

GM's Corner: January 2018



Happy New Year! We hope that 2018 is off to a good start for you and your family. Here at Camrosa, it's time to look ahead to the coming year, as well as reflect upon some of the events of 2017.

Disaster Prep: What You Can Do

The end of 2017 brought devastating fires to this region, followed by mudslides, resulting in impacts on some water districts in the western part of the county. While large-scale interruptions in service are rare, incidents such as fires and earthquakes are unpredictable. For this reason, it is important that we, as individuals, are prepared. Our recommendation is that you have seven days' worth of emergency drinking water on hand, with one gallon per person per day for that week. More tips on storing and filtering water during an emergency can be found [here](#) on our Web site.

State Mandates

Last year was an extremely busy one for water agencies with the California State Legislature and at the State Water Resources Control Board (SWB), two entities that decide most of water policy in California. Camrosa staff analyzes various proposed laws and regulations, and takes action as appropriate. From testifying at official hearings, to submitting detailed comment letters, to voicing our concerns directly to our local elected representatives, we advocate to protect and promote the interest of the District. It is important that we continue to do so in 2018, given the far-ranging impacts that many of these proposals would have on our District and customers.

The most controversial programs in development are new statewide water taxes. **SB 623** and **AB 401** would each enact a tax that would add a monthly surcharge to customers' bills. Known as a "public goods" charge, we've long opposed any sort of tax on your water bill, and many water agencies in the state are in agreement.

SB 623 (Monning) seeks to tax water users statewide to pay for cleanup and maintenance of water systems in specific areas of the state—none of which is in Camrosa's service area. While we support all communities having safe and reliable drinking water, we don't believe that using residential water bills as the funding mechanism for a statewide social issue is an appropriate way to distribute the responsibility, and we have communicated our opposition to the state.

The second proposal, AB 401 (Dodd), creates a financial subsidy for low-income Californians to pay their water bills. Similar to energy bill payment assistance programs (e.g., CARE), the subsidy would be paid for by a surcharge on ratepayers' bills every month. Again, while Camrosa does not oppose financial assistance to those who need it, there are fundamental problems with this program. Specifically, it proposes to use an income level that would render fully one-third of California's households eligible for the subsidy. Such broad eligibility would require a staggering amount of money—potentially upwards of \$650 million a year—and there

are questions about how the money would be collected, privacy and security of sensitive information about income, and other concerns. See our comment letter [here](#).

In addition to these bills, you may have heard about the state's new approach to water management, [Conservation as a Way of Life](#). There are many components to the new framework that will be implemented over the coming months and years. One significant portion is the provision that, by the end of this year, the state anticipates providing each urban water agency with a "water use target" composed of residential indoor water use, outdoor irrigation water use, and a water loss budget with state required implementation.



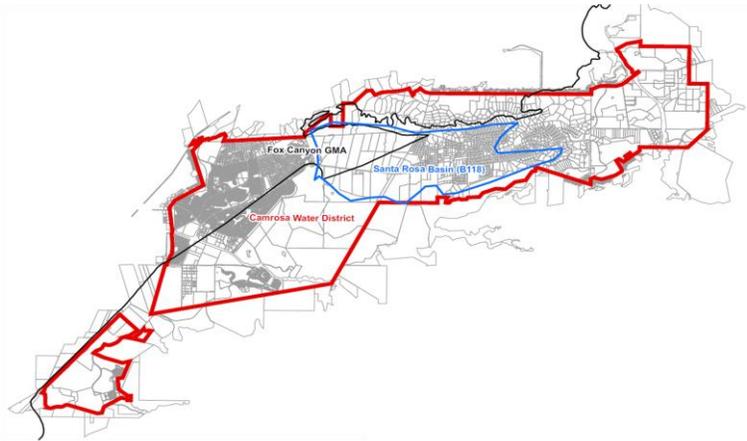
Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin touring facilities

Our concerns about state legislation have helped us forge stronger relationships with our local elected officials. We appreciate those who have visited our district, learning more about our system of water treatment and delivery, and listening to our concerns about pending policy proposals.

Stay informed about water policy development by clicking [here](#).

Groundwater Management Policies Moving Forward

The Santa Rosa Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is gearing up for a productive year in developing management plans for the Arroyo Santa Rosa Valley basin. The GSA was formed as a partnership between Camrosa and the County of Ventura in response to a state directive that requires specific groundwater basins to develop sustainability plans. The basin lies entirely in Camrosa's service area, and the main areas of focus are water quality



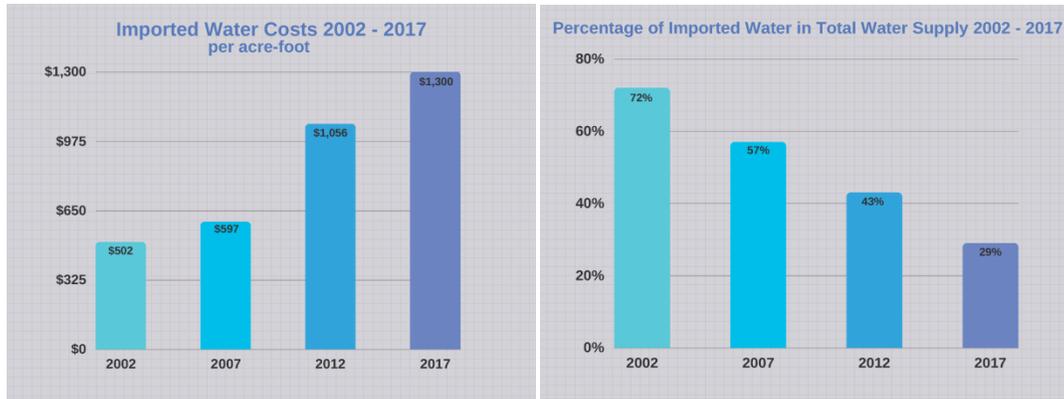
Santa Rosa Basin outlined in blue. Camrosa district boundaries are in red.

and additional local water production. A number of projects to address these issues are on the drawing board, and the GSA Board will discuss them in the coming year. The public will have an opportunity for input throughout this process, both at the formal GSA meetings and at special outreach events. Keep informed by checking the GSA page, located [here](#).

District Projects on Tap for 2018

Developing local water supply projects is a cornerstone of our philosophy to build self-reliance. Importing water from up to 400 miles away is not a reliable way to ensure that our customers receive the water they need, when they need it. And it's not a sound financial alternative, either.

Take a look at the two graphs below, and you'll see how the cost of imported water has more than doubled in 15 years. That, as well as the vulnerability of the state's infrastructure, is why we've made concerted efforts to reduce our dependence on this source. By diversifying our water portfolio, we have reduced our reliance on out-of-district water by more than 40%.



District projects like our groundwater desalination facility, creek diversion structure, and local wells, all contribute to the reliability and stability of our water supplies. Projects often take years of planning and construction, so the payoff doesn't always happen quickly—but it does happen. And that's where you, our ratepayers, come in. Because of your investment over the years via your payments each month, we're able to plan for and build these projects, helping to secure water resources for the near- and long-term future.

As far as nuts-and-bolts projects for 2018, we have plans in the works that will continue our District mission of maximizing local resources, increasing our self-reliance, and reducing our dependence on imported water. Construction will continue at the new **PV Well #2**, located adjacent to Tierra Linda Elementary School and next to the existing well there. This additional water source is designed to produce 1,000 acre feet a year (AFY) of drinking water.

We also have plans to build **two new pump stations** this year that will improve our ability to move water more effectively and efficiently throughout the District. Most of our local groundwater is produced in the lowest elevations in the western half of the District. As we continue to build more local production facilities to reduce our dependence on higher-priced imported water, we'll need these pump stations to take full advantage of our local-resource investments.

As we increase our dependence on locally produced water, we must also ensure that the associated facilities are well-maintained. New projects do not always mean new facilities; sometimes they involve upgrading existing ones. Over the next few years, some of our project budget will include bringing our reservoirs up to current earthquake standards, and the rehabilitation of existing wells that produce our local resource water. In addition, this year, we'll be improving the District's method of disinfection treatment process. We will transition from a free-chlorination system to a chloramination system. This change will allow the District to increase disinfection levels evenly throughout the distribution system without affecting the taste and odor of your water.

We'll keep you posted here and elsewhere on the progress of these projects.

Facilities Tours Give Customers Close-up Look at District

We offered two facilities tours in 2017 to give our ratepayers a closer look at where their money goes—the projects, infrastructure, and maintenance that are required to treat and deliver water that is safe, reliable, and affordable. We visited the Camrosa Water Reclamation Facility, the Round Mountain desalination plant, and the Conejo Creek Diversion Structure. The day was topped off by a homemade BBQ lunch prepared by Camrosa staff. The next tour will be in June 2018, and registration is now open. Contact Charlotte Lopez at (805) 482-4016 or clopez@camrosa.com to sign up.



Long-Term Camrosa Employees Celebrate Work Anniversaries

Camrosa has a talented, diverse, and dedicated staff that allows the District to accomplish many of the things we do. Employees are our most important resource. Two of our finest recently celebrated milestones with the District. Bill Keyes (right), Senior Technical Inspector, marked 30 years. Bob Baker (left), Systems Operator II, reached 35 years of service. These pros bring invaluable knowledge and expertise to our Camrosa team, and we honor their dedication to the District and its customers.



Camrosa Staff Develops Cutting-Edge GIS Applications

Along with many other water districts, Camrosa uses Esri software, known as the “Microsoft” of the GIS world. Talented Camrosa GIS staff took the software to the next level, creating many innovative applications that improve efficiency and productivity, including the ability to detect leaks in the District, calculate landscape areas, and other uses. You can read more about the technology in the Fall 2017 issue of [Esri News for Water](#).

Free Outdoor Water Efficiency Improvement Opportunities

Landscape survey: For qualified customers, Camrosa is also offering a free, comprehensive landscape survey. Through this program, a landscape professional will visit your home and evaluate your landscaping and irrigation system. The evaluator will make recommendations for improving watering practices and selecting drought-friendly plants, as well as conduct an analysis of soil and grass type. At the conclusion of the visit, you will receive a detailed report outlining the evaluator’s findings and suggestions. For more information, and to see if you qualify, call (805) 482-4016.

Deep watering stakes: Camrosa is offering two free 24-inch-deep watering stakes to help you target watering at the roots, where trees need it most. They cut down on water waste from spray heads, and are more effective at root-watering than drip systems. Stop by our office to pick up your free pair of stakes during business hours, 9:00 – 4:30 weekdays.

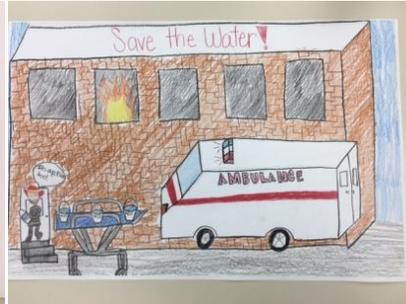
Student Art Contest Winners

Camrosa’s outreach starts in our schools, educating students on the value of water and efficient use of the resource. One of those outreach efforts is the annual art contest sponsored by

Metropolitan Water District (MWD) for students in their service area, which encompasses most of Southern California. This year's theme was "Water is Life." Camrosa promotes the contest in our District, soliciting entries from our local schools. We had some outstanding submissions this year, with Camrosa staff selecting the first, second, and third place winners. Below are the three winning entries:



1st place



2nd place



3rd place

Camrosa's first-place artist, Mackenzie English, has her drawing featured in the 2018 MWD *Water is Life* calendar, and her artwork will be part of a traveling exhibit of winning artists displayed in water district offices throughout Southern California. The calendars are available free of charge at our office, so stop by and pick one up. And if you have a child in our service area in grades K-12 who is interested in participating in next year's contest, please email clopez@camrosa.com for details.

As always, our top priority at Camrosa is to provide a safe, affordable and reliable water supply of the highest quality, along with excellent customer service. Please don't hesitate to contact our Customer Service Department should you have any questions or concerns at any time: (805) 388-0226 or customerservice@camrosa.com. And remember, for the latest District and water news, check our Web site at www.camrosa.com. We're also on [Twitter \(@CamrosaWater\)](https://twitter.com/CamrosaWater) and we'll be unveiling our newly redesigned Facebook page in February—be sure to check it out.

With best wishes for a happy 2018,

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