



Lower Tule River

Irrigation District

LOWER TULE LEGEND

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Lower Tule River Irrigation District

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2006 WATER RATES SET

BOARD IMPLEMENTS LEVELIZED RATE SETTING PLAN

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One of the more difficult decisions the Board of Directors faces each year is setting the water rate. In the past, the rate was determined by considering the water supply available and comparing it to the projected costs for the year. That method of setting the water rate worked fine when the costs were low, rates stable, and supplies plentiful. Those conditions have changed dramatically.

Faced with always increasing costs, the Board has decided to level the water rate on a rolling five year average. The calculations will consider what the District has to pay for the water, the percentage that will be sold after channel loss, and how much water has been available to the District over the last five year period. The end result

computes a rate the District must charge to cover the cost of water. The alternative is to base the rate on one water year at a time which results in wild price swings. As an example, in wetter years the rate could be as low as \$40 per a/f. Conversely, in dry years the District would have to charge as much as \$75 per a/f to recover its costs. The leveling plan results in a rate which keeps the cost more or less the same from one year to the next. The

plan results in some over-collection in wetter years. That money is then used to supplement the water rates in dryer years. The other reason for leveling the rates is to provide a certain element of predictability from one year to the next. In other words, the landowners and water users will know at the start of the year what they can expect for water rates for the entire year, and will have a pretty good idea what it will be the next year.

2006 Rate Set

It is anticipated the total cost of water in 2006 will be around \$8 million dollars. Accordingly, the Board has set the 2006 rates based on the

<u>Winter Rate</u> Jan & Feb	<u>Spring / Fall Rate</u> Feb—May Oct—Nov	<u>Summer Rate</u> June—Sept
\$25	\$40	\$60

chart in the center of the page. These rates will remain in effect until March 2007. Please note: **The**

Board maintains the discretion to change the rates or timing of implementation during the year and will do so if conditions warrant. As an example, the summer rate of \$60 was to go into effect on May 1st, but at their April meeting, the Board deferred implementation of the summer rate until sometime later in May or June. As always, we try to keep the rate as low as possible. Please call me if you have any questions.

WATER SUPPLY

WELCOME THE IDES OF MARCH

In the course of six weeks, from late February to the first part of April, the projected spring and summer snow melt increased by as much as 65% on the local watersheds.

Initially projected at well below average, the repeated series of cold and wet storms has pushed the 2006 water year into the above average category. The spring rains translates into an uninterrupted irrigation season that commenced late January and will continue through August. The water currently in the system is a mix of Friant and Tule River supplies, both of which are being flood released from their respective reservoirs.

Storage Limitation & Impacts

The decision by the Corps of Engineers to limit Lake Success storage to no more than 29,000 acre-feet will impact the District's summer

irrigation supply. In order to keep a reduced lake level, the water must be released now instead of being stored for irrigation delivery this summer. This has a direct impact on the availability and price of the summer water. The Corps has indicated they will allow storage above the 29,000 acre-foot level for flood control purposes. However, for practical purposes, the storage limitation of 29,000 will be in place for the bulk of the summer irrigation run. At the time of printing, there was 50,000 a/f in the lake. A result of the recent storms.

Work continues on the Dam Safety replacement program with construction expected to begin in 2009. Until that work is completed the lake will be held to the lower level. The Corps' decision to restrict storage is based on seismic stability concerns in the event of an earthquake of significant magnitude in the Porterville area.

Dam Safety Update:

The President included \$25 million in his 2007 budget for continued work on the Success Project.

This is the amount asked for by the Corps and pushed for by District representatives during several trips to Washington D.C in 2005.

NEW BOARD SEATED

For the first time in recent memory, the Lower Tule River Irrigation District Board welcomed two new members at the same time.

Following the November elections, Jim Costa and John Roeloffs took their seats on the Board. Costa is a longtime resident of the District, and represents Division 2. Jim and his wife Linda live just outside of Woodville and have 5 grown children. Jim farms a variety of row crops as well as providing custom farming services for other landowners. Jim also serves on the Tule Riparian Board.

John Roeloffs and his wife Marjorie have 5 kids ranging from 11th to 1st grade. John has a dairy and farms a variety of feed related crops and represents Division 5 which includes the west side of the District south of Avenue 144.

The new members join the existing Board of Tony Simonich, Gary Fernandes and Don MacMillan. At their first collective meeting of the new year, the Board elected long time member MacMillan as President of the Board. Simonich was elected Vice-President at the same meeting.

DISTRICT NEWS & NOTES



SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED

The Board of Directors, in conjunction with the Pixley Irrigation District, is offering a \$5,000 scholarship to students pursuing a college degree in the field of agriculture or water resources. The scholarship is available to any resident of Tulare County with preference being given to landowners within the two Districts. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage kids to pursue a career in agriculture. The goal is to provide an opportunity to a student who will then use his or her skills and education to further the cause of irrigated agriculture. The Board felt strongly that agriculture needs to foster the growth and development of well rounded and educated young people who can return to the farms and businesses of the area and work to sustain a viable farming economy.

Anyone interested in the scholarship information may contact the District office, or obtain an application online at www.ltrid.org.

NOTARY POLICY

For almost 30 years, the District has provided notary services free of charge to District landowners for both personal and District related transactions. However, effective January 1st 2006, the District only provides notary services for District related business. The change was precipitated by two issues. First, stricter notary laws placed an increasing liability on the staff with the notary license, and second was a sig-

nificant increase in the request by those outside the District for notary services. The end result was to ask employees to assume personal liability for non-District related signature verification. Unfortunately, the law requires that we provide for either all or none, so the option of keeping the service for just the landowners was not viable.

The District will still provide notary services for forms and/or transactions required by the District. The Board and staff apologize for the inconvenience this loss of service may cause.

IN MEMORIAM JOE GASTALDI

On February 16, 2006, the water and farming community lost an icon when Joe Gastaldi passed away just one day short of his 89th birthday. Joe had been a Pixley Irrigation District Board member since 1972, and served as



President of the Board for more than 14 years. Known for his wisdom and easy going manner, Joe was instrumental in guiding the District through some of the toughest times in its history. Joe is survived by his wife "Vini," along with numerous extended family. In recognition of his more than 30 years of dedicated service, the Pixley Irrigation District Board renamed the shop facility the "Joe Gastaldi Maintenance Facility." A sign has been erected in front of the shop commemorating the honor.

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Working together to meet your water needs now and into our future

RETIRING PRESIDENT HONORED AT RECEPTION

The Lower Tule River Irrigation District, along with friends and family, expressed their appreciation to former Board President Ben Serafin for his 20 years of service to the landowners of the District.

Gathering at a luncheon on March 31st, new Board President Don MacMillan presented Serafin with a Board Resolution and plaque and com-

mended Serafin for his "wisdom, humor and insight" in guiding the District through often difficult and trying times. Serafin also received a plaque and recognition from the



New and Old Board Gather Together at Serafin Luncheon. Back row left to right: Tony Simonich, Gary Fernandes, Jim Costa, John Roeloffs
Front row: Don MacMillan, Ben Serafin, Bob Bowman

Deer Creek & Tule River Authority, thanking him for serving as Board President for 11 years. Serafin had been the only President of the DCTRA Board since its formation in 1994. During that time the Authority has received over \$500,000 in grant funding and has played an important role in the management of local groundwater resources. Serafin also served as a representative on the Tule River Association Board of Directors for more than 17 years.

*New District
Website Coming
in May!*



Work continues on the Phase II of the Westside Intertie project. District crews and equipment battled inclement weather conditions and back ordered pipe for most of the winter to try and get the new canal completed. The pictures below show work being done at the Lateral #2 connection. The project is expected to be operational this summer.



The *Legend* is published by the Lower Tule River Irrigation District. Questions about articles and items appearing in the *Legend* are encouraged. Readers are welcome to submit information they feel should be included. Both may be submitted to Lower Tule River Irrigation District. 559-686-4716