

Pipeline

A quarterly newsletter published by the Rancho Murieta Community Services District

Response to Customer Survey

by Ed Crouse

Responses to the Customer Satisfaction Survey mailed to residents this summer showed a high approval level of services provided by the District. Some of the survey questions generated comments, which were passed along to the District's department heads. Working with the Board of Directors, staff members have evaluated procedures and operations and the District is in the process of implementing some operational changes.

Security. Residents gave high marks to the overall quality of service provided by the District's Security department: 66% of respondents rated service as excellent, and another 30% as good.

Some people questioned why emergency calls to the North Gate were transferred to the South Gate for response. Chief Noller explains that the South Gate has a dispatch facility and the capability to record distress calls. Recording enables security to go back and check calls if there is a discrepancy in the address or for other reasons. The call transfer procedure has been changed to improve service. Previously, those who called the North Gate were asked to redial the South Gate. Now, calls are automatically transferred to the South Gate, resulting in an immediate response.

A few residents who live on cul-de-sacs commented that they seldom see a patrol car. Noller reports that routine police department patrols only cover

cul-de-sacs if a problem has been reported on those streets. However, Security will expand its patrol of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets.

Water. Overall, water quality and taste were rated highly: 38% of residents rated water quality as excellent; 46% rated it as good, while 16% rated it as poor, indicating some concern regarding the taste of their water. The District's efforts to address these concerns and improve the quality and taste of the community's water are discussed in an article by Mick Berklich on page 3.

Quite a few residents commented on odors from the wastewater facility. Mick Berklich and his crew have mapped the areas where concerns were reported and will conduct a targeted survey to those areas to attempt to identify the source of the odors. Some of the problem areas are upwind of the wastewater facilities, so the odors may be from nearby agriculture or the equine center. If residents notice an odor, they are asked to call the District immediately, so a crew can go out to investigate. Once the source of odor is

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On Guard Against Terrorism

by Ed Crouse

In the wake of the terrible events of September 11th, the District has tightened security measures in a number of ways. Since the first security measure is not to talk about security measures, this report will not detail the entire range of our response. But a few precautions and general measures can be outlined.

District personnel have had extensive meetings on the subject of heightened security, and have attended seminars and teleconferences sponsored by the American Public Works Association, American Water Works Association, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Consultants from Sandia National Laboratories have provided briefings on security measures, current

trends, future technologies and vulnerability analysis methodology. Rancho Murieta benefits from its relative size and isolation from other facilities, and the community has its own security system. For those reasons, the District's long-term concern is not necessarily with international terrorists, but with copycat type incidents.

All employees have a heightened sense of security and are looking for anything out of the normal. Gate officers are more inquisitive and more closely scrutinize people who they do not recognize as community residents.

Chief Jim Noller has stepped up patrols at the Rancho Murieta Airport. The District is working with the airport to implement the new security plan

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Customer Survey

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identified, the District will take steps to correct any problems that originate at any of our facilities.

Administration. One person questioned the District's billing date, which is the 25th of the month. Greg Hall, Director of Administrative Services, explains that the date was determined many years ago because people on fixed incomes who receive Social Security checks at the first of the month want to have their bill in hand for payment at that time.

Although only 10 percent of the customers use the District's credit card and electronic funds transfer payment options, those options will continue to be offered. One customer asked that the billing statement show the actual payment date of the electronic funds transfer. The EFT always occurs on the 15th of the month, which is explained when people sign up for the payment option. If the 15th falls on a weekend, the EFT posts on the following Monday.

Another customer questioned District policy on late charges and delinquency notices. The District has a graduated system for announcing late charges. First, the District bills in arrears, for services already provided. If customers miss a payment, the bill will show a previous balance. About two weeks later, the District mails a letter reminding the customer that the bill is still outstanding. Five days later, another letter goes out, giving notice that water service will be discontinued if payment is not received within ten days. At the same time, a tag is posted on the customer's door asking for payment. If a renter is living at the house, the renter may not get the letters, since the letters and the bills go to the owner. One day before the water is turned off, another

door tag is posted giving final notice. Once the water is turned off, the customer has to pay the entire amount of the bill—the delinquent amount and the current charges—plus a \$75 fee to turn the water back on. The District shuts off water to one to two customers a month, which is a low rate, considering that the District has around 2,100 water customers.

District staff received excellent ratings on the courtesy of the telephone service. The District's web site received high marks, with 32% of respondents describing it as excellent, and 49% as good. The web site is not designed to be dynamic, but to provide thorough information on the District, especially for new people moving into the area. To improve the site's usefulness, some forms required to obtain District services can now be downloaded from the site. Board meeting notices and agendas also are posted on the site.

In addition to appearing on the Internet, Board meeting notices are posted 72 hours in advance at several places in the community, including the District office, Rancho Murieta Country Club, Murieta Plaza Foods, and RMA. The Board meeting notice also is shown on the billing statement every month and the informational materials inserted into every bill contain highlights of the previous Board meeting, as well as the date for the next Board meeting.

Groundwater Monitoring

by Mick Berklich

To meet the wastewater discharge requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the District recently installed three groundwater-monitoring wells and is utilizing two existing observation wells. One is

located up gradient from the District's wastewater facility, and the others measure groundwater downstream from the facility. The wells will be monitored to see if the wastewater treatment plant is having any affect on groundwater quality.

The wells will be checked quarterly to determine if there are any impacts to the groundwater content of pH, total dissolved solids, TKN and nitrates, ammonia, coliform, boron, chloride, iron, manganese, sodium, zinc, phenol, formaldehyde, and trihalomethane. Water elevations in the groundwater table also will be monitored.

Power Watch

by Jim Noller

While the state's energy situation appears to be improved from last winter, there remains the possibility of power outages. To be prepared, residents should keep some extra food on hand, along with flashlights and a radio that runs on batteries. If the power does go out, keep the freezer and refrigerator closed for as long as possible to conserve the existing cool temperature.

Since the water distribution system is gravity fed, a loss of power does not mean a loss of water pressure. But without electricity, your water heater will not be able to reheat additional water, so hot water should be used sparingly until the power goes on again.

Garage door openers also stop working when the power is out and some people panic when that happens. Remember that emergency pull straps are attached to the electric door opener. During a power outage, by pulling on the straps, you can manually open the garage door.

DID YOU KNOW?

Liquid lighter fluid stored too close to the fireplace can start a fire you don't want. Be sure to keep lighter fluid away from open flame.

Terrorism

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mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Added precautions are being taken at the water facilities, which continue to be the District's top priority. Security patrols are more frequent and patrol procedures are being varied so as not to set a pattern. The District's mail-handling procedures were altered following the anthrax incidents on the East Coast. The United States Post Office sent some information on procedures and the District is following those suggestions.

Chief Noller reports that there has been no cause for alarm within the community. However, the District will continue to be on heightened alert for the safety of all residents.

Community Map

by Ed Crouse

The map of Rancho Murieta enclosed with this issue of *Pipeline* is the first comprehensive map of the community ever produced. The new map shows local landmarks and encompasses the entire community, including the development areas north and south of the Cosumnes River. The map was produced at the suggestion of the Board's Communications Committee. We hope you like it!

Wet Weather Safety

by Jim Noller

Rain can cause temporary flood conditions on roadways around the community. Although flooding on Highway 16 at Sloughouse has been eliminated by recent improvements to the Jackson Highway, Scott Road always becomes inundated during a

substantial rainstorm.

The Rancho Murieta telephone book contains an emergency section that provides maps of different roads into and out of the community. When possible flood conditions prevail, consult the map for alternative routes. The most current information on which roads are closed can be obtained by calling CalTrans at 1(800) 427-7623.

Improving Water Quality

by Mick Berklich

Once an adequate snow pack is assured, District personnel will begin a system-wide flushing of the entire water distribution system. In the past, problem areas have received spot flushing, but this will be the first time that the entire system is cleaned out. This process is expected to improve water quality by removing sediment that has built up in the system.

The flushing process will start at the water plant. Water will be forced through the system at high velocity to clear sediment out of the pipes. Residents can expect to see most of the District's water operators and utility workers involved in the process. Precautions will be taken not to disturb residential landscapes around fire hydrants, which will be opened during the flushing process.

You will receive a notice from the District when your area is scheduled to be cleaned. While your area is being flushed, you should avoid using water to prevent turbid water from being drawn into your pipes. After the area is flushed, you should run your water to clear out any turbid water that may have entered your pipes. If you avoid using water while the District is working in your area, you are less likely to draw turbid water in.

While residents can expect to see water running in the gutters, that water is not being wasted. Much of the flushing water will flow into Laguna Joaquin and be used by RMA for irrigation.

Other steps are being taken to improve the taste of our water. The granular activated carbon in the filters at the water plants will be tested and replaced, if needed. This material is similar to an aquarium activated carbon filter and is used to absorb organic tastes and odors from the water.

Last fall, the District lowered the level of Lake Chesbro by two feet and organic matter such as tules and weeds were removed from the dam. That process will be ongoing next summer, occurring at different parts of the lake, to help improve water quality.

District Anniversary

by Camille Tavlian

The year 2002 marks the 20th anniversary of the Community Services District. A gala event to celebrate the occasion will be scheduled in the early summer.

In 1982, the Local Agency Formation Commission authorized a feasibility study to determine whether the then-new community of Rancho Murieta would support a Community Services District to provide municipal services. The study concluded that the CSD would be the best way to provide community services. In June 1982, after residents petitioned the county and public hearings were held, voters approved the formation of the Rancho Murieta Community Services District and elected five members to the Board of Directors. If you are interested in volunteering your ideas and time for this event, please call the District.

FIRE SAFETY:

For fire safety, have a chimney sweep routinely clean your fireplace. Good fireplace maintenance reduces the chance of chimney fires or excess smoke flowing back into your home.

Stockpiling Water

by Mick Berklich

A word of caution to people who may be storing water as a precaution against potential terrorism or for other emergencies: bottled water is not necessarily free of bacteria and containers used to store tap water may not be sterile. For personal safety, use a water filter system similar to one for backpacking, and filter stored water before drinking it. Just because water is in a bottle or bought at a store doesn't mean it's safe. You don't know where the water comes from or how it was handled, so take precautions if you are using stockpiled water.

	Oct. - Nov. 2001	Oct. - Nov. 2000	Total 2000
Grand Theft	2	2	7
Petty Theft	11	14	39
Robbery	0	0	1
Vandalism	31	12	116
Trespass	20	39	347
<i>RMA Rule Violations</i>			
Speeding	39	32	216
Stop Sign	8	19	347
Street/Driveway Parking	33	63	599
North Gate Passes	26,775	18,268	129,084
South Gate Passes	6,314	4,758	27,375

RMCS D
Board Members:

James Lensch,
President

Don Cravens,
Vice President

Mary Brennan

Wayne Kuntz

Bill White

Rancho Murieta Community Services District

Phone: 354-3700 Fax: 354-2082

www.ranchohurietacsd.com

The Community Services District, your local government, provides water, sewer, drainage, flood control, and security services. If you have any questions about the services, staff members will be available to assist you.

- Ed Crouse General Manager/District Engineer .. ecrouse@ranchohurietacsd.com
- Greg Hall Director of Administrative Services . ghall@ranchohurietacsd.com
- Mick Berklich Director of Field Operations mberklich@ranchohurietacsd.com
- Jim Noller Chief of Security jnoller@ranchohurietacsd.com
- Camille Tavlian Executive Asst./District Secretary ctavlian@ranchohurietacsd.com

The District is governed by a five person Board of Directors elected by registered voters at Rancho Murieta. Monthly board meetings are on the third Wednesday of every month at 5:00 pm at the District office. All meetings are open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend. The agenda for the meeting is available at the District office.

RANCHO MURIETA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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