdoors, where most household water use occurs.

The next time you are mowing the lawn, take a moment to ensure your sprinklers are working properly. Turn on your sprinklers one zone at a time and look for and fix problems like breaks, leaks, clogs and sprinklers that are watering the sidewalk. That way, they'll deliver the water your yard needs while making every drop count. Replacing your old sprinklers with high-efficiency rotator sprinklers can help you use 30 percent less water and have a healthier yard. These sprinklers deliver heavy droplet streams of water at a slower rate so that water gets to the roots and less is lost to evaporation. Also, remember to water your yard early in the day or later at night. This lets water soak into the soil before evaporation whisks it away. More tips are available at <https://saveourwater.com/>

If you are working on renovating your yard, consider replacing your lawn with beautiful, low-water flowers and plants. It's also a great time to upgrade your sprinkler timer to a weather-based model. Look for a "water-sense"-labeled "smart" sprinkler timer – they can adjust watering based upon weather, soil type, sun exposure (for example, full sun or partial shade) and plant type. It's estimated that a smart timer can save nearly 8,800 gallons of water each year! (<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/weather-based-irrigation-controllers>).

Local water utilities are here to help with rebates to help residents use water wisely at home and work. In addition to rebates for lawn replacement and smart sprinkler timers, there are also rebates for high-efficiency clothes washers. Older conventional top-loading washing machines can use between 30 and 40 gallons of water per load. High-efficiency models use about half that amount while getting your clothes just as clean.

More water-saving tips and information about rebates are available on the Solano County Water Agency website at <https://www.scwa2.com/water-efficiency/rebates-programs/residential-rebates/>.

Training for Power Outages and Wildfires

By Cary Keaten, General Manager

Many of SID's rural neighborhoods of Blue Ridge Oaks, Gibson Canyon, Pleasant Hills Ranch Estates, Pleasants Valley (Vaca Valley) and Quail Canyon were without water in PG&E's prolonged Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) events in 2019. The LNU Complex Wildfire of 2020 cemented the importance of having stand-by power. Therefore, with the threat of PSPS events and fire season in full swing, the Solano Irrigation District (SID or, District) staff is doing its best to be prepared for power outages in our service areas.

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Starting in January to August of 2020, the District installed electrical switching capabilities at all of its potable water (and some non-potable systems) facilities. The District also purchased multiple back-up power generators costing \$1.1 million. In late August and early September 2020, the District finished testing, programming, and permitting the generators. All of the generators were set up with manual transfer switches and permitted as portable generators for ease of operations in the fall of 2020.

Heading into the fall of 2021, most of the generators have been permitted as stationary and it is intended, they be installed permanently with automatic transfer switches. In Gibson Canyon, for example, our goal is 2022 for a fully automated system. In the meantime, District Staff has located the generators at several staging locations near their intended use site. For example, the generator for the Quail Canyon system is located at a secure site a few miles from the Quail Canyon well as the existing site is not secure or set up with automatic transfer switches. This issue is the same for all sites needing the back-up generators.

During PSPS events. The District has historically received several day notice of a pending outage event. As such, the District can easily pre-deploy for the event and be on stand-by waiting for the official outage before turning on the generator.

During wildfire events, the District has not received advanced notice. During the LNU Complex event for example, the District only received a telemetry alarm from its own systems stating there was a power outage. There was no warning.

To ensure SID can respond to events with/without advanced warning, District staff met in early June and July 2021 to rehearse and practice the logistics of generator deployment. Since a deployment may need to happen at 12 a.m. as in the LNU Complex Wildfire or on the weekend as previous PSPS events, Staff rehearsed as if they were the only ones available. [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\) are still in the process of being developed](#) with the purpose of making the complex tasks as straight forward as possible with clear step-by-step instructions.

The latest training occurred on July 2, 2021 at the Blue Ridge Oaks Public Water System. Staff, including all Superintendents, Supervisors and Potable Water Distribution Staff met at 8 a.m. at the BRO system and simulated a power outage. One staff member unfamiliar with the process was able to pick up [the newly developed SOP](#) and step through the start-up sequence with relative ease and place the BRO pumping plant completely on backup power. The trial run was successful, but revealed a few additions to the SOP. We will continue to conduct these practical exercises going forward to train staff and develop/update SOP's.



Figure 1. Staff Members participating in the Bule Ridge Oaks training exercise include the following: Stuart Chaney, Jared Clark, Jeff Sullivan, James Vest, Mark Szura, Adam Burbey, Aaron King, Tito Cuevas, Melissa Vignau, Justin Noutary, Rachel Martin, Craig Thacker, Joe Cardera, and Matt Hobbs. Not pictured was Josh Hendrickson and Josh Ruiz.