Snow Survey

Cont'd from Page 1

By March 31, annual precipitation at Bowman Reservoir (elev. 5,650 ft.) had reached 52.06 inches, or 86 percent of average precipitation for the date. The month of March produced 13.01 inches of precipitation, or 125 percent of the March average.

NID Operations Supervisor Sue Sindt said snowpack runoff should fill or nearly fill NID's mountain reservoirs and that foothill reservoirs (Scotts Flat, Rollins and Combie) are already full and spilling.

"We expect to make full deliveries to all of our customers this year, and with the reservoirs nearly full, it should also be a good year for water recreation," she said.

A member of the California Cooperative Snow Survey, NID conducts three official snow surveys each year. Results of the snow surveys are used to predict water availability locally and statewide.

NID snow surveyors Jessica Erickson and Sue Sindt weigh a probe pole filled with snow to determine snowpack water content. NID conducts snow surveys at six mountain locations.

NID Begins Lengthy Relicensing Process

NID has begun a multi-year process to obtain a new federal license for the continued operation of the NID Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Power System.

The NID Board of Directors on Feb. 23 hired Devine Tarbell Associates, Inc. a Sacramento based consulting firm, to help with initial steps in the relicensing process.

The district constructed the Yuba-Bear Project in 1963-66 under a 50-year federal license issued in 1963. The license expires in 2013.

The Yuba-Bear Project is a system of dams, waterways and powerhouses ranging from Jackson Meadows on the northeast to Rollins Reservoir on the southwest.

'Creek Week' Marks Water Awareness Month

May is Water Awareness Month in California and it is being observed in Nevada County through efforts of the Nevada County Resource Conservation District.

In a special project set for May 14, local youths and parents were planning to mark approximately 1000 storm drains in the City of Grass Valley. Special tags will remind people that the drains empty into local creeks and rivers and should not be used for other purposes.

Other stewardship activities, including school programs, were being planned for "Creek Week," May 7-14, said Lesa Osterholm, RCD manager and Bear River Watershed coordinator.

"This has turned into an exciting project", said Osterholm. "Everyone is working together to raise awareness."

For information, call the RCD office at (530) 272-3417.

District Policy Protects the Public Water System

NID has an encroachment policy designed to protect the public water system from excavations, road crossings or other private property modifications that could impede the operation and maintenance of the water system.

Property owners who wish to build near NID canals or pipelines are advised to contact the district first to determine if an encroachment permit is necessary.

The permit procedure is designed to allow landowners full utilization of their private property, while protecting the district's responsibility to operate the water system.

NID strives for quick turnaround on permits but with differing conditions, the time involved can vary.

For information, call the NID Right-of-Way Section at (530) 273-6185. Placer County customers may call toll-free to (800) 222-4102.

Tim West Remembered

The late Tim West will be remembered as good employee and ambassador for NID and friend to many irrigation water customers on NID Route 11 in the North Auburn Area.

Tim, a Water Distribution Operator with NID, died Dec. 21 in San Francisco following a three-month fight against cancer. He was 35.

He was a graduate of Nevada Union HS in Grass Valley, veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and seven-year NID employee.

Awareness Called For

West Nile Virus in Area; Carried by Mosquitoes

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause serious illness or death. It has been detected this year in 19 California counties, including Placer County.

In Nevada County, the virus was detected in birds last year and County Agricultural Commissioner Paul Boch expects it will be found again this spring or early summer.

With a newsletter reaching 24,000 homes and businesses, NID has agreed to help provide public information on the virus. The newsletter reaches many rural areas where ponds and standing water can provide mosquito breeding grounds.

Nevada County Ag Commissioner's Recommendations

Here are some recommendations from the county agricultural commissioner:

- **Protect Yourself.** Eliminate stagnant standing water whenever possible, use mosquito repellent and wear long sleeves and long pants, especially in the evening hours.
- **Organic Mosquito Control.** Organic mosquito control products are available through local farm and garden supply outlets.
- **Mosquito Eating Fish.** People with ponds may wish to check with the Nevada County Ag Commissioner and RCD offices which are planning mosquito fish giveaway programs for this year.
- **Horse Safety.** Horse vaccines, which require lead time, are available through local veterinarians.

• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

Lincoln Studies Move Forward. NID is working with the City of Lincoln to identify a site for a new NID water treatment plant to supply the greater Lincoln area. Staff recommendations on a proposed site along with alternate sites are anticipated this spring. It is estimated that plant construction is three to five years in the future.

New Tank for Deer Creek Park. The NID Board of Directors has approved a project to add a new 1.1-million-gallon treated water storage tank at the Deer Creek Park tank site off Red Dog Road east of Nevada City. The tank will be built at a lower base level than the existing 236,000-gallon tank so that the top elevations of the two tanks will be the same.

Solar Energy System in Auburn. Working with Alternative Power Systems of Grass Valley, NID has installed a solar energy system to supply some of the electrical needs of the North Auburn Water Treatment Plant and Customer Service Office. District officials said the pilot project, if successful, could lead to other NID solar installations.

Water Quality Report. Over the next few months, NID treated water customers will be receiving the annual Consumer Confidence Report. The report shows that during 2004, as in previous years, NID drinking water met or exceeded all state and federal public health standards. Water suppliers are required by law to report on water quality.

Automatic Payment Plan. NID customers may arrange to have water bills paid electronically by their banks. For further information, please contact NID Customer Service.

How to Contact Your Elected Directors

DIVISION I - *Nevada City Area*
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DIVISION II - *Grass Valley-Chicago Park*
John Drew, (530) 272-5257
DIVISION III - *Lake of the Pines-Alta Sierra*
Dr. Scott Miller, Call NID (530) 273-6185, ext. 222
DIVISION IV - *Lincoln-North Auburn*
R. Paul Williams (916) 645-8507
DIVISION V - *Penn Valley-Lake Wildwood*
George Leipzig (530) 432-2492

The NID Board of Directors meets regularly on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, beginning at 9 a.m., at the NID Business Center in Grass Valley. NID board meetings are open to the public.

www.nid.dst.ca.us

New Assistant General Manager
Page 4

Water Rates Go Up in 2005
Page 2

Weed Control With.... Vinegar !
Page 3

NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers of the Nevada Irrigation District

Volume 25 • Number 4 • Winter, 2004/05

District Improves LOP System

More than 5000 people in Lake of the Pines and surrounding areas have a more reliable water supply following a $7 million upgrade of the Lake of the Pines Water Treatment Plant.

NID is putting the final touches on a project that has added a new filtration system and increased the plant's capacity from 3 to 5 million gallons per day. A new 640,000-gallon clearwell storage tank, chemical feed system and sludge drying beds have also been added at the plant.

A new 850,000-gallon storage tank was added to the system two years ago, boosting water system storage to 2.6 million gallons.

LOP Water Treatment Plant

NID has completed a two-year, $7 million makeover of the water treatment plant serving Lake of the Pines and the surrounding community.

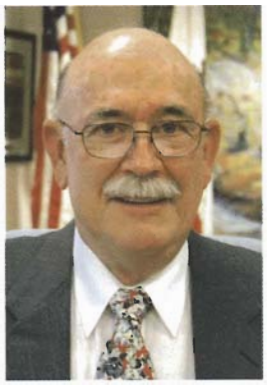
Plant Dates to 1960s

The Lake of the Pines Water Treatment Plant dates to the 1960s when it was built to serve the developing lakeside community. To accommodate growth, it has been expanded and upgraded through the years.

From the plant's earliest days, there had been a problem with sand from the system's filters migrating into the water system. The new filtration system has been designed to abate that problem.

2000 Service Connections

The raw water source for the Lake of the Pines Water Treatment Plant is Combie Reservoir, via the Magnolia III Canal. The plant serves more than 2000 connections and a population of about 5100.



John Drew

Drew Leads Board: Leipzig, Miller Return for New Terms

Two members of the NID Board of Directors have begun new terms following the November general election.

In Division V, Director **George Leipzig** of Lake Wildwood won a fourth four-year term in office. He faced two challengers on the November ballot.

In Division III, Director **Scott Miller, MD**, of south Nevada County, was unopposed in his bid for reelection and has begun his second term on the board.

In its annual reorganization, the board on Dec. 8 elected Division II Director **John Drew**, of Chicago Park, to serve as 2005 board president.

Five-Member Board

Also serving on the five-member board are Division IV Director **R. Paul Williams**, of Lincoln, Placer County, and Division I Director **Nancy Weber**, of Nevada City.

The elected Board of Directors is NID's policy-making body. The board meets in regular session at 9 a.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

Monthly Bills to Arrive in Early 2005

Depending on billing cycles, NID treated water customers will begin receiving monthly water bills during the first quarter of 2005. NID has billed every two months in past years.

The change to the 30-day billing cycle conforms to current practices in the marketplace and will allow customers to equalize their payment schedules. Officials said NID's increased costs for postage and printing would be offset by improved cash flow and a streamlined work flow.

The monthly billing schedule applies to the district's 18,000 treated water users. NID also supplies more than 5000 irrigation water users who will remain on current full amount or three installment payment schedules.

Rate Increases, Use of Reserves Fund $37.2 Million Water Budget

The NID Board of Directors on Nov. 10 approved a 2005 rate schedule that includes water rate increases of 4 to 9.5 percent for most non-commercial NID water users.

District officials said the rate adjustments along with the withdrawal of $5.1 million in reserve funds will be used to balance a Water Division budget of $37.2 million.

The 2005 rate and budget package is part of a comprehensive financial plan aimed at bringing revenues and expenditures into equilibrium. Revenues have not kept pace with increasing costs of providing water service, said General Manager Ron Nelson.

The state budget crisis has had a significant impact on NID's financial planning and is expected to affect the district into 2007, Nelson said. NID anticipates loss of $3.2 million in local property tax revenues in fiscal year 2004/05 and another $3.2 million in 2005/06 because of state revenue shifts.

Under the approved 2005 rate schedule, base rates for most treated water customers will increase from $1 to $6 per month, with larger increases for the largest users. Usage rates will increase between 4 and 18 percent, depending on use.

It was estimated that a typical treated water customer, with a standard 5/8-inch meter and using 18 hcf (hundred cubic feet) of water, would pay an additional $1.74 per month for water service.

Rates for irrigation water were increased by an across-the-board 8 percent.

NID's overall budget of $43,512,926 includes a $37.2 million Water Division budget, a Hydroelectric Division budget of $5.7 million and a Scotts Flat Reservoir recreation budget of $607,500.

6.8% Connection Charge Increase

Developers and new customers connecting to NID treated water supplies will pay 6.8 percent more in 2005, under action taken by the NID Board of Directors.

The total connection fee for a standard 5/8-inch meter is now $5980, up from $5600. The total includes a capacity charge of $5075 and installation charge of $905.

NID Studies New Ways of Weed Control

Add Just a Sprinkle of Vinegar...

NID is always looking for new and better ways to limit weed growth in its canal systems. Its latest test is with acetic acid, or old-fashioned household vinegar.

"It did very well in our first tests; we were very impressed with it," said NID Pest Control Supt. Bruce Early, who over the past four years has conducted alternative weed control experiments with Dr. David Spencer of UC Davis.

Brian Stafford sprays acetic acid (vinegar) along the DS Canal near Nevada City

Early said he is hopeful that use of vinegar, a household product labeled for organic use, can reduce use of weed control herbicides.

400 Miles of Canals

The district operates more than 400 miles of canals and relies mainly on chemical weed control to keep canals free of American Pond Weed, Elodea, Curly Leaf Pond Weed and other common growth.

These weeds have been controlled using a copper compound (Cutrine-Plus) that has produced a 95 percent control rate. Early said the acetic acid tests have produced about a 75 percent control rate.

While copper can be used year-around, acetic acid is limited to the off-season when canals can be dried out and sprayed. Early said the treatment is most effective in dry canal conditions.

Tested at Various Elevations

After testing of acetic acid at elevations of 500 to 1500 feet the year before, the 2004 tests were conducted at 3500 feet on the DS Canal east of Nevada City. Early said results were similar except that it takes longer for weeds to break down at the cooler, higher elevations.

Early said NID has been at the leading edge among irrigation districts in seeking to limit herbicide usage. "Some methods have merit, some don't," he said. "We're always looking for a better way to do our job."

Early Storms Boost Seasonal Rainfall Totals

A wet October produced 212 percent of average precipitation and gave a jump start to the 2004/05 rainfall year. However, a wet start doesn't necessarily mean a wet year.

NID measures precipitation daily at Bowman Reservoir (elev. 5,650 ft.) and uses rainfall data to plan water storage and delivery operations.

After the October storms, November was relatively dry with only 37 percent of normal precipitation. By mid-December, seasonal precipitation stood at 95 percent of average.

Precipitation at Bowman Reservoir stood at 17.39 inches, as of Dec. 13. The seasonal average, measured July 1-June 30, is 68 inches.

In 118 years of records, October, 2004, with 8.5 inches of precipitation, turned out to be the 17th wettest October on record.

"It is hard to say if a wet October is an indicator of the type of year to expect," said NID Operations Supv. Sue Sindt. "Some of the driest and wettest years have had wet Octobers. The mid-70's drought year of 1975 had a wet October (11.37") and ended with a total of only 39.10" (57% average). The month of October, 1982 was also wet (11.98") and that year ended with 102.99 inches (149% average)."

Snow Surveys Will Tell

NID conducts monthly snow surveys February through May to better predict water availability. Customers interested in weather and snow survey data may wish to visit the California Data Exchange website at *www.cdec.water.ca.gov.*

• PERSONNEL NOTES •

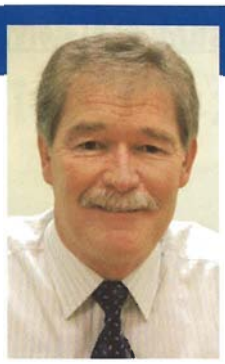
Crough Named Assistant GM

Timothy A. Crough has been appointed as NID's new assistant general manager. He comes to the district from the City of Grass Valley where he served as the city's deputy director of public works for four years.

A registered professional engineer, Crough has a 25-year background in public and private sector engineering and management, including service as general manager of the Tenaja Community Services District and the Murieta County Water District. He and his family reside in Lake of the Pines.

Crough succeeds Asst. General Manager **Ben Barretta**, who retired in December from a 30-year career with the district.

Two additional longtime employees have retired from NID employment. Maintenance Crew Supv. **Ron Skewes** retired Jan. 4 after 33 years with the district. **Bucky Upp**, a Hydroelectric Dept. utility worker, retired Dec. 10 from a 26-year NID career.



TIM CROUGH is NID's new assistant general manager

RETIREES, clockwise from right, Barretta, Upp and Skewes

Automatic Payment Program

Customers are encouraged to take advantage of NID's automatic payment plan for paying water bills. The free service allows electronic transfer of funds to NID from the customer's bank.

Contact NID for an informational brochure and application form. Details also are available at the NID website: *www.nid.dst.ca.us.*

• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

Solar Power in Auburn. NID is moving into the realm of solar energy with the installation of a solar energy system at the North Auburn Water Treatment Plant and customer service office. The system is expected to generate about 15 percent of the site's energy needs. Its cost is about $600,000, half of which is being paid through a self generation incentive grant from PG&E.

Transfer Complete. More than 200 homes in Deer Creek Park east of Nevada City are officially part of NID following the completion in October of a four-year system transfer. The Deer Creek Park water system was originally installed by a private developer and then operated by residents who asked for NID to become their water supplier.

Draft EIR This Spring. NID anticipates that the draft environmental impact report for the Lower Cascade Canal/Banner Cascade Pipeline Project will be reissued this spring. The project, which includes a new pipeline on Banner Mountain, is designed to supply more water to customers in south Nevada County.

NID's New Mailing Address. By request of the Grass Valley Post Office, NID is using a new post office box. The district's mailing address is now Post Office Box 459003, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

State Grant for Recreation Project

New Ramp at Cascade Shores

A major recreation improvement project is under way at the Cascade Shores day use area at Scotts Flat Reservoir. The new facilities are expected to be ready for the 2005 recreation season, weather permitting.

Project contractor Cache Creek Construction of Redding was awarded a $621,900 contact in September to construct a new wider and deeper boat ramp with launching facilities. Parking improvements, a new restroom, picnic area and gate also are included.

The work is being funded through a recreation grant obtained by NID through the California Dept. of Boating and Waterways.

Boat ramp work was planned to begin in fall, a time of year when water levels in the reservoir are lowest.

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Terry Mayfield: 34 Years with NID ...Page 4

Monthly Water Bills in 2005 ...Page 2

Will Winter be Wet or Dry? ...Page 3

NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers of the Nevada Irrigation District

Volume 25 • Number 3 • Fall, 2004

Getting Together

Community Effort Brings Water to Big Oak Valley

August 21, 2004 was a historic day for residents of a five-square-mile section of Big Oak Valley, four miles west of Penn Valley and just south of Highway 20.

On that day, for the first time, irrigation water flowed to more than 100 property owners, culminating a four-year effort to bring water to their community, making their lands more productive and safer against wildland fire.

Working with NID, residents formed the Melody Oaks Mutual Irrigation Company. They assessed themselves an average $7500 to install more than 13 miles of pipeline to carry water a mile and a half

(Please turn to page 2)

Green Acres

NID Water Supt. Warren Hart walks in green pasture with Caroline Burnside and Maxine Harmon of the Melody Oaks Mutual Irrigation Company.

Budget, Rate Hearings This Fall

As this newsletter went to press, NID's 2005 calendar year budget was being prepared by the NID staff and board.

Facing increased costs in many areas, the district is reevaluating programs and planned improvements in an effort to limit financial impacts on ratepayers. It is anticipated the 2005 budget will be balanced through water rate increases, withdrawal of reserve funds and postponement of some capital improvement projects.

District residents interested in the water rate and budget process may visit the NID website, www.nid.dst.ca.us, or call the district office for information on when rate and budget hearings are planned.

Change from Bimonthly

Monthly Billing Begins in 2005

In early 2005, NID will begin to bill metered water customers on a monthly rather than bimonthly basis. Customers will receive 12 water bills per year instead of six.

The change to the 30-day billing cycle conforms more to current practices in the marketplace and will allow customers to equalize their budget and payment schedules.

"We hope that receiving smaller bills on a more regular schedule will be an advantage to our customers," said NID Finance Manager Tess Andrews. "Most of us are accustomed to monthly billings."

Andrews said the district's increased costs for printing and postage would be offset by improved cash flow and a more streamlined work flow. The needs for reminder and late payment notices may also be reduced, she noted.

Irrigation Customers Not Affected

The monthly billing cycle applies to approximately 18,000 metered, treated water users. The district's 5,000-plus seasonal irrigation water users will remain on current full amount or three installment schedules.

Andrews said conversion will be considered later in the year for about 900 customers who use irrigation water year around and pay bimonthly.

— Water for Big Oak Valley —

Continued from page 1

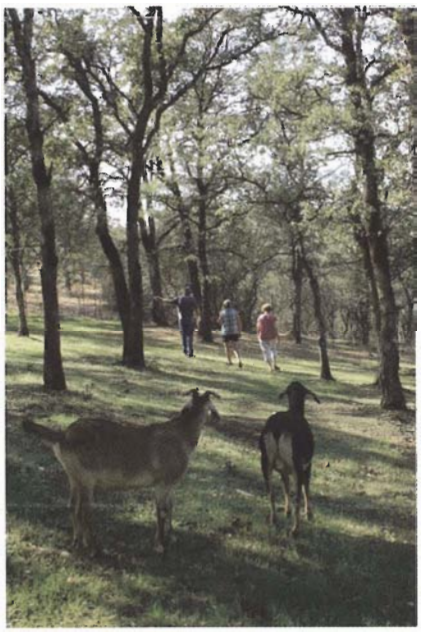
from NID's China Canal and to distribute the water within their neighborhood.

Maxine Harmon, president of the fledgling water company, said residents of the area had relied solely on wells, some adequate, some not. Now, she said, there is a new optimism along Melody Lane.

"Some of us had been through the 49er Fire, so fire safety is very important for us," said Harmon. Residents are talking about a number of agricultural endeavors including gardens, vineyards, orchards and expanded livestock production, she said.

NID Water Supt. Warren Hart said the district worked with the residents for about four years as neighbors worked to gain consensus on the water project and raise the funding needed for its completion.

This year, a temporary pump was used to supply water from the China Canal. By next year, a permanent pump station is expected to be complete, supplying up to 120



miners inches of seasonal irrigation water to Melody Oaks.

"We have a number of people who would like to use their land for agricultural and business purposes as well as residential purposes," said Caroline Burnside, secretary/treasurer of the local water company. "Having a good water supply will help them do that."

The Melody Oaks Mutual Irrigation Company may be reached at P.O. Box 224, Smartville, CA 95977 or *momic@sunset.net.*

Assessment Rate is Down This Year

The NID Board of Directors on Aug. 11 approved a 2004-2005 assessment rate of just under one quarter of one cent per $100 of assessed valuation for lands within the district.

The $0.0023 rate is down 4.2 percent from the 2003-04 rate of $0.0024.

The assessments are collected as part of the property tax in Nevada and Placer counties and are used solely to repay NID's voter-approved debt. The assessments are based on land values only; homes and other improvements are not included.

NID Finance Manager Tess Andrews said the 2004-05 assessments would raise $62,498, the amount needed for next year's debt service. The low-interest state loan is scheduled to paid in full in 2012.

Will Winter be Wet or Dry?

Sierra Rainfall Totals Vary Widely

Precipitation totals in the Northern Sierra can vary greatly from year to year. These variations provide challenges for water resource planners.

NID has 117 years of weather records for Bowman Reservoir (elev. 5650 ft.) and other local weather data going back to 1850.

Wettest Years on Record

1903-04	142.07 inches
1889-90	134.95 inches
1981-82*	127.42 inches
1994-95	125.94 inches

*Wettest year in NID history, since 1921

Driest Years on Record

1887-88	29.40 inches
1976-77	30.80 inches
1986-87	33.91 inches
1948-49	35.96 inches

The most recent really wet year was 1994-95, which brought 184 percent of average of precipitation, beginning a wetter than average cycle that lasted for five years.

For the past five years, we have been in a drier than average pattern, with last year (2003-04) bringing 51.91 inches of precipitation, or 75 percent of average.

Despite the dry pattern, NID water storage remains good, with 166,000 acre-feet of mid-September water storage. This equals 97 percent of the mid-September average and 66 percent of total capacity.

A More Reliable Water Supply

In a project underway this fall, NID is replacing the No. 12 flume on the D-S Canal east of Nevada City with an elevated pipeline. The work is part of an ongoing effort to upgrade and increase the reliability of the water delivery system.

Meter Retrofit Program is Complete

A five-year program to equip all NID residential water meters for remote reading by handheld or vehicle-mounted radio devices is now complete.

The program has included retrofit of existing meters with new registers and transmitters or replacement of older meters with new meters.

Radio-read meter technology allows faster, more accurate meter reading by handheld computer or vehicle computer. Meter readers can do their work without climbing steep banks, entering fenced yards or disturbing customer privacy.

The new technology has allowed the district to add new customers without adding to its meter reading staff. The district has grown to include 18,000 metered customers while employing three meter readers since 1988.

Cold Weather and Your Water Supply

Are your exposed water pipes and faucets insulated against freezing temperatures? NID recommends that customers check and insulate pipes to prevent possible freezing, breakage and costly repairs. Inexpensive pipe wrap is available from local building supply outlets.

Are you planning to be away for an extended period of time during the cold weather season? The district recommends that you turn off your water supply at the customer valve on your side of the water meter. This can help avoid frozen and broken pipes and water damage to your home.

New Boat Ramp, Upgrade at Cascade Shores Day Area

The Cascade Shores day use area at Scotts Flat Reservoir is being upgraded in a recreation project this fall.

The NID Board of Directors in September awarded the $621,900 project contract to Cache Creek Construction, Inc. of Redding, lowest among five bidders on the project.

The work includes a new boat ramp and was planned to take advantage of seasonal low water levels at this time of year. Also included are a new picnic area, new restroom and gate and parking lot betterments. The day use area is closed during the construction work.

The work is being funded through an $804,000 grant obtained by NID through the California Department of Boating and Waterways. The new day use area is planned to open in time for the 2005 recreation season, weather permitting.

• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

Close Heads Water Treatment. Armon W. "Chip" Close III has been appointed as NID Treated Water Superintendent. A 10-year veteran employee, Close moves up from his previous position as Chief Water Plant Operator. His appointment was effective Aug. 9.

Automatic Payment Plan. NID encourages customers to take advantage of the new electronic bill payment plan that allows your bank to pay your water bill. Contact NID for an informational brochure and application form.

Lincoln Water Agreement. The NID Board of Directors on Sept. 22 approved a temporary water supply agreement with the City of Lincoln and Placer County Water Agency. NID boundaries extend to and in some parts within the City of Lincoln and the district is planning a new water treatment plant for the fast-growing area.

NID's New Mailing Address. By request of the Grass Valley Post Office, NID is using a new post office box. The district's mailing address is now Post Office Box 459003, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

Terry Mayfield Retires

Water Operations Manager Terry Mayfield retired Oct. 6, following a 34-year career with NID.

Mayfield joined the district in 1970 as a young Vietnam veteran. He rose through the ranks to head NID's Water Operations Dept., overseeing a team of 40 employees and a $5 million annual budget.

Over the years, he documented much of the district's colorful history and became known as its unofficial historian.

He's Seen in All

"I've been here through the wettest and driest years in NID history, the biggest snowstorm and the worst fire," he said.

An avid outdoorsman, Mayfield lives in Grass Valley with his wife, Susie. They have three children and two grandchildren.

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