

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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PROPANE DEAL SET FOR WOODRIDGE, BRIDLEWOOD CANYON, SIERRA CROSSING HOMEOWNERS

Many residents of Bass Lake use propane for heating their homes. Many of those propane users were upset by unusual spikes in the price of propane that occurred last winter. As a result of a deal inked in April with propane company JS West, these customers are now eligible to purchase their propane at a volume discount which is a set amount above the wholesale price of propane.

The deal is the outgrowth of an investigation into the seemingly unwarranted price fluctuations conducted by a committee set up in March under the leadership of Bass Lake Action Committee. The committee was made up of homeowners from Woodridge and Bridlewood Canyon. The investigation revealed several facts about propane.

In the first place, propane is not regulated in California, and a propane company may charge whatever the market will bear; prices are set by competition among providers. Customers who purchase propane on a month-to-month basis may change their propane company at any time, but customers must lease their propane tank from their particular propane provider unless they own their own tank.

The committee found that the discounted propane rate agreements that were negotiated with Amerigas by the Bass Lake housing developers expired years ago; Bass Lake

residents now pay Amerigas the price set by Amerigas. Also, the retail price of propane at any given time, and the annual tank rental fee, vary widely between the various propane companies, and in some instances, vary within a company's customers, even though all the propane companies pay close to the same wholesale price for propane.

The committee discovered that some propane companies charge a hazardous materials fee and a fuel surcharge fee, others do not. For example, on every delivery Amerigas charges a hazmat fee of about six dollars and a fuel recovery fee of about four dollars. Neither of these charges are imposed by regulation, they are simply added onto the customer's bill by Amerigas. The committee also found that volume discounts are available from some propane companies if enough homes in a neighborhood agree to purchase their propane from that propane company.

Based on this information, the committee surveyed local propane companies to see what kind of a deal could be obtained on propane. Each propane company was asked for a proposal to furnish propane to residents of the three neighborhoods of Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing, and Woodridge.

Most companies responded, however some declined to bid, as they could not accommodate a large number of new customers. The submitted proposals were reviewed to determine the best deal that could be obtained for the propane users in the three neighborhoods.

The committee decided that, based on the competing offers, propane company JS West put forward the best deal for propane based on price and terms. In essence, the JS West offer consists of a five-year contract to provide propane at a set amount over the wholesale price of propane. This set amount varies in proportion to the number of households that buy their propane from JS West; The more homes that buy, the cheaper the price (a volume discount). Tank rentals are free for the first two years, and no surcharges will apply to deliveries.

The JS West propane offer is available only

to the homes in Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing, and Woodridge, as it is a volume discount for a specific geographical area of contiguous homes. It is not necessary for all the homes to sign up with JS West. However, the price per gallon goes down in proportion to the number of homes that sign up; the more homes, the cheaper the propane. Bass Lake Action Committee President John Thomson said that that BLAC simply set up the deal, no middleman is involved, and all arrangements are between the homeowner and JS West. Thomson also said that he has been told that more than a hundred homeowners have signed up for the offer to date.

JS West has been a family-owned California company for over a hundred years. It was founded in 1909 by James Stewart West, a Nebraska lawyer who moved to California for his health. He ended up in Modesto, which had about 4,500 people and was emerging as a farming and food-processing center. In the beginning the young company sold hay and grain to farmers, along with coal and wood for winter warmth. In the 1930s, JS West branched into auto sales and service, and propane. Today, the company has five sectors—propane, eggs, feed, furniture and hardware—in various locations in the Central Valley.

Homeowners in Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing or Woodridge that wish to get information about this offer may contact JS West Regional Sales Manager Betty Best Easton at 530-642-7001. ~



Memorial Day
May 31



CALIFORNIA: ANOTHER YEAR OLDER AND DEEPER IN DEBT

No big bailout from Washington, and personal income tax receipts in April were dismal. The ruling class in Sacramento have removed their rose-colored glasses to find the state awash in debt and deficit.

The legislature has about 50 days until the end of the state's fiscal year. Assembly Republicans have made it clear that they will not accept any new taxes in order to close the state's nearly \$20 billion budget gap. Assembly Democrats have orchestrated a road show calling for higher taxes and for doing away with the two-thirds vote requirement for raising taxes.

State Controller John Chiang reported that California has collected \$1.3 billion less in taxes through April than the governor predicted. And Schwarzenegger has abandoned his idea to raise \$118 million for 2010-11 by authorizing new oil drilling off the California coast, citing the environmental consequences in the ongoing Gulf of Mexico spill. Federal officials have indicated they may provide about \$3 billion in new help to California – far less than the \$6.9 billion Schwarzenegger penciled into his January budget plan.

Meanwhile, legislators in both parties rejected a Schwarzenegger idea to install speed cameras at intersections. Republicans opposed a new tax on insurance policies. Democrats vowed not to consider cuts to schools or social services until the governor's May budget proposal.

Republicans point to the more than dozen tax-raising measures Democrats have introduced this year and note that California has the highest sales tax rate in the United States, the highest gas taxes in the country and the second highest income tax rate. Furthermore, the state has a 12.6 percent

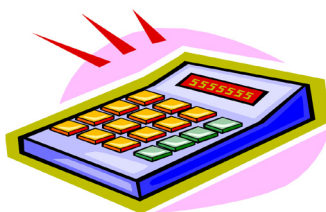
unemployment rate and passed \$12.5 billion in tax increases last year.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recommended that lawmakers approve cuts to social services and the prisons agency in March that require months of implementation time. But because the Legislature did not do so, they have to find deeper cuts to make up for lost time. The delays could cost the effort more than \$2.5 billion.

Schwarzenegger may resort to wholesale cuts he proposed in January as contingencies in case federal money fell short. Those included the elimination of the state's welfare-to-work and in-home health care programs.

A \$20 billion deficit is significant. If no new revenues are raised, the state's general fund spending could end up little more than \$80 billion for the year, well below the \$103.3 billion spent in 2007-08.

Schwarzenegger and legislative Republicans have vowed to oppose new taxes and want to rely on spending cuts to balance the budget. Democrats believe that slashing social services would hurt the poor and unemployed and cost California billions in federal matching dollars. ~



JS WEST PROPANE BILLING CLARIFICATION

Homeowners in Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing and Woodridge are reminded that the price per gallon on the print-out receipt that the JS West delivery man leaves at your door is not necessarily the price for which you will be billed. The bill generated by the Placerville office will reflect the actual price you will pay under the agreement with JS West.

The laid-in price on which to estimate your actual bill was recently \$1.35 per gallon; add the contract markup to find the approximate price to you. Bass Lake Action Committee understands that there are more than 110 JS West customers now receiving propane under the agreement. Remember that the laid-in price may fluctuate up or down several cents depending on the daily wholesale price.

BLAC is working on a procedure by which the JS West laid-in price will be available on the BLAC website on a weekly basis. ~

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



HELLO EVERYONE,

It looks like the April showers are finally giving way to May flowers. When Memorial Day nears, I know that Summer can't be far behind.

This month's Bulletin is a short one, since the first part of the month was taken up entirely with preparations for Clarksville Day, which, by the way, was a complete success.

Fran and I are on the board of the Clarksville Region Historical Society, so we were involved with the planning and execution of Clarksville Day. On the Friday before we were in Old Clarksville helping to get things ready. On Saturday we were back again in Clarksville at 7:00 in the morning, helping to set up and get everything in place.

Those of you that went to Clarksville Day know what fun was to be had. Wagon rides, cannons going off, gunfights, and lots and lots to see. Plus we saw a lot of our friends and neighbors there. What a nice day.

If you missed the event this year, you may never get to see Clarksville, because it may be gone before next May. Time marches on, and with the economy picking up (so some say), the land may be developed before we know it.

Now that Clarksville is behind us, Fran and I may be able to catch up with our gardening. The late rains have certainly brought out a fine crop of weeds. First one kind, then another. But the flowers and bushes are doing well also, though we did lose our acacia tree in the front yard to something.

Well, I'm off to spray and trim, but I am going to make sure I get some rest also. I hope you do the same.

Have a wonderful Spring!

John E. Thomson
President



PRESENTATIONS BY EL DORADO COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

At the May Bass Lake Action Committee meeting, BLAC hosted candidates for El Dorado County Sheriff: John D'Agostini, Larry Hennick, Ernie Hillman, Bob Luca, George Nielsen, and Craig Therkildsen. We asked each of them to say something about themselves, and what would distinguish them if they were elected sheriff. Following is a short summary of the remarks the candidates made at the meeting.

John D'Agostini

John said that he has 17 years of law enforcement experience in Amador County. He has also been a builder, and a member of the Pioneer School Board. He was born in El Dorado County. He has been a patrol officer, city deputy, field-training officer, narcotics supervisor, promoted to the office of Sergeant, an investigator for the D.A.'s office, and Grand Jury liaison. He believes that we should bring back the concept of "resident deputies" to El Dorado County, where deputies live in the communities they serve. He believes that he is the least political of the candidates.

John then said that he has two to three terms in him [as the youngest of the candidates]. People want fresh eyes. They want something new. He understands what deputies' issues are. He hasn't been in administration for years and thus disconnected from the issues. He has private sector experience as a builder. He would bring a style of involved leadership, an open door policy, and will be someone who will be around a while and be accessible. He also has endorsements from national anti-drug organizations, Amador County and Jackson law enforcement associations. Almost everyone who worked for him is endorsing him.

Larry Hennick

Larry said that he first started in police enforcement as a volunteer in 1974. He has worked assignments from the jail to the street, was named Officer of the Year, promoted to detective, promoted to Narcotics, developed El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement, promoted to Sergeant in Placerville

and South Lake Tahoe. He retired from law enforcement in 2006.

Larry went on to say that he brings knowledge, skills, and abilities. You want someone who knows the people and what programs work. We want to go back to what worked and do more with less, to be a revenue generating department, not revenue using. He believes in writing grants, and in asset forfeiture programs. He will write a program and plan for every unit as to how they can save dollars. He wants resident posts, two officers minimum in an area. He will provide residents with an information source on most wanted felons, volunteer programs, and mounted patrols in inaccessible areas.

Ernie Hillman

Ernie said that when he came out of the military in 1972, he wanted to be in law enforcement. He was hired by El Dorado County as a deputy. He loved his work. He has held every sworn position in El Dorado County except Sheriff. He was Under-Sheriff, a manager for 17 years, worked every division in the department including Watch Commander at South Lake Tahoe. He was a resident deputy for six years from 1974 to 1980. He holds a degree in Administration of Justice and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

Ernie then said that there is no substitute for experience. He has held every sworn position in the department and as a manager worked every department in the county. He has been retired for a short time, but he brings a law enforcement perspective and a citizen's perspective. He brings experience with the jail and the Coroner's Office. He's been a lieutenant and captain and has many law enforcement endorsements.

Bob Luca

Bob was a D.A. investigator for three years. He studied law enforcement in college, and when he graduated he went to work as an undercover narcotics officer. Most of his experience was in Santa Clara County. He holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration. He later transferred to the Bureau of Investigations. He established the California Gang/Sexual Predator Programs. He is also active in CASA, an advocacy group for children. He says more deputies endorse him because they want a more progressive person developing the Sheriff's department. Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police also endorse him.

Bob also said that the position of Sheriff is an executive position. He was the chief executive of a bureau that covered the whole state. He managed through good and bad

budget times. He lives in El Dorado Hills. He will look at protection and look at statistics and allocate resources based on that need. He is the only candidate with private business experience as head of security for E-trade for seven years. He built their cyber-crime team and knows about return on investment.

George Nielsen

George has lived in El Dorado County all his life and has been a peace officer for 24 years. He has worked in Placerville for 21 years and is the Chief of Police. He is the only candidate who has worked his entire career in El Dorado County. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and Leadership Institute. He has past executive development experience. He has an Executive Certificate, only one of a limited number issued. He is tough on crime and reduced the crime rate in Placerville by 53%. He believes one should lead by example. He serves on local boards of organizations for youth and hospital.

George said that he wants to bring his knowledge, experience, and success to the whole county. He reduced the annual crime rate in Placerville by 53% over the last five years. The California Police Chiefs Association endorses him. Represents the 1,400 top law enforcement executives in California. He brings service and professionalism. Many people in office are known to him and are his friends.

Craig Therkildsen

Craig said that he represents us in the whole county. He is the only one who works for El Dorado County. He has many different personal ties to the communities in El Dorado County. There are 385 personalities in his office. They have ideas, and he asks people to write out ideas as proposals.

Craig also said that he is a Captain and has worked in the El Dorado County Sheriff's office for 24 years. He is the only candidate from the El Dorado Hills area. He was Jail Commander for 2-1/2 years and has managed the Coroner's Division and the Civil Division. As Sergeant he did community policing. He took a group of deputies to Georgetown, where crime was high, and they worked with the local community to bring crime down. None of the deputies lived in that area. For him, the bottom line is: Do you want deputies who live in the area, or ones who are interested in solving your problems?

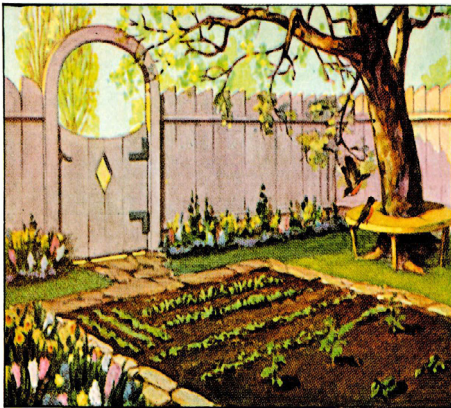
The formal presentations were followed by general discussions with the candidates over refreshments. Everyone thanked the candidates, and wished them all well in the upcoming election ~



PG&E APOLOGIZES FOR SMART METER BLUNDERS

Customers have been complaining about Pacific Gas & Electric's new Smart Meters for months. Recently the utility held a news conference to apologize for missteps in the program and promised to work to regain customers' trust. Pacific Gas & Electric has released a report acknowledging that thousands of its smart meters have had technical problems and that its customer service has been insufficient.

The company has been the source of ire by customers in California who have complained that their utility bills went up after the two-way digital meters were installed.



May Day

A delicate fabric of bird song
 Floats in the air,
 The smell of wet wild earth
 Is everywhere.
 Oh I must pass nothing by
 Without loving it much,
 The raindrop try with my lips,
 The grass with my touch;
 For how can I be sure
 I shall see again
 The world on the first of May
 Shining after the rain?

— Sara Teasdale

More than 5 million meters have been installed since 2007. Prompted by customer complaints over billing accuracy, California regulators ordered PG&E to provide details of its smart-meter program.

At a recent press conference, company executives said the number of problems related to inaccurate bills could be as high as 23,000, according to a report in the *San Jose Mercury News*. The utility also released four years' worth of project management reports and the results of a review that identified "issues" related to wireless communication, data storage, meter installation, and accuracy.

In response to the problems, PG&E will ramp up its customer service programs, including dedicating a call center to smart meters. It will also communicate more with customers who receive a smart meter and offer information on how it can help them control energy usage, the company said.

PG&E's travails with its smart-meter program, which is about halfway through to its 10 million meter goal by 2012, are being felt throughout the utility industry.

There is concern that smart meters are being installed without giving consumers tools to take advantage of the technology or with little information about the capabilities. In some cases, consumers can get more detailed information through a Web portal and turn off appliances with a dedicated in-home display. But in many cases, utilities are installing meters to improve automated usage reporting without providing such tools to end users.

Installation of Smart Meters has begun along Bass Lake Road, according to several BLAC members who have had the meters recently installed. They report that the installation is accomplished quickly, but requires that the power to the house be interrupted for about five or ten seconds. ~

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BLAC SETS JUNE MEETING AND SPEAKER

The June meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee will be held at 7:00 PM on June 7, 2010, at the home of Stuart and Sue Colvin, 2401 Summer Drive, in Woodridge (El Dorado Hills), telephone 530-672-2427.

The speaker for June will be Guy Gertsch, El Dorado Hills Community Services District Director and El Dorado County Parks Commissioner. Guy will speak on current challenges in civic governance.

All BLAC members and members of the community are cordially invited to attend. For further information, contact Vice President Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~



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