



# BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

April 2012

[www.basslakeaction.org](http://www.basslakeaction.org)


## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES BILLBOARD ALONG HIGHWAY 50

Though the Planning Commission rejected requests to erect three billboards along Highway 50 in the Cameron Park-Shingle Springs area, The Board of Supervisors has allowed one of the signs to go up, though with conditions.

John David Pereira of Cameron Park applied for special use permits last year to erect three billboard-style signs on three different parcels of land in Shingle Springs and Cameron Park.

The county's Development Services Department originally recommended conditional approval of the three projects and sent them to the Planning Commission in February. The Planning Commission, in a unanimous vote, denied the applications for all three special use permits. Under county law, decisions by the Planning Commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

The appeals on two of the billboards, one on Mother Lode Drive in Shingle Springs and one on Coach Lane in Cameron Park, were unanimously denied by the supervisors.

However, a two-sided billboard slated for Sunset Lane in Shingle Springs was approved after modifications were prescribed by the supervisors. The sign, clearly visible from east- and west-bound Highway 50, was proposed to be 14 feet high and 48 feet wide and sit atop a pole for a total of 50

feet in height. The appellants argued that the sign would not block nor impair the view from the highway eastward toward the Crystal Range of mountains. The Planning Commission had held that it would impact a "scenic vista."

After much discussion, the supervisors voted unanimously to uphold the appeal conceptually, with the provision that the sign be reduced to 480 square feet instead of the 672 requested in the initial application.

The permit process is designed to determine whether a project like erecting a sign or billboard may or may not be appropriate with respect to its size, the neighborhood, style of construction materials and other such consideration. The county ordinance notes that "prior to the issuance of a special use permit for off-premises signs, the zoning administrator shall consider the location, size and display of the sign for compliance with the policies of the General Plan Land-Use Element."

In addition to a lack of specific standards for off-premises signs, the county's General Plan is rather vague on what constitutes a "scenic vista or scenic corridor," but notes the following considerations related to scenic vistas, including such things as a "mapped inventory of sensitive views and viewsheds within the entire county; limitations on incompatible land uses; identification of foreground and background; long distance viewsheds within the built environment; and grading and earth moving standards for the foreground area."

As a result of the uproar which surrounded several requests for digital animated signs in El Dorado Hills last year, residents at that time were promised that a specific county sign ordinance would soon be developed, with citizens' input, in the near future. It remains to be seen whether a new county sign ordinance will be forthcoming. ~



## EID RAISES RATES, WATCHDOGS CRY FOUL

At a public hearing held in the evening of March 26, 2012, the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) Board of Directors adopted a resolution approving their announced four-year rate plan for water, wastewater, and recycled water customers that was detailed in the Proposition 218 notice that was earlier sent to customers. The first rate changes will be effective April 1, 2012, with the exception of the Recreational Turf and Domestic Irrigation changes, which go into effect on January 1, 2013.

The EID last year completed a comprehensive cost-of-service study to ensure appropriate changes and differences in charges among water, wastewater, and recycled water rate classifications. The EID retained an expert consultant and formed a cost-of-service committee consisting of five community volunteers and five District staff to undertake the study. The final cost-of-service rate study report showed that changes and increases in water, wastewater, and recycled water charges are needed in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 to meet financial requirements, including debt service coverage, ensure rate equity, and comply with Proposition 218.

According to EID, they have taken a number of steps to control costs and increase non-rate revenues since the economic downturn began in 2008. In addition to other cost-cutting measures, EID says the operat-

*(continued on page 2)*

## EID RATES *(continued)*

ing budget has been reduced by 8 percent, the staff cut by 30 percent, and negotiated wage and benefit concessions have resulted in wage freezes, furlough days, and the implementation of a two-tier pension plan.

Fix EID, a local El Dorado Hills watchdog group, disputes the EID's claims of thrift. On their website, [FixEID.org](http://FixEID.org), they say that: "In December 2010, EID announced a 'flat' budget totaling \$42.7 million had been passed for 2011 operations. Yet, 2010 actual spending was \$39.1 million and included \$0.4 million fewer credits. So the 'flat' 2011 budget reported on EID's website and in the Press was really a \$4.1 million increased gross spending budget... a 10.6% 'de facto' spending increase... hardly 'flat', and certainly 'tone deaf' in the face of painful budget slashing by our County, State, and Federal governments. So what was included in this 10.6% INCREASED BUDGET deemed 'cut to the bone' by EID's Board...and 'essential to the quality and safety of our Water supply'? Well, try the following: increased travel, meetings, training, contract services, consultants... not to mention 175 vehicles for 115 field employees, \$38,800 per employee benefits (including \$18,500 medical and \$12,800 pension contributions), and \$0.5 million increased Engineering expense, despite a 41% decrease in Capital Improvement Projects. EID clearly continues to spend with their own comfort and job security in mind... NOT the financial best interests of EID ratepayers."

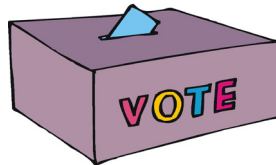
Greg Prada, a Cameron Park resident and a member of Fix EID.org, contends in a recent interview that it is EID's high overhead and excessive debt that is the driving force behind the increases. He said he served on EID's cost of services panel and was involved in the "maneuvering" of EID's rates. "EID has more overhead expense than they have (costs) in the field," Prada said. He said it is important to note that EID residential sewer rates are more than double that of the city of Folsom. "[Our] water rates are going to be doubling between 2009 and January 2015," he said.

According to EID, the proposed bi-monthly rate changes vary according to the type of services and usage which customers have and are not communicated as a specific percentage change. They say that in 2012, some customers' rates will go up and others' will go down. EID customers have access to a rate calculator on the District's website at [www.eid.org](http://www.eid.org) to calculate their individual rate changes over the four-year period.

The cost of services study was the driving factor in EID changing from a rate structure designed to collect 70 -30 formula ( 70 percent of rate revenues from usage charges, and 30 percent from fixed fees known as base charges) to a 50-50 formula. The cost-of-services study highlighted the need to increase base charges to provide more stable annual revenues to meet operating costs and debt service obligations, particularly in wetter years, according to EID.

"I believe our customers continue to value our excellent service, quality, and reliability," said EID General Manager Jim Abercrombie. "With these new rates approved and a rate methodology in place that more accurately determines cost for service, I am confident that EID will have the needed resources to continue to provide excellent service to our customers. While no one likes to see rate increases, I truly believe that our customers know that we have reduced our expenditures and staff significantly before coming to them to ask for the changes. We will also continue to look for cost savings in the future years." ~

*Credits: Penne Usher, EDH Telegraph*



## EL DORADO COUNTY SUPERVISOR RACES SHAPE UP

Three seats on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors are on the ballot this June, those of Districts 1, 2 and 3.

Incumbent John Knight is facing challenger Ron Mikulaco in District 1. In District 2, incumbent Ray Nutting is being opposed by perennial candidate George Turnboo, who ran against Nutting last time.

The District 3 supervisorial seat appears to be a horse race, with a number of candidates vying for the office that is being vacated by Supervisor Jack Sweeney, who is termed-out. At the time we went to press, six candidates had tossed their hat into the ring: Allen Amaro, retired businessman; Richard Barb, small business owner; A.L. Hamilton, senior citizens' attorney; Cathy Nerwinski, retired investigator; Sue Taylor, building designer; and Brian Veerkamp, retired administrator/instructor. The presence of so many candidates for Sweeney's seat makes it almost certain that there will be a run-off election in November. ~



## PROPANE TANKS NEED NEW LABEL FOR FILL?

Just in time for the barbeque season, it appears that there is a new requirement that your 20-pound propane cylinder must have a new hazardous warning label on it before it can be refilled. If you don't have one, you will probably have to buy one for about a dollar. Plus you must pay sales tax on the price of the label.

No one seems to know the source of this new requirement. The hazardous material labeling laws and regulations are administered by a hodge-podge of federal and state agencies.

But if you want the propane tank on your barbeque filled, you will probably need one the next time you go to get it refilled. ~



## NEW ANIMAL SHELTER TURNING INTO A ZOO?

With cost estimate over-runs rapidly shrinking the available square footage of the proposed animal shelter on county-owned property in El Dorado, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors (Board) has begun looking for yet another alternative location for the beleaguered shelter.

In January, the county Department of Transportation (DOT) estimated that the budget over-run for the proposed shelter would be \$2 million (now it may be \$4 million short). The DOT now says that if they forge ahead with the project at the current site, they could build only a 7,500 to 9,000 square foot shelter building and stay within budget. The supporters of a new shelter

*(continued on page 4)*



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello Everyone,

Spring is here. and with the exception of a few showers, it looks like we are finally at the end of winter. Though it was a strange winter, quite warm in January and no rain until late in the season.

With the advent of spring, the evenings are longer, and as soon as it really warms up it will be time to barbeque dinners and enjoy the sunsets. Easter used to be the time to change one's attire from the grays of winter to the tans of summer, but no one seems to pay attention to that any more. Anyway, soon it will be time for Bermuda shorts and Hawaiian shirts, and that will suit me just fine.

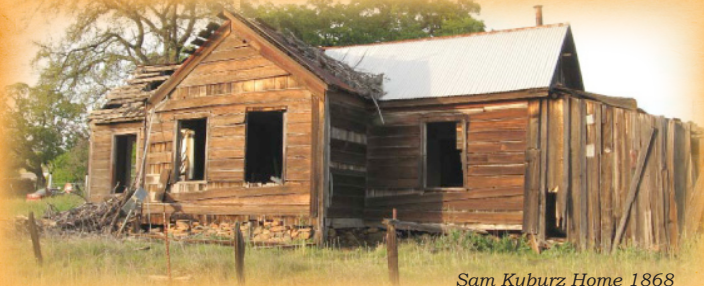
The hot weather will no doubt bring out the bugs, too. Especially the ones that think I'm a tasty morsel just made for them. Be sure to dump out any standing water in your yard to keep the skeeters from breeding, they thrive and breed as soon as the daily temperatures get above 70 degrees. I put out new bait for my yellow jacket traps the other day, perhaps I can catch some of them before they multiply.

I must say that the blossoms this year are beautiful, I love all the different colors. Our Japanese crabapple trees have such lovely red and white blossoms, and the pear trees were all snowy white. Not to mention the bright redbud trees. I hope that your gardens are blooming, too. Have a happy spring!

Sincerely,

*John Thomson*  
President

# 6th Annual Clarksville Day



*Sam Kyburz Home 1868*

## Celebrate the rich history of El Dorado Hills

Historic Sites & Exhibits • Pony Express  
Mormon Battalion • Wagon Rides • Gold Panning  
Food & Beverages • Live Music • Antique Cars  
Old West Gunfight Re-Creations • Mountain Men

### Bring Family & Friends

Saturday, May 5, 2012

10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

To the Historic Town of Clarksville  
White Rock Road and Silva Valley Parkway  
South of Highway 50 • Free Admission

For More Information, Call Betty at (916) 933-3173

#### Presented by

*Parker  
Development Co.*

*Wilkinson  
Portables*



*Veerkamp Engineering  
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El Dorado Hills  
Fire Fighters' Assn.*

[www.edhhistory.org](http://www.edhhistory.org)

Clarksville Region Historical Society is a Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Corporation

## CLARKSVILLE DAY IS ON MAY 5th THIS YEAR

Clarksville Day, the Clarksville Region Historical Society's annual historical celebration, will be held this year on May 4th in the old ghost town of Clarksville, from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Admission and parking is free. The town of Clarksville was the original settlement located on the Sacramento-Placerville road to the gold country. Clarksville later became El Dorado Hills, and the old town is located on Silva Valley Road south of Highway 50.

El Dorado old-timers know that the Mormon Tavern, offering rough hospitality for gold seekers, was built in 1848 or 1849 by a Mormon named Morgan in the area just south of the present community of El Dorado Hills. The tavern later acted as a remount station during the short life of the Pony Express, from April 1860 through October 1861.

About the same time the Mormon Tavern was built, a man named Clarkson had a stop-

ping place near Mormon Tavern known as Clarkson's Village. Clarkson's Village was near the junction of the stagecoach road from Sacramento and the freight road east to the Sierra mines which brought people, news, supplies, and mail to the gold fields. The town soon became the commercial and social center for the area, and boasted of four hotels in its heyday. By 1855 a post office was established there, and in the process the postal authorities renamed the town Clarksville.

At the present time all that is generally left of Clarksville are the ruins of some frame buildings and few stone walls. The one standing building is the old school house, which has been moved from its original site, added onto, and maintained as a barn.

For further information on Clarksville Day and the Historical Society, contact Betty January at 916-933-3173. ~

**ANIMAL SHELTER** *(continued)*

believe that any reduction of the building size makes the entire project not worth the effort, because a 17,000 square foot facility is needed.

County staff suggested an alternate approach that would take an existing industrial building and remodel it to use as the West Slope Animal Shelter. They have identified two such sites, but cannot disclose their locations as one of them would be the subject of property negotiations, once staff completes some additional review. The minimum size building that the county would consider is 13,000 square feet, and still to be analyzed is the availability and cost of land adjacent to either alternative that will be needed for livestock.

The Animal Shelter Coalition commented that the minimum size they should be looking for is 17,000 square feet; that size requirement is based on specific data and statistics of actual numbers and types of animal intakes, standards of care, health protocols, and building codes. They reminded the Board that the 17,000 square foot size was adopted by the Board in 2007. Furthermore, Coalition representatives said if the supervisors are going to reduce the size, the community deserves to hear what is being cut from the plan.

Though Coalition supported the alternative approach, they urged the Board to



## Shropshire Lad

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again,  
And take from seventy springs a  
score,

It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

A. E. Housman

find the right-sized building, and if a much smaller building was identified, to instruct staff to include the expansion of the building as part of their analysis of feasibility.

The Board, in a 4-1 motion with Supervisor Nutting opposing, instructed staff to move forward to research the alternative sites, and see if they can identify an additional \$2 million that could be used to complete the original project. The Board also formed a subcommittee of Supervisors Knight and Briggs to engage in negotiations for the alternative property selected and monitor this process. The motion passed on a 4-1 vote. Supervisor Nutting stated he could not support the second item in the motion but would support it, if the "see if you find another \$2 million for the Y" was separated out from the "look at alternates" part of the motion. So it seems possible that an alternate approach may ultimately be something Supervisor Nutting could support.

County staff expects to return to the April 17, 2012, Board Meeting with the results of their review. A time certain of 2:00 p.m. was set for that meeting. ~



Warm spring weather has brought bud-break to vineyards in El Dorado Hills. Soon these little shoots will become long canes upon which the grapes will grow.

Bass Lake Action Committee  
501 Kirkwood Court  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

**BLAC SETS MAY, JUNE 2012 BOARD MEETING DATES**

The May BLAC Board meeting will be held at the home of Dee and Denny Olberding, 4068 Kirkwood Drive (Woodridge), El Dorado Hills, on May 7, 2012, at 7:00 PM. The scheduled speaker is Bette Best Eastman from J.S. West Propane.

The June Board meeting will be held at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court (Woodridge), El Dorado Hills, on June 4, 2012, at 7:00 PM. The invited speaker is Kirk Bone of Parker Development.

All BLAC members are cordially invited to attend all meetings. For further information regarding our meetings, please contact Vice President Kathy Prevost, 530-672-6836. ~

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