

Manager's Column

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Thank you for another year!

The Nipomo Community Services District ("NCSD") Board Members and staff want to recognize and congratulate the community for successfully meeting the challenges brought on by the extended drought conditions we are all living through. Water issues remained a top concern on the Nipomo Mesa in 2017. Much of the State has seen measurable relief brought on by last winter's rain, but the central coast continues to grapple with low groundwater levels. Groundwater is the Nipomo Mesa's principle source of water supply.

Disappointing groundwater levels measured in the Spring of 2017 kept the NCSD from fully providing for the community's water needs. As a result, a Stage IV water shortage condition was kept in place and NCSD has continued to encourage water conservation. Also, NCSD issued its last new water service in May 2015 - more than two and a half years ago. To those who are waiting for a new water service connection from NCSD, we share your concerns and, like you, NCSD looks for groundwater levels to improve in the upcoming year to remedy the situation. The inability of NCSD to provide additional water creates an imbalance in our neighborhoods and stifles the business community. It is clear that more water needs to be available during dry periods. NCSD is working to build infrastructure to meet this need in cooperation with many partners.

2017 saw the completion of the Joshua Road Pump Station Reservoir, a major piece of infrastructure of the Nipomo Supplemental Water Project ("NSWP"). The NSWP is a network of pumps and pipes connecting the City of Santa Maria with the three major water providers on the Nipomo Mesa - NCSD, Golden State Water Company and Woodlands Mutual Water Company. The total budget for the NSWP is \$32 million dollars and is \$6 million dollars away from being complete. The remaining work was intended to be built years from now as funding is collected over time and set aside. If the winter rains fail us, the Nipomo community will be more reliant on imported water. Efforts are ongoing in the search for possible opportunities to accelerate completion of the NSWP.

Looking ahead, 2018 may be the year that NCSD harnesses the power of the sun to power the community's water and wastewater enterprises. It takes hundreds of thousands of dollars of purchased energy to power water and sewer operations and the District is always looking for ways to cut costs. NCSD is deep into an energy study to see if the time is right for moving into alternatives like solar power. We'll know early in the year if the prospect of reducing our carbon footprint will correlate with reduced energy costs. If all goes well, NCSD could have solar facilities installed at the Southland Wastewater Treatment Plant by next Christmas. What a present to the community that would be.

From all of us at the Nipomo Community Services District to all who have helped make 2017 a memorable and successful year on the Nipomo Mesa, thank you for your support. As we look forward to 2018, we hold onto the hope for a bright future filled with opportunities and fulfilled promises. NCSD's team of professionals will continue to improve service offerings to enrich the lives of our valued customers. By investing in the infrastructure needed for uninterrupted water and sewer services and by improving communication lines with service-minded people in surrounding agencies who share common challenges, NCSD is positioned to meet customer's needs now and well into the future.

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.