

WATER NEWS

AMADOR WATER AGENCY

www.amadorwa.com



**Quarter Four
2008**

Inside This Issue:

Customer Service Survey	1
New Water Tank for Lone	1
Grant Monies Offset Rates	2
Camanche Improvements Double Capacity	3
Getting Ready for Winter	3
Ask Aqua Annie Is Back!	4

AWA Surveys: Commitment to Customer Satisfaction

The mission of the Amador Water Agency is “To enhance the quality of life in Amador County by producing clean, safe, reliable water and providing sanitary wastewater services. We will accomplish this as a team dedicated to excellent customer service, while at the same time, maintaining appropriate rates and community leadership.” In order to determine if customers agree that the Agency is upholding that commitment, we regularly send out questionnaires to obtain customer feedback about Agency services.

Below is a summary of the recently returned surveys:

- ◇ **Over 91% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with AWA service.**
- ◇ **Over 86% of customers were satisfied with our phone service.**
- ◇ **Over 91% of customers rated our field service as average to very good.**
- ◇ **Up 6% since 2006, 64% of our customers rated our rates as reasonable, compared to gas or electric service companies.**

Customers were also asked to rank water topics of importance. Customers ranked water quality and water reliability the highest. The Amador Water Agency is pleased that recently completed projects, such as the Amador Transmission Pipeline and the new Buckhorn Treatment Plant, address these issues by delivering a significantly higher standard of water quality and reliability for both the Amador Water and CAWP Systems.

AWA Partners With Developer. Results? A New Water Tank for Lone

The Wildflower Tank, a new two-million gallon storage tank and pump station in Lone, became operational in August. AWA crews built a new pump station behind Lone Elementary School, off of Highway 104. The pump station feeds into the huge storage tank and allows for better operational capacity at the water treatment plant. The new tank also has the added benefit of increased fire protection flows and emergency storage for the entire City.

Agency negotiations secured the new storage tank at no cost to existing customers. The Wildflower Tank was constructed and paid for by developers Ryland Homes & JTS Communities, at a cost of about \$2.4 million. The developers, in turn, will receive a credit toward future connection fees. According to AWA’s Financial Services Manager Michael Lee, **“Because the facility was financed entirely by developers, there is no direct cost to current rate-payers and we have immediate use of a much needed storage tank for the lone area.”**



The two-million gallon Wildflower Water Storage Tank comes at no cost to existing customers.

The majority of customers in Lone will see more stable, increased water pressures. However, customers north of Sutter Creek may see a slight pressure drop. Agency crews are adjusting the system to reduce or eliminate pumping on the north side of the creek — saving electricity for all of Lone’s ratepayers.

Continued on from Page 1

A New Water Tank for Lone...

After taking continuous pressure readings, the Agency has found that the heaviest water use in Lone is between the hours of 5:00 and 6:30 a.m. — apparently many customers irrigate their lawns and gardens during this time. If you find that you are not getting the same coverage with your sprinklers, the Agency suggests irrigating earlier or later than this peak usage period. The Agency is continuing to make adjustments to provide the best possible service to the customers of Lone.



The Agency was able to upgrade an existing water main to increase fire flows and water source for Lone.

The Amador Water Agency also partnered with the City of Lone in a Safe Walk to School project along south Lone Street. This project had been stalled because the existing water main was too shallow for the installation of sidewalks. With the Wildflower Tank in place, there was an opportunity to upgrade the system from an aging 4-inch pipe to a new 8-inch pipeline, placed deeper in the ground. The new water main provides improved water distribution for Lone. **This partnership allowed the City to install new sidewalks, and the Agency was able to upgrade the system and increase fire protection flows and emergency storage for the city.**

AWA Success in Securing Funding Keeps Rates Low

For the Amador Water Agency, providing a clean reliable water source while keeping rates affordable go hand in hand. The Agency is dedicated to exploring available financing options to offset rate increases. **The \$3.725 million in grant funding the Agency has secured in the last 3-4 years is certainly an indicator of our success.**

In the last few years, the Agency received a grant award of \$2,360,000 for the Buckhorn Water Treatment Plant and \$148,000 for the La Mel Heights Water Improvement Project from USDA Rural Utility Service. We also received a grant award of \$500,000 for the Amador Water System Transmission Pipeline and \$145,500 to develop an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan from DWR. Recently we secured another \$140,551 in the form of two planning grants for the Gayla Manor Leachfield and the Lake Camanche Wastewater Improvements from the State Water Resources Control Board.

“The Agency will to continue to concentrate on finding outside funding resources so that we can maintain our reliable water service at affordable rates.”

**Michael Lee
Financial Services Manager,**

\$425,000 from the county’s Water Development Fund was used for: Central Amador Water Project (CAWP) water rights at \$85,000; La Mel Heights at \$50,000; Lake Camanche Wastewater at \$250,000; and \$40,000 for the Lower Bear River Reservoir Study. The Agency also applied for and received a commitment of \$3 million in Federal Water Resources Development Act funds for developing a regional wastewater system.

The Agency’s ability to secure close to \$4 million in grant funding over the last several years is considered a huge success. **Agency staff is also currently working on securing another \$3.5 million in funding for upcoming projects** including the Small Diameter Pipeline In Canal Project, Regional Wastewater Recycling, the Gravity Supply Pipeline (GSL), and the Camanche Groundwater Sustainability Study. According to Financial Services Manager Michael Lee, “The Agency will continue to concentrate on finding outside funding resources so that we can maintain our reliable water service at affordable rates.”

Camanche Improvements Double Water Supply



An new well and intertie system provides strong producing wells, reliability and flexibility for the customers of Camanche.

Lake Camanche Village customers are enjoying an increase in water capacity with the recent installation of the Amador Water Agency's Well 14. The recently completed project has allowed the Agency to alternate using Well 9 with the new well — doubling capacity and improving reliability.

Before drilling the new well, the Agency connected two of Lake Camanche Village's independent well systems with a new 6-inch pipeline. The back system supplied by Well 9, was connected to two tanks at Well 12 in the front of Lake Camanche Village. At the time of the final connection of the two wells, or "intertie," Well 12 was not producing enough water.

Well 12's storage tank was down to a dangerously low 3 feet of water — just a foot above the 2-foot high outlet. According to AWA Construction Superintendent Barry Birge, "As soon as we made the connection, we started filling the front tank from the back system. Without the intertie, the front system would have been without water." While the intertie will typically only be used in the summertime, the Agency found that the connection provides two strong producing wells, reliability and flexibility.

Also in Camanche this year, the shingles on water storage tanks 9 and 10 were replaced. In a previous project, the Agency replaced the shingles on tanks 12a, 12b and 8 with 20-year shingles. The project provides that the storage tanks are well-protected from the elements and possible water quality issues.

Continued on Page 4

WINTERIZING YOUR PIPES



Winter will be here soon. Are you prepared? Every year people are caught off guard by freezing weather and are inconvenienced by lack of water or broken water pipes. The Agency suggests the following maintenance to avoid problems:

- ◇ **Wrap and insulate all water lines that are exposed or subject to freezing.** Outside faucets and pipes, including those in unheated garages and crawl spaces, are most vulnerable. Wrap with insulating material and/or electrical heat tape, then cover with plastic and secure with string or wire. Extremely cold weather can freeze even insulated or underground pipes.
- ◇ **Drain and winterize your irrigation system.**
- ◇ **Drain and properly store all your hoses.**
- ◇ **Don't forget your pets.** Make sure their water dish does not freeze — even if it's in the garage.
- ◇ **Don't put antifreeze in your toilet if you are going to be away** from home for an extended period of time. If you have a septic system, you run the risk of causing groundwater contamination.
- ◇ **If your water bill seems unreasonably high, check for a broken service line.**

If you discover a problem, call the Agency Customer Service Department for assistance. It may be worthwhile to install a shut-off valve at your meter. If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding quickly. Remember... the Amador Water Agency is not responsible for water loss or damage caused by water leaks and/or high pressure.

Camanche Improvements Double Water Supply ... Continued

The Amador Water Agency has also been pursuing grant monies for a Groundwater Sustainability Study. The Agency applied for a Local Assistance Grant of \$225,000 from the Department of Water Resources. Although the Agency did not receive the initial grant funding, it is believed that additional funds will be allocated from Proposition 84 once the state budget is passed. Until then the Agency has been using a computer-generated well monitoring system called "SCADA".

"SCADA" allows us to continuously monitor well trends. Any changes to the trends are investigated and corrective action is taken if necessary," says Lance Roberts, the Agency's Distribution Supervisor. The preventative equipment allows the Agency to catch any irregularities that could later become potential problems. This year the preventative measures have proven effective — there have not been any problems with the wells in the Camanche area, even after two years of very low rainfall.



Ask Aqua Annie

What does it mean when the Agency calls for an emergency conservation period?

Although rare, the Amador Water Agency does sometimes call for an emergency conservation period when local water users are asked to conserve. Customers will be notified of such an event by the local media, and by signs posted in the affected area in high traffic zones. Customers can receive more information during the conservation period by calling the Agency at 223-3018.

Emergency conservation periods are put into effect for several different reasons: power outages, constraints on resources, fires, and line breaks. During any of these situations, conservation may be necessary to ensure that the treated water supply is not depleted.

The new Amador Transmission Pipeline now ensures that water is supplied to the Tanner Treatment Plant even during power service interruptions. However, the equipment used to *treat* the raw water is electric-powered so dur-

ing power outages, customers down country may be asked to conserve the treated water supply.

Wildfires may also cause the Agency to ask customers to conserve. If needed, fire crews may use water supply reservoirs like Lake Ta-beaud to fight a fire, as well as fire hydrants located in our systems.

Can local fire crews use water storage tanks as a water source to fight fires?

Chief Jim McCart of the Amador Fire Protection District says that using our district storage tanks upcountry poses several problems. Accessing our tanks is much more difficult for fire protection vehicles compared to the many fire hydrants located along county roads. Also, accessible valves at the tanks could be an invitation to vandalism in remote areas, thus putting the water supply at risk.

Erik Christeson, Supervising Engineer at AWA, notes that pressure at tank sites would be as low as 10 pounds per square inch — the equivalent of fighting a fire with a garden hose. There's also the risk of possible contamination issues that would also make the storage tanks an unacceptable source for fire fighting.