

BELLA VISTA WATER DISTRICT:

The Value of Our Water

Water is essential to our daily lives, but few people consider its importance and value. In most communities potable tap water costs less than a penny per gallon at the tap. In Bella Vista Water District, a gallon of clean, safe tap water costs less than one sixteenth of a cent! Safe and reliable water is a true bargain considering the energy, extensive delivery systems and expertise required to capture, store, pump, filter, disinfect and deliver. Our water is continuously monitored for quality and is distributed on demand to our customers every day around the clock.

The cost of delivering that water has increased in recent years for several reasons. Even with these ongoing increases, our water remains an incredible value, especially compared to bottled water and other essential products. When you consider the convenience and life sustaining critical needs addressed by water service, clean wholesome tap water is a tremendous value. Some take for granted this essential service which is essential for public health, fire protection, economic development and a high quality of life.

Where Does Our Water Come From?

Our water supply comes from two sources, the Sacramento River and deep groundwater wells. The water from the River is provided through a Central Valley Project (CVP) water service contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The rates for CVP water are adjusted annually with adjustments passed through to the District's customers. The water is pumped from the River at the Wintu Pumping Plant located below Hilltop Drive in Redding and filtered at the District's Treatment Facility. The District is able to pump and treat up to 52.5 million gallons per day through a state-of-the-art treatment facility. The filtered and disinfected water is then distributed throughout our 52 square mile service area through a distribution system using over 200 miles of pipeline ranging in size from 54-inch diameter to 4-inch. Additionally, District facilities include three storage tanks, two regulating tanks, nine pumping plants, and five groundwater wells. Our water is supplied to over 6,100 customers including, residential and rural customers, businesses, schools, and agricultural.

Treatment Of Our Water Supply

Bella Vista Water District is committed to providing a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. The District monitors for over 100 contaminants and must meet stringent EPA and State drinking water health standards. Our water has never violated a maximum contaminant level or any other water quality standard. The water supply is tested daily at our treatment facility and undergoes more frequent testing than bottled water. Microbiological testing is also completed weekly at sites throughout the District.

Maintaining And Replacing Aging Infrastructure

Bella Vista Water District was formed in 1957 with construction of the original water system in 1965. Aging facilities and system components must be continually upgraded, repaired or replaced to ensure reliable water delivery to our customers. Maintenance of the system accounts for a substantial portion of expenses. Capital expenditures such as the \$10 million dollar upgrade to our Wintu Pump Station and Water Treatment plan have been made to improve water service reliability and meet current drinking water standards. Other necessary and ongoing maintenance projects include water main replacements, water storage tank rehabilitations, valve exercising and water meter replacements.

While everyone benefits from this giant network of piping, pump stations, and treatment facilities, it doesn't come without a price. Because our water infrastructure has lasted as long as it has, we haven't had to worry about the expense of replacing it. However, during next few decades, much of that network is going to need upgrading or replacement. We can therefore be sure that tap water service will cost more in the future than it does today.

We have arrived at a turning point. The choice we face is either to adopt strategies to renew our water infrastructure, or accept the erosion of reliable water service over time. If we begin to move toward rate structures and financing plans that reflect the full cost of water service, we will avoid rate shock in the in the years ahead.

Environmental Regulations

Environmental regulations, including compliance with endangered species requirements, wastewater discharge permits, air quality standards, and many more – also add significant cost to the delivery of our water.

Reduced Revenues Due To Conservation

Our customers have responded to recent water shortages and requests from our state government to reduce water usage. While we appreciate our customer's effort to conserve, the drop in water sales translates to reduced revenues while much of the cost for delivering water remains the same. Due to these fixed costs, many water agencies have had to raise rates to offset revenue lost due to reduced water sales. Due to our cost based rates combined with a reduction in staffing and other expenses the District has not had to raise rates and remain some of the lowest in the state!

Increasing Energy Costs

It takes a tremendous amount of electricity to pump, treat and deliver water to our customers. Electricity is also a substantial portion of our operating costs. As energy costs rise, these increases directly affect the cost of delivering water to our customers.

