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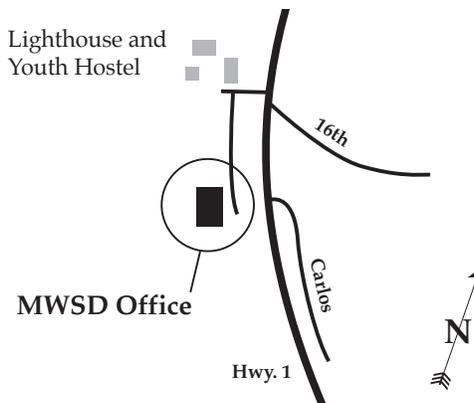
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## MONTARA WATER AND SANITARY DISTRICT

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P.O. Box 370131  
Montara, CA 94037

Board meetings are held the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the District Office at 8888 Cabrillo Highway, Montara, CA



Montara Water & Sanitary District  
P.O. Box 370131, Montara, CA 94037

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Chuck Little

Born and raised in Florida, Chuck was busy with a career running restaurants in 1979 when he decided that his future lay in California.



He began to work for our water system's former owner, Citizen's Utilities in 1984 as a System Operator, and is currently Superintendent of Operations. In this capacity, Chuck has overall responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of the water system. He is a "hands-on" boss, both managing and working with the crew of people that operate and maintain the complicated structure that collects, treats, and delivers our water.

Chuck's favorite aspect of his job is the never-ending variety of issues that need to be addressed in order to keep the water flowing.

He is most proud of the fact that he and his crew have kept the system up and running through a contentious change of ownership, and in the face of a rigorous and ever-growing regulatory structure.

Thanks Chuck!

# The Lens

Issue Number 14 Fall 2006

## Montara Water and Sanitary District

### LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST DISTRICT

Herman I. Kalfen, an attorney, has filed a lawsuit against the District in San Mateo County Superior Court in his own name and an alleged Citizens group to contest the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that the District filed with the California Coastal Commission for the Public Works Plan Phase I (PWP) project. The PWP includes a new well and water storage tank at Alta Vista, a larger tank at the School House site and a water treatment plant at the County of San Mateo Half Moon Bay Airport. The District views the lawsuit as being without merit and premature since the Coastal Commission conducts its own environmental review, using the District's EIR as a resource. Furthermore, the Commission has not yet approved the project. It is uncertain how long the suit will delay the PWP project, but for every month of delay we estimate that the cost of the total project will be increased by about \$12,000 per month. This figure does not include the litigation costs, but only estimated inflation increases in construction and materials costs (4% per year).

### YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

The District forwarded Phase 1 of the District's Public Works Plan to the California Coastal Commission several months ago. This document also provided sufficient information to the Commission to make the necessary environmental review. This project is critical in achieving the District's goal of overcoming the historic serious deficiencies in the community's water supply that we inherited when we acquired the system in 2003. Please contact the Coastal Commission at the following address and urge them to expedite their review and approval of our permit to construct the new Alta Vista Well and additional water storage:

Chris Kern, District Manager  
North Central Coast District Office  
California Coastal Commission  
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219  
(415) 904-5260 or  
(415) 904-5200  
FAX (415) 904-5400  
E-mail: ckern@coastal.ca.gov

Please go to the District's web site at [www.msd.montara.com](http://www.msd.montara.com) to see the full Phase I Public Works Plan.

### G.O. BOND TAX RATE DECLINING

District's General Obligation Bond tax rate for the water system acquisition and improvements has decreased 15% in the last three years:

Bond Authorization—24.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value (AV).

Actual Rate for FY 2004/5: 16.85 cents per \$100 AV.

Actual Rate for FY 2005/6: 15.43 cents per \$100 AV.

Actual Rate for FY 2006/7: 14.33 cents per \$100 AV.

As the assessed valuation of all the properties within the District increases the tax rate for those bonds will continue to decline each year.

### FINISHING THE JOB

The District has applied and received tentative approval from the State of California for a low interest loan (2.5% interest) to pay for the remaining improvements needed to bring the

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- Emergency Preparation
- Emergency Personnel
- Successful Water Alert

- Cellular Antenna
- Seal Cove Study
- Grand Jury Review
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water system up to industry and engineering standards for the existing customers.

These funds will be used for the following projects:

- The design and construction of a new 1 million gallon water tank on the 15-acre Alta Vista site acquired with the water system.
- The replacement of the current sub-standard 100,000 gallon tank at the School House site with a new 200,000 gallon tank that will meet current earthquake standards.
- The construction of a new water treatment plant at the Half Moon Bay Airport as required by California Department of Health.

The total loan would be about \$3.8 million and could be paid over a 20 year period. This will require a rate increase over the next three years. The District will be mailing out information on this project in the next few months once the various funding and rate options are developed.

## MORE WATER SYSTEM PROJECTS COMPLETED

The following is the summary of on-going and recently completed District's projects:

**Wagner Well Rehabilitation Project:** Wagner Well, one of the largest producing wells in the system, has been completely rehabilitated and its production restored to nearly 90 gallons per minute (GPM). The well has been re-drilled in place.

**Public Works Plan Phase I (PWP):** This pivotal document for all of the District's customers has been submitted to the Coastal Commission for review. It contains the following proposed facilities:

- Alta Vista Site: the location of the existing above-ground treated water storage tank; the raw water storage tanks, and the treatment plant; and the future site for the new Alta Vista production well and the 1 million gallon water storage tank.
- School House Site: the location of the existing dilapidated above-ground treated water storage tank and the booster pump station; and the future site of the new 200,000 gallon above-ground treated water storage tank replacing the existing 100,000 gallon tank, which will be demolished.
- Airport Wells Site: the location of the existing three production wells producing over 60 percent of the water for the entire District; and the future location of the Centralized Water Treatment Facility to ensure compliance with DHS' requirements.

**Water Quality Regulations Compliance Projects:** these projects are required by State and Federal regulations:

- The District has successfully completed a pilot test study of the venturi aeration system to address elevated copper levels in the water at some customers' homes. The copper is not actually in the District's water, but reacts with the copper plumbing in the home to produce copper at the tap. DHS endorsed the results and approved using the process. The full-scale implementation is included in the PWP described above which is awaiting the Commission's approval.
- The District has submitted a request to the State to discontinue treatment at its Drake and Wagner Wells due to no detection of MTBE in the water for the last 5 years. This request is currently under review.
- The District has developed and DHS approved a revised water quality monitoring schedule.

**Water Main Replacement Program:** the District has completed replacing nine high-priority leaky water mains; in addition, three Pressure Regulating Stations have been completely refurbished.

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## IRRIGATE YOUR LANDSCAPE AND REDUCE YOUR WATER BILL

**DON'T OVER WATER** – Water that runs off does not help your plants grow. Turn off the sprinkler for a while to let water soak into the ground and only start it again if more water is needed later.

**MAINTAIN YOUR SYSTEM** – Irrigation systems need regular maintenance. Also insure that water does not spread unevenly or onto paved areas. Look for an irrigation contractor certified in system maintenance and auditing to keep your system working efficiently.

**WATER BASED ON THE WEATHER, NOT THE CLOCK** – Use rain and/or soil moisture sensors to prevent your clock-based controller from watering when it is raining or when there is already enough moisture in the soil. Consider using a weather-based irrigation controller that adjusts your irrigation schedule based on your local weather.

**MICRO IRRIGATE** – Consider using a drip (or micro) irrigation system that slowly releases water right at plant roots, where it is needed.

**PICK THE RIGHT PLANTS** – Native plants or species adapted to the local climate need less irrigation because they're suited to the amount of water nature provides.

## EMERGENCY WATER PREPARATION

If you don't have bottled water or treated water from the District, here is what you can do in an emergency:

- Filter murky or colored water through clean cloths or allow it to settle. It is better to both settle and filter.
- Boiling is the surest method to make water safe to drink and kill disease-causing microorganisms like *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium*, which are frequently found in rivers and lakes.
- To improve the flat taste of boiled water, aerate it by pouring it back and forth from one container to another and allow it to stand for a few hours, or add a pinch of salt for each quart or liter of water boiled.
- When boiling is not practical, certain chemicals will kill most harmful or disease-causing organisms. Chlorine (in the form of unscented bleach) and iodine are the two chemicals commonly used to treat water.
- You can use non-scented, non-detergent household chlorine bleach that contains a chlorine compound to disinfect water. Use 1/8 teaspoon (about 8 drops) per gallon of water.
- You can use tincture of iodine to disinfect filtered and settled water. Common household iodine from the medicine chest or first aid kit may be used to disinfect water.

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## HELP DURING EMERGENCIES

We are attempting to develop a list of residents that we can contact during an emergency to help operate the water system. We need State of California certified operators and/or civil engineers who we might contact during an earthquake, avian flu, terrorist attack or other emergency that could assist our small staff during such emergencies. Please call the District office at 728-3545 or e-mail us at [msd@coastside.net](mailto:msd@coastside.net) with your name and contact information if you are interested.

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## THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

On June 22, 2006 we posted a Stage 5 Water Alert and asked you to restrict the use of water while the District renovated one of its principal wells (Wagner Well). The renovation was successfully completed and is restored to full service. .

Thanks for the terrific job everyone did to conserve water during that time!

## VERIZON CELLULAR ANTENNA

District entered into an agreement with Verizon for a cellular antenna on District property adjacent to the existing Sprint monopole. In January 2006 the District signed the agreement and forwarded it to Verizon for processing. This will benefit the community by providing a new cellular service for the area and the District will receive a lease payment of about \$2,000 per month increasing to \$2,250 per month after forty months along with a \$10,000 lump sum payment once the project is approved. The project is currently under review by the County Planning Department.

## SEAL COVE AREA STUDIED

The Board authorized staff to prepare a report and recommendations for a long-term solution in the Seal Cove area that is prone to land slides and sewer and water pipeline breaks and leaks that are difficult and time consuming to fix. A copy of the report is available at the District office for review, but essentially it recommends replacing pipe in the areas most prone to breakage with new more flexible joint pipes and removing the pipe where possible away from these break areas. It also recommends installing six slope inclinometers to monitor active rotation of the existing landslide and to quantify the rate of movement.

## COUNTY GRAND JURY REVIEWS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The County Grand Jury has completed its study of disaster preparedness of special districts in San Mateo County. The report did not identify any deficiencies of the District. The District responded to the Report with the following:

The District is entering into an agreement with the County of San Mateo providing space at our Alta Vista Water Tank for another County radio transmitter in exchange for a no-cost UHF radio base station at the District office providing for emergency communications with County agencies.

The District has entered into an agreement with the operator of the fuel storage tanks at the County Harbor District in Princeton, CA to supply diesel fuel in an emergency for our generators as well as gasoline for our trucks. The Harbor District has about 24,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 12,000 gallons of gasoline at their facility.

All District wells and sewage pump stations have emergency generators for use during an emergency so that we can continue to operate. The District's main office also has an emergency generator.

## CHEVRON ENERGY PROJECT

On September 4, 2003 the Board authorized the District to submit an application to the California Energy Commission to participate in the Energy Partnership Project. This program provided consulting services to local governments to reduce the amount of energy used. Water systems, which use about 20% of the State's energy, can frequently benefit from such a review. The California Energy Commission (CEC) agreed to provide this service to the District.

The Board authorized Chevron Energy Solutions to conduct an energy audit to develop overall strategies to decrease energy costs, take advantage of energy rebates and recommend other improvements that would benefit the District. The final approved projects would make the following improvements:

- Install 40 hp pump and motor, concrete pad and controls for Alta Vista well along with electronic converter and transformer so existing electrical service can be used without expensive upgrade;
- Install underground 1,000 feet of PVC water pipe connecting well with Alta Vista water tank, as well as electrical wires for power and SCADA controls.
- Replace dilapidated Alta Vista Reservoir roof with solar panels on built-up roof system.
- Install variable speed drives on 8 District wells which will improve energy efficiency at the wells by precisely matching the speed of the pumps with the actual required water production.
- Upgrade main backbone of monitoring system (called SCADA) with newer more reliable and less costly-to-maintain components and software since the current system requires expensive specialist using a one-of-a-kind software.
- Refurbish existing building to house emergency and maintenance supplies;
- Replace all District water meters, most of which are over 10 years old and in need of replacement, with automated meter reading system. This full District meter change out will allow for "drive-by" meter reading as well and increased accuracy associated with the new meters. This part of the project was completed in September 2006.

The cost of these improvements will be largely paid for through reduced energy costs and increased revenues from more accurate water meters.

## EXCESSIVE COUNTY RENT FOR USE OF AIRPORT WELLS

The District currently pays the County of San Mateo about \$70,000 per year for the water extracted from the three airport wells which provide about 60% of the District's water supply. The agreement was entered into by the former owners (Citizens Utilities) several years ago. The District has attempted to negotiate a more reasonable price, but the County has refused. The charges have increased over the years from \$40 per acre foot to the current rate of \$382 per acre foot. This charge is unreasonable and excessive. The District uses its own pumps and electricity to pump the water out of the ground and must then apply expensive treatment before the water can be used. We are expecting the County to increase the extraction charge further this year. The District has only a Revocable Encroachment Permit so the County can attempt to evict us at any time, which it has, in fact, threatened to do. As such we are not eligible for State loans or grants for any improvements at the well sites.

## HOW SEWER SERVICE CHARGE RATES ARE CALCULATED

The District uses the wet weather months, November through February, to calculate the water use for purposes of preparing the Sewer Service Charge. The water used during those months are then multiplied by the rate that is adopted by the Board every year. This means that the more water a person uses during those months, the higher their Sewer Service Charge.

The reason these four months are used is because the majority of that water will be put into the drain and treated by the sewer plant in Half Moon Bay. There is generally less water used for outside purposes such as landscape irrigation during those rainy months. The wet weather period upon which you are billed is from the water used in the prior year. This means that the water used from November 2005 through February 2006 will be used to calculate the Sewer Service Charges for the FY2006-2007 tax bill.