



TUOLUMNE UTILITIES DISTRICT

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TUD INITIATES FINAL PHASE OF BIG HILL WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

SONORA, CA: Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD), received a court order in 2000 to take over the Big Hill Water Company, which consisted of two water systems, one of which was a dilapidated water system that was built in the late 1940's. Since TUD has acquired the Big Hill water distribution system it has been making necessary repairs to keep its 200 rural customers with a continued source of water supply.

In a continuing effort to provide reliable, high quality water, TUD Engineers researched grant funding for updating the Big Hill water system without passing exorbitant costs to the residents of Big Hill for those much needed improvements. Ninety two percent of all Big Hill residents fall under the targeted income group of below 80% of the County's median income. The first phase of reconstructing the system began in 2002, when The California Department of Water Resources committed a \$4.2 million dollar grant to fund the Big Hill Water System Infrastructure Replacement project, which included reconstruction of two water systems. \$1 million was also received from the state Department of Health Services, Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant.



Photo: Example of Corrosion of Iron Pipe Prior to TUD Acquiring the Big Hill system.

Tuolumne Utilities District this year is now in the final phase of the construction of the West Big Hill Water Distribution Project. Construction for this phase is being funded by a \$3.9 million dollar grant through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, commonly known as the Economic Stimulus Program. The current water system experiences extreme water loss due to leaks. This final phase will replace approximately 30,000 feet of 4"-8" pipelines and construct a booster pump station which will improve water delivery and overall quality of service of service.

"With a total project cost of \$11 million, of which \$10 million has been received in grant funding over the past 4 to 5 years, this is a huge undertaking for the community", stated TUD General Manager, Pete Kampa. "These grants have saved each of the approximately 14,000 customers of the District over \$3.50 per month for up to 40 years; a savings of \$1,600 for every District customer". "Our engineering team has done an outstanding job in securing 95% grant funding, through four separate state and federal programs, for completion of this important project", adds District Engineer, Tom Scesa. "The remaining 5% of the project cost is funded with a 0% interest loan for 30 years. It is unheard of in the industry to have such a costly project grant funded at 95% and this is an example of the resolve of TUD to provide

reliable, high quality services at the most reasonable cost”, added Scesa. “TUD further saved its customers hundreds of thousands of dollars by completing construction of the new water treatment plant with its own construction crews who completed a top quality work product”, stated Scesa. This federal grant funding is intended to stimulate the local economy through the creation of jobs and reduction in local costs. “In addition to the construction cost savings, completion of this project will also result in over \$100,000 in annual operation and maintenance cost savings”, stated Kampa. Construction for the West Big Hill Water Distribution Project will begin at the end of April 2010 and is expected be completed this fall.

Construction will involve trenching and installing new water pipelines mostly within existing roadways. The District has awarded the project construction contract to Mozingo Construction of Oakdale. Mozingo is familiar with the Big Hill area and is experienced with this type of work. Mozingo was the contractor responsible for replacing the water distribution system in the East Big Hill area in 2007.

Working hours will be normally from 7 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday. Since many of the roads in the project area are narrow, windy, and steep the District is asking residents to be patient and understanding so that the Contractor can progress as quickly as possible. Please be prepared for traffic delays of up to 20 minutes (generally delays will be less.) Roadways will be impacted during construction; however, trenched areas will be re-paved or re-baserocked at the end of the project to match the condition of the road before construction. Additionally, the Contractor will take care to not damage culverts or any other drainage facility. Damage that may occur as a result of construction will be repaired prior to the onset of wet weather.

The Tuolumne Utilities District currently serves over 44,000 Tuolumne County residents. The District currently owns and operates 15 water treatment plants, 71 treated water storage tanks, two wastewater treatment plants, approximately 57 miles of open ditches and 330 miles of treated water pipeline. For more information or questions regarding this project, please contact Lisa Westbrook, Customer Services Supervisor at ext. 501 or Erik Johnson, Associate Engineer at ext. 520.

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