

Be Part of the Conversation

As the General Manager for the Nipomo Community Services District ("District"), I recently had an opportunity to present the District's proposed water rate adjustment to the Nipomo Rotary and Nipomo Lions community service clubs. There were many questions and a level of understanding one gets from likeminded individuals committed to service. While no one wanted their rates to increase, attendees engaged in discussions about matters driving cost increases to develop a deeper understanding of the matter. Mostly, people looked for assurances that water would be available when they want it and requested more information on what water challenges to expect in the future.

Challenges do lie ahead for the District's water supply. On September 22, 2017, the first day of fall, it snowed in the Sierras! Does this mean we will have a wet winter? There is still tension in many minds over weather conditions here on the Central Coast. 12 months ago most wondered if we'd ever see a "normal" winter season again. While the drought has eased, for those who are still unable to build a home because they can't get water service, the drought continues.

The optics of the situation seems confusing. Drive down Nipomo's main drag and you see new homes and businesses being built. Santa Maria has a massive new shopping mecca and large housing developments are springing up all over town. In the City of San Luis Obispo there is a ground-breaking ceremony for 172 new homes announced in the local paper. How does all this growth get approved during a water shortage?

Sure, we all know that complaining about these problems won't solve them, but what else can we do? Maybe a certain level of complaining leads to a higher level of conversation and just maybe that could lead to action supported by a better understanding of the problems we face. Building consensus is not easy, but it is the way we can advance to solutions.

The District's Board is a local example of committed individuals who reflect the diverse prospective and views found in Nipomo. They understand the challenge; find a way to meet the needs of the utility systems so the utility systems can meet the needs of customers. They take action in response to diminishing water supplies. They explain to a confused community how growth and development factor into the District's overarching responsibilities and why utility costs must be adjusted to maintain expected services. They have difficult conversations with their community because they recognize it is essential to address issues rather than kick them down the road for some future generation.

The District's Board, staff, and consumers all play a role in supporting the underlying infrastructure necessary for Nipomo to sustain a healthy place for a thriving community. Consider this a call to action. As a consumer you can stay informed through our District website and add your voice to the conversations on rates, development, conservation and other items. Developing an understanding of these issues is not the same as liking them. Ask questions. My new found friends at the Rotary and Lions service clubs did. Your questions desire answers too.

Until next time...

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The mission of the Nipomo Community Services District is to provide its customers with reliable, quality, and cost-effective services now and in the future.