

## **AWA DIRECTORS ADDRESS ON-LINE BILLING, RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLERS & AGENCY-WIDE RATE STUDY**

For immediate release: 10/31/2011

Contact: Gene Mancebo, General Manager  
Amador Water Agency, 209-223-3018

(*Sutter Creek*) Amador Water Agency customers will soon be able to receive and pay AWA bills on-line. AWA staff announced at Thursday's AWA Board meeting that the Agency will be contracting with an Internet billing company to bring on-line billing and on-line bill payment to AWA customers.

The new service will offer security and convenience to AWA customers who prefer to pay their bills on-line. Water Agency staff also anticipate significant cost savings and increased efficiency as customers sign up for the new service.

"The Agency has the potential to save several thousand dollars per year in mailing costs with the addition of e-billing and e-pay," said Cris Thompson, Clerk of the Board, who worked on securing the billing contractor. "If one-third of our customers use electronic billing and payment services, our mailing costs would be reduced by approximately \$15,000."

According to Thompson, e-billing and e-pay should be up and running by the first of the year. Customers interested in signing up for on-line services should watch for announcements on billing statements and on the Agency website.

Also at Thursday's meeting, Directors held the first of three workshops on the Agency-wide rate study currently underway. The study is designed to ensure rate equality and transparency for all customers of the Agency's several water systems.

Rate consultant Bob Reed presented the process his firm is using to analyze the Agency's costs. The goal is to bring all systems under a single basic rate structure and also to develop a 5-year plan for rates beginning with the 2012 – 2013 fiscal year.

### **In other AWA news:**

- PG&E representative Randy Herbst gave a presentation to the Board on PG&E's Peak Day program, designed to save electricity costs for companies that can conserve electricity on high demand days. Herbst encouraged the Agency to try the program for a year though he acknowledged that AWA peak demand often coincides with PG&E peak pricing, making it challenging to take advantage of PG&E discount programs. Board discussion particularly focused on attempts to lower costs of pumping on the CAWP water supply and treatment systems. AWA Field Operations Manager Chris McKeage said the CAWP system doesn't have

enough tank storage capacity to turn off the CAWP pumps and take advantage of time-of-day pricing. He noted that operators are reluctant to let tank levels drop in the hottest part of the summer because it can take days to catch up. Directors also discussed incentive money available from PG&E that could help pay for the Gravity Supply Line, as the gravity-fed pipeline would eliminate the demand for a significant amount of electricity

- Directors approved a policy to provide property owners with a choice of one or two water supply lines when installing residential service connections for fire sprinkler systems, now required for new homes in California. Property owners, developers, or fire district requirements will determine whether a separate line is installed for the home sprinkler system. Those who choose to install a single water line will be informed that, if at some point water charges become delinquent and water service is shut-off, service to the fire sprinkler system would also be disconnected. The optional second water line, though an additional construction expense, would continue to provide fire protection in a case of shut off for non-payment.

###