



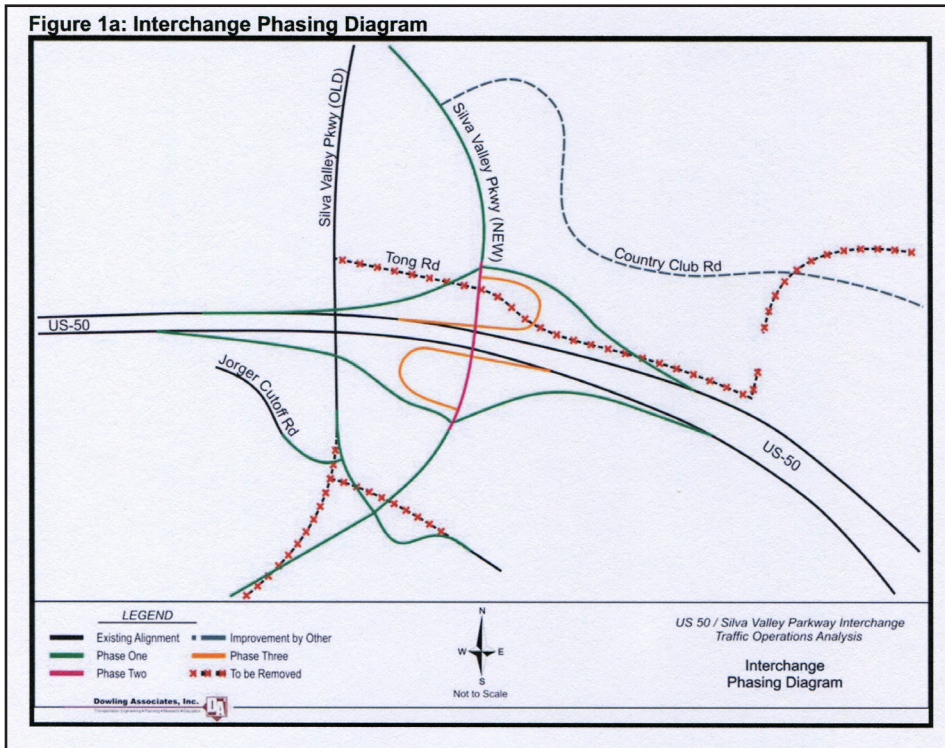
BASS LAKE BULLETIN

Vol. XII No. 3

The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

April 2014

www.basslakeaction.org



Map showing phases of work on the long-awaited interchange

WORK BEGINS ON SILVA VALLEY INTERCHANGE

Construction has started on the new Silva Valley Parkway interchange project on Highway 50. The interchange will consist of a new freeway overcrossing east of where the current Silva Valley Parkway crosses under Highway 50.

The interchange has been in the works since 1988. Plans for the interchange were approved by Caltrans and El Dorado County officials in 1991 in anticipation of the potential growth of El Dorado Hills.

The interchange is designed to decrease traffic congestion on other major El Dorado Hills arteries, and improve travel time, by providing direct access to Highway 50 via Silva Valley for drivers who would otherwise use Bass Lake Road or El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

The El Dorado County Department of Transportation has \$27 million set aside for the project, and the total cost is estimated to be about \$40 million. Blackstone developers will make up the difference through payment of Traffic Impact Mitigation fees.

Though the project is 100 percent locally funded, Caltrans will own the interchange upon completion.

Preliminary work included the widening of approximately one mile of Silva Valley Parkway, creating four lanes from Entrada Drive to a point about a quarter mile south of Oak Meadow Elementary School. That project cost about \$2.6 million and included a sidewalk, bike lanes, and a left turn lane into the school.

Though the map shows Tong Road to be eliminated, the eastern portion of Tong Road will remain, and a new access road will connect to it Silva Valley Parkway. The current Silva Valley Parkway that goes under the freeway will remain a two-lane road. Not part of the interchange project is the planned extension of Country Club Drive, indicated by a dashed line, which will eventually connect Silva Valley Parkway with Bass Lake Road and also provide access to the properties now served by Tong Road. ~



MERGER OF EL DORADO HILLS FIRE AND LATROBE FIRE MOVES FORWARD

The combination of El Dorado Hills Fire Department (EDH Fire) and the Latrobe Fire Protection District (Latrobe FPD) continues to progress, with the process now in the hands of El Dorado County's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

The service area of the Latrobe FPD is located in the southwestern corner of El Dorado County, south of Highway 50, serving the greater community of Latrobe. The District is directly south of the EDH Fire boundaries, and is bounded on the west and south by the Sacramento and Amador County lines, respectively.

Earlier this year, the El Dorado Hills and Latrobe fire boards voted to proceed with the merger, which is technically referred to as an annexation. If all goes as planned, EDH Fire will assume responsibility for the 45-square-mile Latrobe FPD and add two fire stations to its coverage area.

The Latrobe area is much more rural with only about 1,100 residents. El Dorado Hills firefighter crews already serve as the back-up first-responders in the area because Latrobe does not provide around-the-clock fire coverage.

Negotiations to combine the neighboring fire district began about two years ago, when property tax allocations that kept Latrobe and other small El Dorado County fire districts afloat began to wane.

The proposed Plan for Service provides that the Latrobe community would be staffed 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. seven days per week, with

(continued on page 2)



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello All,

Last month I told you something about the history of Bass Lake, which was for a long time the terminus for the Crawford Ditch. The Crawford Ditch, built originally during the Gold Rush to serve gold miners in Diamond Springs and El Dorado, carried water down from the North Fork of the Cosumnes River around Sly Park to what the was then called the American Reservoir, now called Bass Lake.

The lake passed through several private owners beginning in the 1920s or so, among them James Nicols, who in the 1930s to early 1950s ran the Bass Lake Resort on the east side of the lake. The resort had a concession stand, picnic tables, and rowboats for rent. Then in the 1970s Bass Lake was purchased by EID to be a part of their water delivery system.

When the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan (Serrano) was approved in 1987, Bass Lake was included in the boundary of the specific plan, and the Bass Lake property is called Village R. A specific plan is a subset of the county general plan that covers a specific geographical area.

The El Dorado Hills Specific Plan provides that Village R consists of Bass Lake and the 157 acres of natural open space surrounding the lake, and that Bass Lake offers a visual water amenity. It also says that Bass Lake and the surrounding property constitute an area of "permanent open space."

The Specific Plan also provides that such natural open space will be preserved in perpetuity in an essentially unaltered condition, and that no development will occur within these areas except for the minimum required for maintenance.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service has designated Bass Lake and parts of its eastern shoreline as wetlands. The California and the El Dorado County Departments of fish and Game are also on record as desiring that Bass Lake remain natural open space.

The question of what will happen to Bass Lake is uppermost in the thoughts of many of us who live around the lake, and those of us that enjoy it as we drive by. I sincerely hope we can keep Bass Lake natural open space.

Sincerely,

John E. Thomson

President

FIRE *(continued)*

after-hours response from volunteers, apprentices and the closest staffed resource, most likely Station 87 in the Business Park. Chief officer coverage would be around-the-clock by the shift battalion chief or the assigned duty chief, responding typically from Station 85.

The Plan for Service further provides that EDH Fire and the EDH Fire Board of Directors intend to staff the Latrobe area with an around-the clock three-person engine company as soon as it is practical. Increased staffing levels and hours would be dictated by several triggers, including area growth, call volume, call type, response time, budget and the amount of the tax allocation adjustment granted by the Board of Supervisors.

Latrobe's part-time paid staff will keep their positions, and the Latrobe chief, currently a volunteer position, is encouraged to stay on board through the transition process, according to the agreement. EDH Fire will use Latrobe's volunteer firefighters and also retain a Latrobe volunteer captain.

The Board of Supervisors will have a say in the annexation process in the form of a tax allocation adjustment. Currently, EDH Fire's tax allocation rate is 17 cents per dollar. Latrobe currently receives 4.3 cents per dollar, and the district wants the supervisors to increase that rate to match El Dorado Hills' rate. Latrobe's current budget is about \$165,000 a year; EDH Fire operates on a \$14 million budget.

County Supervisor and former EDH Fire Chief Brian Veerkamp has said that whatever rate is approved — the additional money will come from the county's General Fund — he and fellow supervisors will ensure that the fire department has "solid funding."

While a 13-cent rate has been discussed, EDH Fire Chief Roberts said a 13-cent rate would not be enough to proceed with annexation. He and El Dorado Hills Fire Board members discussed last week initiating a study that would support the 17-cent rate and further review the EDH Fire-Latrobe FPD annexation plan. They decided to hold off for now, citing that staff has been meeting individually with supervisors to explain the plan of service and the proposed budget adjustment.

First, the agreement must go through El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) review. LAFCO Executive Officer José Henriquez said staff will analyze the fire departments' proposal, looking at more than two dozen factors. Once the initial review is completed, the proposal goes to affected county departments and to

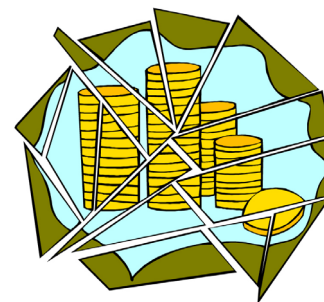
the supervisors (sometime this summer) to determine the AB8 tax allocation rate.

The public will also have a chance to review the documents, ask questions and share their opinions during planned LAFCO public workshops. The dates of the workshops are yet to be determined, but will take place after the Board of Supervisors makes its decision on the property tax revenue rate. If LAFCO receives valid, written protests from 25 to 50 percent of the affected population, the annexation will go on the ballot, according to Henriquez. If more than 50 percent of the population submits valid protests, the annexation will fail.

Chief Roberts said he and Latrobe Fire Chief Chris Couper have already reached out to many affected residents and don't anticipate much public opposition. They've also provided LAFCO with much of the information staff needs to complete its work. Barring any hiccups in the process, the LAFCO commissioners will make their final decision on the annexation agreement as early as late summer 2014 but more likely, according to Henriquez, by the end of 2014. El Dorado Hills and Latrobe officials will then have a year to comply with any conditions set upon them by LAFCO.

To read the El Dorado Hills Fire Department/Latrobe Fire Protection District Annexation Plan for Service visit edhfire.com and click on "Documents and Forms" under "Our Services."

Credit: Noel Stack, Village Life



Dividing up the money

EDH AND LATROBE FIRE MERGER MAY DEPEND ON SUPERVISORS

Action by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors may determine whether the merger of El Dorado Hills Fire Department and Latrobe Fire Protection District (FPD) is successful. The parties involved have asked the supervisors to grant Latrobe an increase in allocated property tax money, from 4.3 to 17 cents.

(continued on page 3)

SUPERVISORS *(continued)*

County Controller-Auditor Joe Harn recently reminded the county supervisors that any increase in the tax allocation for the Latrobe FPD must come out of the county general fund. That is, any additional tax money allocated to Latrobe FPD must come out of the operating budget for county services, such as the sheriff's department. Also, Harn said that increasing the Latrobe FPD rate may set a precedent for increasing the rates for other beleaguered fire protection agencies, to the detriment of county services.

The following explanation may shed some light on the complex procedure of allocating property tax revenues to county government agencies within the county.

California property owners pay their property tax bills to their county tax collector. The funds are then transferred to the auditor, who distributes the funds collected from the 1 percent rate differently than the funds collected from the other taxes and charges on the bill.

All property tax revenue remains within the county in which it is collected, to be used exclusively by local governments. Property tax revenue from the 1 percent rate is distributed among the county general fund, cities, K-12 schools, community college districts, and special districts in the county by the county auditor. Here in El Dorado County that is Controller-Auditor Joe Harn.

State laws direct the method of allocation of the revenue from the 1 percent rate. The allocation system is commonly referred to as "AB 8," after the bill that first implemented the system. In general, AB 8 provides a share of the total property taxes collected within a community to each local government that provides services within that community.

Each local government's share is based on its proportionate countywide share of property taxes during the mid-1970s, a time when each local government determined its own property tax rate and property owners paid taxes based on the sum of these rates. As a result, local governments that received a large share of property taxes in the 1970s typically receive a relatively large share of revenue from the 1 percent rate under AB 8.

So we see that revenue from the 1 percent rate is shared by many local governments. However, on a typical property tax bill, the 1 percent rate is listed simply as the general tax levy or county-wide rate, with no indication as to which local governments receive the revenue, or for what purpose the funds are used. In general, county auditors must allocate the revenue from the 1 percent rate to a variety of local governments within

the county pursuant to a series of complex state statutes.

In summary, the general property tax levy of 1 percent is divided up among the government agencies in the county much like slicing a pie. The overall size of the pie was set in the 1970s. If the pie gets bigger, each slice may grow. If the pie gets smaller, the slices shrink. Increasing the size of any one slice of pie means someone else's piece must shrink.

So if the supervisors increase Latrobe FPD's tax allocation, they must also decrease the size of the county general fund's tax allocation. ~



The end of the tracks

HIGH SPEED RAIL DERAILED FOR NOW

In November 2008, California voters approved \$10 billion in bonds to build the first segment of a bullet train system that, according to the ballot materials, would whisk riders from San Francisco to Los Angeles in under about an hour and a half for about \$50 per person. The \$43 billion system would be built with federal and private matching funds, and would be self-funding once operational, requiring no new taxes or government subsidies.

The State filed a lawsuit, High-Speed Rail Authority v. All Persons, because it now wants to sell the bonds and is asking the court to approve the sale. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA) is fighting that request because the State's current plans for the money break almost every promise made to the voters in 2008. The estimated cost of construction has increased by \$25 billion. The federal government has pledged only a trifle, and private investors are not interested at all. A revised business plan has scrapped the idea of 220 mph trains operating on their own track in favor of slower trains partly sharing existing track with standard passenger and freight trains. Ridership projections have been reduced, which means less ticket-sale revenue, which means higher ticket prices and annual taxpayer subsidies.

The measure approved by the voters

required some oversight. An independent Finance Committee was supposed to review the proposed bond sale and approve it only if all prerequisites were met. The evidence at trial showed that the Finance Committee did not do its job. It rubber-stamped the sale without ever holding a hearing to consider whether the promises in the ballot were being kept.

In January, the trial court ruled in HJTA's favor on the grounds that the Finance Committee's approval of the sale of bonds was not supported by any evidence in the record. The court entered judgment denying validation of the bond sale — a huge win for taxpayers. The State then unsuccessfully petitioned the Supreme Court to step in and vacate the trial court judgment. The Supreme Court instead referred the case to its usual next step, the Court of Appeal. That's where the case is right now. Watch for updates as those proceedings develop. ~

Credit: HJTA Taxing Times



EDH TO SEE AMGEN TOUR PASS BY IN MAY

The first stage of the 2014 Amgen Tour of California cycling race will be held in the Sacramento area on May 11. This is the ninth running of the race. The men's race covers more than 700 miles over a number of stages throughout California. The Sacramento stage will be 120 miles (193 kilometers) long.

The race will start around 10:50 A.M. at the Capitol, beginning with a long pedal that follows the Sacramento River north, and then climbs to Lincoln and Auburn, followed by hills on Highway 49 to Cool and then loops back to Sacramento via Salmon Falls Road, El Dorado Hills Boulevard, and White Rock Road, finally returning to downtown Sacramento for three laps around the Capitol. ~





THE END OF LANDLINES?

Seniors fear deregulation may leave them without service

The market for smart phones has reached the saturation point in the United States; it's hard to find anyone who doesn't have a mobile device. Hard, maybe—but not impossible. There are still thousands of people, many of them seniors, who rely on that old-fashioned, low-tech landline for their inexpensive connection to the world—and they're about to lose out.

The deregulation of the telecommunications industry has reached the point where phone companies in California and elsewhere are getting ready to pull out and disconnect the copper wires that support traditional landlines — which, by law, have to be made available at dirt-cheap rates to low-income people.



Spring Song

Hark, I hear a robin calling!
List, the wind is from the south!
And the orchard-bloom is falling
Sweet as kisses on the mouth.

In the dreamy vale of beeches
Fair and faint is woven mist,
And the river's orient reaches
Are the palest amethyst.

Every limpid brook is singing
Of the lure of April days;
Every piney glen is ringing
With the maddest roundelays.

Come and let us seek together
Springtime lore of daffodils,
Giving to the golden weather
Greeting on the sun-warm hills.

—Lucy Maud Montgomery

And while so-called Lifeline rates for cell phones are coming, they aren't available yet.

So over the next year or two, seniors could find themselves disconnected. Basic utilities like phone service have long been considered necessities, and legislators have ensured that every household has access to them.

Right now, Lifeline service is only offered through landlines. Retiring copper wire networks, and thus traditional landline service, could eliminate Lifeline altogether.

The California Public Utilities Commission has been forced to rethink its idea of what basic service looks like. The commission approved redefinition of "basic service" in December. That redefinition included offering Lifeline to "wireless and non traditional providers." But the service isn't yet available for wireless or VoIP — and some fear that the current program will eclipse before a new one is in place.

Besides seniors' concerns, many folks get their high speed internet connections over a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) that connects via one's telephone landline. Also, most home alarm systems are hooked to their alarm company via the telephone landline. Then too, power failures do not affect telephone service; a conventional landline telephone will work when the power is off, while cellular phone towers do not. ~



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



BLAC BOARD TO MEET IN MAY

The Board of Directors of Bass Lake Action Committee will meet at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, May 5, 2014 at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, telephone 530-677-3039. Agendas will be sent to all current members prior to the meeting.

BLAC members who have not yet sent in their 2014 renewals are urged to do so by BLAC Treasurer Fran Thomson

All BLAC members are cordially invited to attend all BLAC board meetings. For additional information, contact Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~

The Bass Lake Bulletin is published monthly seven to ten days after the regular monthly BLAC meeting, by the Bass Lake Action Committee, El Dorado Hills, California
Copyright © 2014. Permission to reproduce unabridged articles is granted if appropriate attribution is given to the Bass Lake Bulletin
John E. Thomson, Ph.D.
President and Editor
doctorjet@aol.com
530-677-3039
For additional information see our website, basslakeaction.org or contact
Vice President Kathy Prevost
blacinfo@aol.com
530-672-6836
