



The Waterfront

El Dorado Irrigation District • March – April 2007

Message from the General Manager

Creative thinking at its best



“Work” was once again the key word as your District held its sixth annual Public Strategic Planning Workshop in February. And once again, creative thinking was the result.

Ane D. Deister We had moments of fun; there’s something about candor and problem solving in a casual environment that brings out the best in all of us. And this year’s delightfully diverse group of stakeholders, which included our customers, elected officials, our colleagues at other water agencies, and EID managers and staff, proved once again that this annual venue for sharing innovative ideas works for everyone.

If this year’s workshop had an overarching theme, it was the nuts and bolts of planning and implementation. We talked about, for example, how being prepared for every possible emergency is essential, but also how it’s important to not “over plan” for changeable realities such as community growth. As we discussed, the District does not want to tie up financial and human resources too far in advance to deal with something that can slow down, speed up, or otherwise change, depending on the economy.

This year was our best-attended workshop yet, and I was pleased that one of our special guests and eager participants in the Board room of the Harry J. Dunlop Customer Service Building was none other than Harry J. Dunlop himself. Harry served EID as General Manager many years ago and with great distinction and leadership. He is a thriving example of EID’s most precious commodity: our people—past, present, and future.

Customers and water professionals fill the Board room at EID’s 2007 Public Strategic Planning Workshop

The sixth annual Public Strategic Planning Workshop held on February 5 turned out to be a congenial forum for the exchange of ideas and comments.

Key among the ideas discussed during the all-day session was the District’s new prioritizing tool for capital improvement projects, which helps EID to plan for the future. “This tool assists in our master-planning studies, what we call our roadmaps, for where facilities will someday be needed and what we can expect them to cost,” said district engineer **David Powell**, EID’s assistant department head (engineering) for Facilities Management. The new system, which the firm Black & Veatch helped EID to develop, includes a host of initiatives with emphasis on new projects and facility upgrades to meet safety and regulatory compliance.

“In some water agencies, Board members are asked to approve projects when things are right on the brink of disaster,” said EID General Manager **Ane Deister**. “Our Board wants a more long-range perspective. And cost efficiency, while crucial, isn’t the only criterion in the staging of projects. We place a high priority on safety and reliability.”

In afternoon breakout sessions, participants kicked around a number of ideas submitted by EID customers. The sessions included discussions on sewer rate issues, water conservation, lifeline rates, annexation in the District’s service area, and the challenges of EID partnering with telecommunications providers for faster access to the Internet.

For a summary of the workshop proceedings, titled “Keeping Promises and Balancing Priorities,” visit the District’s website at www.eid.org or call us at 530-622-4513 and request a copy.



Breakout session on sewer rate issues

EID’s automated meter-reading program—taking the guesswork out of the equation

To increase accuracy and efficient use of labor, minimize the disruption to our customers, and safeguard our employees from protective dogs and hazardous conditions, almost one-fourth of EID’s water meters are now being read by hand-held devices from a distance of up to 500 feet. This is possible because we have converted many existing meters, and are installing all new meters, with special radio-read equipment.

The read distance will increase this year to as much as 2,000 feet in parts of our service area as we switch to laptops in the field for the reads. And we plan to equip an additional 5,000 meters with the radio-read parts before the end of 2007.

In 2006, we concentrated on high-density housing areas and locations where access to meters is extremely difficult during winter weather, leading to bills that were based on educated estimates. Our goal is to take the guesswork out of the equation.

Bass Lake Tanks Kids' Planting Project

The Bass Lake Tanks Kids' Planting Project came to an end around 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 7, as the last group of students from Green Valley Elementary School boarded their bus and waved goodbye. This project, in cooperation with the school and the American River Conservancy (ARC), involved several hundred second, fourth, and fifth grade students who rotated among stations on our Bass Lake tanks' campus. They eagerly participated in an interactive presentation on how EID makes water safe for drinking, led by EID water treatment operator **Jonathan Beall**. EID water-efficiency specialist **Cari DeWolf** shared water facts and quizzed the youngsters on their water knowledge before they joined in a nature hunt that focused on identifying native plants and insects. Some students presented results of previous experiments to EID and ARC staff, and they ended the day's session by planting native grasses and shrubs. "It's been very rewarding to work with everyone involved," said **Chris Word**, EID environmental review specialist and program manager for the project. "It was a pleasure to provide an opportunity for the students to get out in the environment and to help teach them about ecology and where their drinking water comes from."



Clockwise from top: ARC volunteer Bob Pabst helps two attentive students during the planting; EID's Jon Beall gets many responses during his presentation; EID's Chris Word stamps students' booklets as they find items in the nature hunt.

EID employees honored



We know **Rich Wheeler** (top) and **Gene Zangrando** are great assets to EID, but it's always nice to hear someone else confirm it. Rich was named the regional California Water Environmental Association (CWEA) Electrician/Instrumentation Person of the Year for his outstanding contributions during 2006. Gene received the 2006 CWEA Collections System Person of the Year award, the second time he's been honored in this category. He holds a Grade 4 Wastewater Collections Maintenance and Operation certification.

Focus on Water Efficiency

Good news—toilet and water-efficient clothes washer rebates are back!

Rebates up to \$75 are once again available to EID and City of Placerville customers who install new toilets in homes built before 1992.

Now in its fifth year, EID is offering rebates of up to \$125 on select energy star water-efficient clothes washers for EID and City of Placerville customers.

To learn more about these programs, visit www.eid.org or call 530-642-4126.

Another way to save money and water

EID offers a complimentary water survey and plumbing retrofit program that helps you become more water efficient and save money. To request a survey, visit our website at www.eid.org, or call **Tim Heslin** at 530-642-4071.

Sign up now for the **Ultimate Garden Makeover Contest** sponsored by the Regional Water Efficiency Program. Grand prize is one FREE front yard makeover valued at up to \$40,000. For more details, program rules, and guidelines, visit www.rwah2o.org or call 1-888-WTR-TIPS (888-987-8477). To enter, fill out and mail the entry form by May 31, 2007. **SMART GARDEN MAKEOVER CONTEST**

Upcoming Board Meetings

March 12 and 26
April 9 and 30

Visit our website for the 2007 Board meeting calendar.

EID Works

A brief review of 2006



- Inside**
- **Construction** - A look at improved and new infrastructure
 - **Water rights secured** - 41 new rights, 10 new and 1 under right
 - **Governing with vision** - EID Board overhaul outlined and done
 - **Helping pay off** - How irrigation districts saved
 - **Reciprocity 2006** - Progress through program implementation and planning
 - **Costs and sustainability** - Our capital investment program and how it fits the picture for the future

Our latest publication, "EID Works: A brief review of 2006," highlights projects and initiatives at the District from last year.

Visit our website to download a copy.