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Rancho California Water District incumbents lead voting

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10:00 PM PDT on Tuesday, August 25, 2009

By AARON BURGIN
The Press-Enterprise

With most votes in, it appears four Rancho California Water District incumbents will return to their posts.

John Hoagland, William Plummer and Ben Drake each garnered more than 20 percent of the 27,263 votes cast. Hoagland received 5,697 votes, Plummer received 5,521 and Drake received 5,490 votes.

Stephen Corona, with 5,298, or 19.43 percent of the votes, led challenger Edward "Bob" Lemons, a retired district employee, by 41 total votes.

Officials from the Riverside County registrar of voters said they still must count ballots received today in the mail but outstanding votes likely would not change Tuesday's results.

The district of 120,000 customers in Temecula, parts of Murrieta and unincorporated portions of southwest Riverside County faces a crucial period.

It is struggling with a prolonged water shortage that has affected all of Southern California and forced water-use restrictions and rate increases by its major water supplier, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Lemons had run on a platform of change, including a pledge to push to reduce the board of directors from seven to five.

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