November 9, 2022

Greetings to all:

As your General Manager, I want to inform you of a glorious and wonderful event that was held at our Arsenic Treatment Facility located at 4290 Jessup Road last week on Wednesday, November 2, 2022. The event was initiated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State Water Board. They wanted to recognize and honor our District as an example of what they should be investing their money in. They praised us for the work we are doing in providing clean and safe drinking water for our community and surrounding communities.

The EPA and State recognized Keyes because we were the first in the State to consolidate five (5) water systems that had arsenic and nitrate issues with our water system. We constructed our Arsenic Treatment Facility, upgraded our water wells and installed transmission lines to four mobile home parks and a Teen Challenge addiction ranch that are outside of our District boundaries. We were made eligible for grants under Proposition 1 because of our severely financial-disadvantaged status. The consolidation of the water systems became a Regional Benefit Arsenic Mitigation Project and the State awarded Keyes a $20 million grant for the project. The entire construction costs for the consolidation project came in slightly less than $21 million. We currently owe about $600,000 on our water treatment plant and have a 30-year no-interest loan to pay it back.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Biden last year allowed the EPA and State Waterboard to award our District $10.4 million for the construction of a Granular Activated Carbon filtration project that would ensure that our drinking water remains safe. Low levels of a pesticide residue called 1,2,3-TCP (trichloropropane) has been discovered in our drinking water and these Calgon filters will ensure that the contaminant is completely removed from our drinking water. The centralized (GAC) filtration plant will be constructed on the empty lot next to the PAL community center located at 5506 Jennie Avenue. The bid opening for construction of the GAC filtration project will take place by June 2023 with construction starting in October. The completion of construction will be in early 2024.

Keyes Community Services District has now received $30.4 million in grants to improve our water system and to ensure that Keyes residents have clean and safe drinking water. Because of these grants, we do not have to increase water rates for the longest time ever. A recent water and wastewater rate study concluded that we do not have to raise rates for the next five years. That is great news!

In closing, I want to remind everyone that we still have a great need to conserve water by using as little water as possible.

Be well and stay safe!

Ernie Garza