



Autumn 2023

Fires, Fluoride and the Future

On Friday, October 27th, we solemnly recognized the 30th anniversary of the Kinneloa Fire, which was devastating for our community. Many of you were living here at the time and remember it vividly. Several of you lost your homes, which you have since rebuilt in a commitment to remaining in this community. Although I did not reside in the District then, I lived just a mile down the hill and assisted my grandparents with evacuating their home so they could come and stay with us for a few days. Fortunately, their home was not damaged, and they were able to return safely.

In the subsequent 30 years, the impact of that fire has had many ramifications on how local agencies deal with fire suppression and how water systems can be better prepared for a “fire of the future,” as Cal Fire and other officials referred to it. For KID in particular, it highlighted our shortcomings concerning electrical system resiliency and storage and pipeline capacity for delivering water for fire suppression purposes. Resiliency goals were established following the fire. Although great strides have been made, many of those goals have not yet been achieved due to funding constraints. For our customers who were not living locally at the time of the fire or are not aware of its significance, I encourage you to visit the Wikipedia page for the [Kinneloa Fire](#), as it was recently updated by an editor who has written extensively about wildfires in California.

This year marks another significant 30th anniversary of an event that impacts District operations in a different way. Under authority provided by state legislation, the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water (DDW) granted a handful of water districts, including KID, a variance from California's fluoride drinking water standard. This variance expires at the end of calendar year 2023. Fluoride in our water naturally occurs from eroding mineral deposits in the earth. Some water agencies add fluoride to their water, but our water supply, which is exclusively from groundwater, has naturally occurring higher levels. Our tunnel wells have elevated fluoride levels and have been blended with pumped groundwater from the Raymond Basin to meet the variance requirements over the past few decades. With the expiration of the variance, KID will be required to use less tunnel well water in our system and will instead divert more of it to groundwater recharge. The tunnel well water has been a source of lower-cost water as we do not incur the cost associated with pumping it out of the aquifer and then pumping it uphill to the various storage sites. The Board of Directors and District staff, working with an outside consultant and DDW, have crafted a system-wide plan to implement compliance in meeting California's fluoride requirements while providing for concurrent monitoring. This plan will be paid for out of our 2024 budget but will not be an insignificant cost.

By the end of June 2024, the Board of Directors and District staff are committed to the creation of a new Master Plan, the establishment of 10-year budgeting priorities, the exploration of financing options and the development of multi-year rate projections to meet these goals. This type of long-range comprehensive planning has never been done at the KID but provides the basis for ongoing fiscal discipline and wise investment through 2035. I will keep our customers informed on this process and hold regular community meetings as materials are prepared. In the meantime, I encourage you all to stop me on the street if you see me out walking or call me at the office to share any concerns or priorities that deserve our focus.

Tom Majich
General Manager



New Customer Billing Portal

Beginning with the October water bills, KID transitioned to a new customer billing system and portal hosted by Ampstun. Customers who receive a paper bill only may have noticed that the format of the bill was changed slightly. For customers previously enrolled in our legacy billing portal, you should have received an email notifying you of the change and inviting you to establish a new account. All customers wishing to have online account access must establish a new account in this portal since the legacy portal is deactivated. The District considered various options for our needed upgrade and chose Ampstun based on its ease of use for customers and staff, affordability, United States-based engineering and support staff and, most importantly, being a web-based software solution. Detailed instructions for setting up your account are available via a prominent link on our homepage. Many customers have successfully established their accounts, and others are in progress. If we can support you in any way, please don't hesitate to call or email the office.



Your Water Operators at Work

Although KID is one of the smallest water agencies in Los Angeles County, we belong to several organizations created to support each other through mutual aid when needed. That could be during an emergency situation, but also by sharing resources for routine maintenance or extra labor when needed. KID has over 500 valves in our system that need to be operated regularly to ensure they are in good working order so that they open and close as expected when we need them to. Manually operating valves is labor intensive and has proven to be a leading cause of injury to operators in the waterworks field. KID investigated options for purchasing or leasing specialty equipment to support the effort, but the most cost-effective solution was right next door. Rubio Cañon Land and Water Association purchased a valve-operating truck a few years ago but does not require daily use. Under a mutual aid agreement, they provide their truck and a qualified operator to support KID staff with this effort at a very cost-effective rate. We are working our way through the District and scheduling this effort for two days per month to complete the exercising District-wide by the end of 2024. When you see the Rubio truck in your neighborhood, don't worry that you made a wrong turn coming home. It's just an example of mutual aid support that we intend to pursue more often in the future to best leverage our limited resources.



Copyright (C) 2023 Kinneloa Irrigation District. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

