Search PE.com Search WEB SEARCH by YAHOO!

Comments 0| Recommend 0

Elsinore Valley Water District postpones $42 million in projects

Download story podcast

10:00 PM PDT on Thursday, September 10, 2009

By AARON BURGIN
The Press-Enterprise

The Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District has indefinitely postponed $41.9 million in projects that would deliver water to and sewage from homes that don't yet exist.

The standstill in home construction delayed the need for the projects, which represented more than one-third of the water district's $110 million building campaign to modernize and expand the district's infrastructure, including miles of recycled-water pipelines and new groundwater-treatment plants that would reduce the district's dependence on imported water.

The five projects being shelved include a $23 million station that would lift sewage to higher pipelines so that gravity could pull it to the district's main treatment facility, as well as several pipelines that would deliver water to homes in the Alberhill Ranch community in north Lake Elsinore.

More than 1,500 homes were slated for the development's first phase, but fewer than 300 have been built.

"When we started the capital improvement campaign, no one could have foreseen this steep of a downturn," district spokesman Greg Morrison said. "These projects were all development driven, and right now, there is no development."

The capital improvement campaign is being paid for by certificates of participation -- bonds that are paid back over a three-year period through fees paid by developers, property owners and homeowners. If the district didn't delay the projects, it would not be able to make the bond payments because there would be no homes or development on which to assess fees.

"We wouldn't have been able to make the timeline," said Paul Carver, the district's engineering director.

District officials said the district benefits in the meantime because it is not carrying as hefty a bond debt as it would have otherwise.

"This will keep us financially stable, so that when development does resume we're able to get those projects online," Morrison said.

The district has done about $10 million worth of projects thus far, but is about to start a $54 million project to replace its arterial sewer line, the Lakeshore trunk sewer line; and a $3 million project to install recycled-water pipelines throughout Wildomar.

Reach Aaron Burgin at 951-375-3733 or aburgin@PE.com

Projects shelved

Lakeshore Regional Sewer Lift Station	$23 million
Alberhill Ranch Water Transmission Pipeline Phase 1	$9.3 million
Alberhill Ranch Water Transmission Pipeline Phase 2	$1.4 million
Temescal Valley Water Pipeline Pump Station	$6 million
Baker Street Water Transmission Pipeline	$2.2 million

Source: Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District