

Opinion

CLWA prioritizes for 2009



R.J. Kelly

As proud as we are of our successes in meeting a variety of challenges in 2008, we at the Castaic Lake Water Agency are equally determined and confident about 2009, despite a daunting set of continuing challenges and some new issues we'll need to confront.

It's no secret the entire state of California must answer some difficult questions when it comes to planning a secure, reliable water supply in the face of aging state infrastructure, climate change, court rulings and environmental issues.

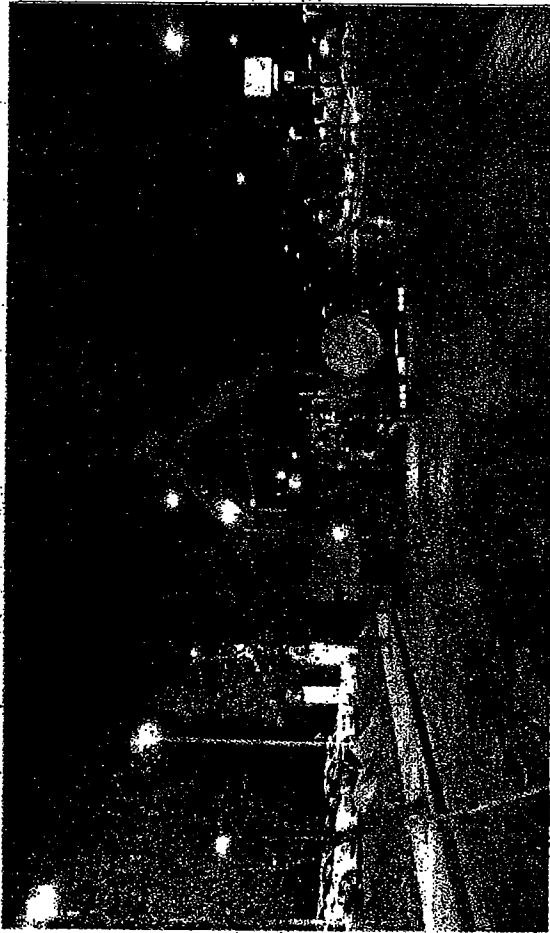
In 2009, we will join water agencies throughout the state in seeking responsible, cost-effective answers to these important questions.

Yet we also view 2009 as an exciting time when it comes to water in the Santa Clarita Valley as we embark upon some important facility construction projects and complete a highly anticipated construction project that will remove perchlorate from one of our groundwater aquifers.

Here's a quick look at these and some of CLWA's other top priorities for the coming year:

Rio Vista expansion: The designs we completed in 2008 will be put to use as we seek construction bids for the expansion of the Rio Vista Water Treatment Plant. While the economic climate is difficult for many organizations, one "upside" is we are putting this project out to bid at a time when the bidding climate is extremely favorable.

The 2010 water plan: Later this



Crews work on trenching and laying the pipeline for the Perchlorate Project at night to minimize inconvenience of traffic detours during more heavily traveled times.

ter retailers purchasing recycled water from CLWA and distributing it to end users. This expansion will add two retailers, the CLWA Santa Clarita Water Division and Newhall County Water District.

This phase will provide recycled water for irrigation at Central Park and other areas near the Sanitation District wastewater treatment plant in Saugus.

Delta, Delta, Delta: In the coming year, we plan to be involved in the implementation of the governor's Delta Vision, the first phase of which involves the state's planning and environmental process for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to address environmental and water conveyance issues.

We are providing financial and technical support to the effort to solve the myriad issues related to the Delta, and we look forward to a solution that will not only earn the support of CLWA, but also other water agencies and Californians in general.

Whatever the solution is for the Delta issues, it will have far-reaching impacts on the California economy and environment.

As we undertake all of these efforts and more, we welcome your questions, comments and suggestions, and we encourage you to visit us at www.clwa.org, where you'll find a great deal of information about your water.

As you can see, we have plenty to keep us busy this year at CLWA. Some of these challenges are difficult ones — and have broader implications beyond our valley — but we're excited about our prospects for success and the anticipated satisfaction of continuing to meet the needs of our community.

R.J. Kelly is president of the Castaic Lake Water Agency Board of Directors. His column reflects the agency's views and not necessarily those of The Signal.

We may want rain, but we won't actually dance. Seriously, though, at CLWA we will continue to carefully monitor the drought and respond accordingly.

If we have a third year of drought, we are still looking OK in terms of supply for this year, but for the first time we may have to withdraw some of the "banked" water we have been storing for dry years. That, of course, is what the banked water is for — but the fact that we may have to tap into it for the first time would be telling indeed.

Recycling program expansion: Recycling is a rather new part of the SCV water supply portfolio, and we are ready to embark upon design and construction of the second phase of this long-term effort.

Currently, Valencia Water Co. is the only one of the four local wa-

ter to the former Whittaker-Bermite munitions manufacturing plant.

Just as important, pumping and treating of water from these two wells will prevent migration of the contaminant plume in our groundwater to other wells in the valley.

Look for the system that will "pump and treat" the contaminated groundwater to be operational later this spring or early this summer.

Stiff defending your water: As two lawsuits regarding two water transfers between CLWA and other water agencies proceed to the appellate courts, we'll continue to vigorously defend your water supply.

We're confident the appellate courts in both cases will echo the sentiments of the trial courts and uphold these transfers as both legally and environmentally sound.

Doing a rain dance: Just kidding.

year, we and the local retailers will start preparing the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan, a long-term projection of water demand and supplies in the Santa Clarita Valley that must be submitted to the state by December 2010.

We'll take into account the current water management plan, how the recent Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta court rulings impact long-term State Water Project supply availability, updated demand projections, climate change impacts on our water supplies, any changes in local water supply availability and a variety of other technical factors.

Perchlorate cleanup on line: We're nearing completion of construction of the treatment plant and pipelines that will enable us to restore two wells to service that were closed due to the perchlorate contamination