

Experts aim to avoid area water hazards

By MIKE GARRETT 2/18/92
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Studies conducted by Citizens Utilities Co. and other water experts indicate the West Valley is blessed with the highest quality and most abundant water supply in Maricopa County.

But West Valley water experts are saying it's a blessing in disguise because of higher costs to bring groundwater to the surface.

Finding cheaper sources and better management of available water was the main topic at a special West Valley water resources meeting Monday in the Sun City West Community Services Center.

Despite reports of rising water tables, experts say the West Valley's increasing demand for water could surpass the supply beyond 2000.

Virginia Smith, Property Owners and Residents Association Utilities and Water Resources Committee chairwoman, called the West Valley's leading water experts together to define area water problems and seek solutions.

Smith invited Dennis Schroeder, Central Arizona Project manager of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Arizona Projects Office, to discuss future CAP plans for the West Valley.

Schroeder told the group that the bureau, Department of Water Resources and the Phoenix Active Management Area launched an extensive three-phase, nine-month study in January to evaluate various CAP water delivery options for the Valley's municipal and private water contractors.

He said the study group is seeking active participation and feedback from West Valley interests to ensure they're on the right track to meet the area's future water needs.

Attending Monday's meeting were 13 Sun Cities and West Valley water experts. Representing Sun City West interests were Smith, PORA President Dick Egan and Keith Hook, Arve Dahl, Dess, Chappellear, Dick Malafa and Dick DeFranco. Former HOA President George

Radie, Wes Gilbertson and Max Waugh represented Sun City.

Representing the West Valley were Bill Beyer, Peoria attorney and West Valley lobbyist for the Western Maricopa Coalition, and Joe Falbo, Maricopa Water District chairman and former Glendale city councilman.

"What we're really looking at is which water system is going to be the most efficient and the least expensive for us in the future," Egan said.

"Are we looking at a simple source such as CAP water, or to have a complicated recharge, recovery program that will be tied up with environmental people as well as the DWR?" Egan asked.

"What we're trying to do is to see what's going to be best for us for the long term," he said.

"I feel we need a good water allocation system for the Sun Cities and we need to look to the future to build a conveyer supply pipe line and a water treatment plant so these communities can go along in perpetuity," said Chappellear. "But I'm hearing a lot of conflicting data as to which way the water table is going and I don't know what's right. We need more data."

Meeting participants said each water distribution system has its pros and cons based on current data.

Dahl and others expressed concern that CAP or recharged water (effluent) would be of lesser quality than groundwater. But they acknowledged the West Valley cannot depend exclusively on groundwater under current state guidelines.

Under the state's new Groundwater Replenishment Act, West Valley communities and water users dependent solely on groundwater may be taxed up to 2 1/2 times more than Phoenix and the East Valley communities that pay for treated surface water.

While the two Sun Cities water resources committees have done extensive area hydrology studies, their conclusions are that there is still a scarcity of good, solid information on the subject, said Gilbertson.

Water - Where It Comes From And Where It Goes

by Judith Meldrum

WESTER 10/17-23/91

At the PORA General Meeting, Oct. 10, at 9 a.m. in Johnson Social Hall, the story of Sun City West water was discussed by four knowledgeable citizens.

Where The Water Comes From:

Water Resources Chairman Dick Egan showed slides of the eight wells and two water stations throughout Sun City West. Each well produces 11,000 gallons per minute. Our city is fortunate to be located above an enormous groundwater Aquifer which has been accumulating water over 500 million years. The water level was at 400 feet before the city was developed and has actually risen 10 feet over the past ten years.

Where The Water Goes:

Keith Hook of the Rec Center's Advisory Board, described the irrigation system. Our affluent, he said, is treated at the SCW Water Treatment Plant located at 115th St. and Beardsley Road on the south bank of the Agua Fria. Water has a long way to flow through its pipeline from the collection tank behind the wall at Bell and Mirage Roads, across the desert washes and through a tank of ferris chloride to counteract odor.

Mr. Hook said that so far affluent is not used on the golf courses because the mineral quality is questionable, though Del Webb is considering a recharge program for some affluent to be drawn for that purpose.

Valley Water History:

Frank Barrios, Director of the Phoenix Department of Water Resources, said that in early days, probably during the Indian cultures,

there was, oddly enough, water logging in the area but heavy use of agriculture soon changed that. Since 1923 thousands of acre feet have been pumped from the Squifer and, though it remains very large, it is a depleting resource. In 1940 the first ground water law was tried and failed. Since 1980 a new ground water law is working and now the CAP project has given Arizona control of its share of the Colorado River. The final aim is to reduce the dependence on underground water and to keep it and surface water on an even keel.

Today's Water

Fred Kreiss, General Manager of Citizens Utility, was the final guest speaker. The community water use covers private residences, condos, hospitals,

Efficient water use urged

Rec centers test conservation methods

By MIKE GARRETT 10/11/91
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — About 150 Sun City West residents and Property Owners and Residents Association members were updated on area water conservation efforts at PORA's General Membership meeting.

Addressing residents Thursday on that key issue in the R.H. Johnson Social Hall were Dick Egan, PORA second vice president and chairman of PORA's Utilities and Water Resources Committee; Keith Hook, Recreation Centers of Sun City West Advisory Board water specialist; Frank Barrios, director of the Phoenix Active Management Area for the Arizona Department of Water Resources; and Fred Kriess, general manager of Citizens Utilities and Sun City West Utilities Co.

Kriess said he prefers to call it wise water management because the cheapest way to preserve Sun Cities groundwater is through conservation.

He stressed that Sun Cities commercial water users are just as guilty as private single-family and multi-family residents in wasting water.

Kriess and Egan said studies have shown that 65 percent of all water used in the Sun Cities is water used outside that can't be recycled. That's opposed to 35 percent inside usage, which goes into the Sun Cities waste water treatment system.

"We have to try and cut that outside usage down and use water more efficiently," said Egan.

"We're fortunate that Del Webb selected this site for a retirement community because we have an ample source of water for the current size of Sun City West as it now stands and for the intended and proposed expansion.

"But what we would like to do is assure for future generations that this community will stand as it does today," said Egan.

He explained Sun City West's aquifer system, how and where water is pumped from the community's eight wells into its two treatment plants and how residential-commercial water sources are different from the water used to irrigate the area's seven golf courses.

Hook said the recreation centers have been experimenting with different ways to conserve golf course water usage. But so far the centers haven't resorted to using treated effluent on the courses because of its high mineral content as it comes out of the waste treatment plants.

Hook said for the past three years, the recreation centers have complied with the DWR allocation standard of 2,958.4 acre feet of water for its five courses.

Hook noted that the amount of lake water used to irrigate the golf courses — 50,000 to 100,000 gallons a year — is per capita roughly equivalent to the amount each resident uses privately.

Kriess said that Sun City West, because of its greater use of desert landscaping, consumes about 20 gallons per capita per day less than its Sun City counterpart.

Egan also noted that the Sun City West water table has risen about 10 feet in recent years so replacing used groundwater is not yet a major problem.

Watchdogs guard against water loss



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

In an effort to conserve water, the Sun City West water committees urge homeowners and businesses to stem irrigation water running into the streets.

Sun City West looks to Legislature for relief

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

9-29-04

Sun City West water watchdogs hope to get help from the Legislature to ensure the community doesn't lose thousands of acre-feet of water next year.

The water committees of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West and the Property Owners and Residents Association have approached Mark Frank, director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, about extending the community's General Industrial Use permits through 2012.

According to some committee members who met in a joint session Tuesday, Frank is willing to do that

by including a provision in DWR's funding bill next legislative session.

The GIU permits, used to irrigate some of the community's golf courses with groundwater, are set to expire in August 2005. Legislation passed in 2002 would extend the permits until 2012, but only if the community can prove it is making headway in using Central Arizona Project water.

Use of CAP water could come through a pipeline to Sun City for use on its golf courses, and then tie into an existing pipeline in Sun City West to serve golf courses there as well, but that project is tied up in a court battle that won't go to trial until March. Unless Sun City West can find another method of using CAP water or can prove it is otherwise reducing its reliance on groundwater, the GIU permits will expire next year.

Bob Jones, chair of PORA's water committee, said the community has requested Frank include the extension in an omnibus funding bill

next session.

The problem is most legislators probably wouldn't support a special provision benefiting just Sun City West, according to some committee members.

"We are not popular down at the Legislature, nor is Sun City because we're viewed as not paying school taxes," said Rep. Carole Hubbs of Sun City West, R-District 4. "It's just an attitude and they're going to say they're specifically singling us out."

For that reason, Jones and Hubbs suggested the community not spread the word of its request, for fear legislators from other communities would balk at the idea.

Carolyn Jennings, who chairs RCSCW's committee, said making a request that would benefit a single community isn't unusual. "We're not the only special interest in that omnibus bill. There are others as well," she said. "But rather than draw attention to it, we'd rather just leave it quiet."

Hubbs said Sun City West will be "in very serious trouble" if the groundwater permits are not extended.

"What will they do if it doesn't pass and they lose 2,000 acre-feet of water?" she asked.

One acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, or about enough to supply a family of four for a year.

Jennings said there is no plan but the community likely would have to buy water allocations to make up for the loss.

Jones said Frank indicated the water resources department has "never shut down a well because of expiring permits."

However, he added, "That's no excuse to curtail our activities."

The water committees continue to pursue other alternatives to groundwater for the community, including the possibility of using treated effluent to irrigate the golf courses. Members also are looking at other

See SCW, A5

From A1

sources of water, such as buying water rights from Native American tribes, and obtaining new CAP allocations or additional effluent sources.

Hubbs said the state's water crisis is only going to get worse in the future.

"You think gas is bad —

percentage-wise, (water) is just going to be horrendous in the next 10 years," she said.

In an effort to conserve water, the committees continue to contact homeowners and businesses that allow irrigation water to run into the streets. The so-called fugitive water has been an ongoing challenge.

Harvey Lorentz, a member

of the committees, said the gutter in front of an average home can hold about 10 gallons of water. "So if you see water running down in front of 10 homes, that's 100 gallons," he said.

Bob McCurdy, another member of the committees, said posse members contact businesses and homeowners whenever they notice fugitive water. He said Luke Air Force

Base is a positive story in the water conservation battle. The base in 1995 started converting landscaping at its off-base housing to desert landscaping, saving about \$1 million a year in water and maintenance costs.

The committee will meet again 9 a.m. Oct. 26 in the Camino Room at PORA, 13815 Camino del Sol.

Water conservation topic of SCW meeting

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — Water conservation and future water supplies will be the topics of a joint membership meeting Oct. 10 of the Property Owners and Residents Association and the Sun City West Recreation Centers.

The 9 a.m. session will be held in the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center, 19803 R.H. Johnson Blvd.

Representatives from Sun City West Utilities Co., the state Department of Water Resources and Del Webb Co., developer of Sun City West, will be among the speakers. *AZRep/PA 62*

Sun City West Utilities Co. signed an agreement in August with DWR for a mandatory water conservation plan for Sun City West. The agreement allowed the company to avoid paying \$31,000 in fines for exceeding state-mandated water consumption limits. Consumption was 232 gallons per person per day in 1989, exceeding the 219-gallon state-imposed limit.

As part of the water conservation plan, water audits will be provided to both single-family and multifamily residential customers at no charge. Suggestions will be provided to customers on reducing water use in irrigation of landscaping as well as inside the home.

Customers will be offered free water conservation kits that include low-flow shower devices and toilet leak-detection kits.

Also, the water companies will retrofit commercial customers with low-flow toilet flushing devices and low-flow shower heads at no charge.

To promote water conservation,

water bills will show a history of water consumption so customers can track use.

A similar conservation plan was also approved for Sun City Water Co., which, along with Sun City West Utilities Company, is owned by Citizens Utilities Co.

Future water needs for the expansion area of Sun City West will be discussed at the Oct. 10 meeting. Del Webb Corp. is planning to build up to 3,000 houses on 880 acres between Deer Valley Road, Pinnacle Peak Road, 135th Avenue and 151st Avenue. An 18-hole championship golf course and a new recreation center are planned. *9/20/91*

Another water issue to be taken up at the meeting is the new state law that creates a ground-water replenishment district in the Phoenix area. The district will levy fees for pumping ground water and use the money collected to purchase surface water supplies to replenish the aquifer.

Since Sun City West only uses ground water, community leaders are concerned about high water costs.

Quality of water also is a concern because of the proposed Cholla Landfill to be built between Olive and Northern avenues in El Mirage, along El Mirage Road near the Agua Fria River bed.

Sun City West resident Dick Egan, who is a PORA board member, has been an outspoken critic of the landfill, which is to be developed and maintained by Houston-based Browning-Ferris Industries. Egan said he is concerned about the landfill contaminating the ground water.

News-Sun 12/1/95

Overton calls water summit

Legislator wants Sun Cities area to gain better grasp of issues

By J.J. McCORMACK
Senior staff writer

State Rep. Jerry Overton has identified all the "stakeholders" in the Northwest Valley's water supply and will bring them together next week for a three-hour summit to promote understanding of water issues.

"Water is a terribly complicated issue. It's a misunderstood issue. We want to educate folks and explain the laws that we operate under," said Overton, a Litchfield Park Republican who represents portions of the Sun Cities in legislative District 15.

Overton defines stakeholders as civic organizations and commercial entities that care about the quantity, quality and cost of water now and in the future.

Representatives of each of the designated "stakeholders" will serve on a panel during the water summit, scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Thursday in R.H. Johnson Social Hall East, 19803 R.H. Johnson Blvd., Sun City West.

The stakeholders include the Sun City Home Owners Association, the Property Owners and Residents Association, the city of Surprise and town of Youngtown, the Recreation Centers of Sun City and Sun City West, the Sun City Taxpayers Association, the Sun City Water Users Association, the Condominium Owners Association, Del Webb Corp. and Citizens Utilities Co.

The summit will open with presentations about Arizona water laws by officials from the state Department of Water Resources and the state Department of Environmental Quality. The speakers then will field questions and join in a discussion with the stakeholders panel. Overton,

'Water is a terribly complicated issue.

It's a misunderstood issue. We

want to educate the folks and explain

the laws we operate under.'

— STATE REP. JERRY OVERTON

R-DISTRICT 15

who will moderate the panel, said he will invite summit participants to suggest changes in the law.

Discussion topics during the summit will include the future of the Central Arizona Project — the 368-mile-long canal that carries Colorado River Water into central and southern Arizona — groundwater quality and supply and use of effluent or untreated water on golf courses.

Proposed water and sewer rate increases for Citizens Utilities Co. are not on the summit agenda, Overton said. The rate case is pending before the Arizona Corporation Commission. A public hearing is set for May 15.

► See Water summit, A6

Water summit on tap

■ From A1

News-Sun 12/1/95

Overton, a retired engineer who serves on the House Natural Resources and Environment committees, said he organized the summit because of the strong interest in water issues shown by the stakeholder groups. He said he also wants to dispel misinformation he knows has been circulating among the stakeholder groups.

Overton said that during meetings in Sun Cities over the last three years he's heard inaccurate statements about water quality, the use of effluent and CAP water.

Although he knows others are concerned, Overton said he's not worried about Arizona's water supply and quality diminishing or the cost skyrocketing.

"I have a lot of confidence in the future of our water. I think we've got sufficient water resources. We just have to learn how to use them and manage them. We shouldn't have to worry too much about a lot of increased cost if we manage them right," Overton said.

"I think we're going to have to expect to pay more for water but not a huge amount. I don't see anything happening in the next 20 to 30 years to cause huge, huge increase in water costs."

Because some of the stakeholder groups have butted heads for years on water issues, Overton said the past will be off-limits during summit discussions.

SC West water plant begins operation

The first of four planned water plants has been placed in service in Sun City West, a spokesman for the Sun City West Utilities Co. said today.

William Raymo, manager of Citizens Utilities, parent company to the Sun City West branch, said the facility northwest of the Meeker Boulevard extension, will serve all of Sun City West.

THE PLANT includes a 1.25 million-gallon storage tank; a 10,000-gallon hydro-pneumatic tank; three 100-horse-

power pumps, each with a capacity of 1,800 GPM; and one 75-horsepower pump with a capacity of 1,000 GPM.

An electrical control building, designed to handle three future plants planned for the community, also is on the three-acre site.

Placed into service March 4, construction costs for the facility were approximately \$640,000.

RAYMO SAID the water supply for the community comes from two ground wells controlled from the plant.

The groundwater level in the area is approximately 350 feet. There are 12 existing wells in the Sun City West area dug by the one-time area cotton and citrus farmers for irrigation purposes. As the development of Sun City West progresses, the utility company will be able to utilize those wells to expand their operations, reducing drastically their production and drilling costs.

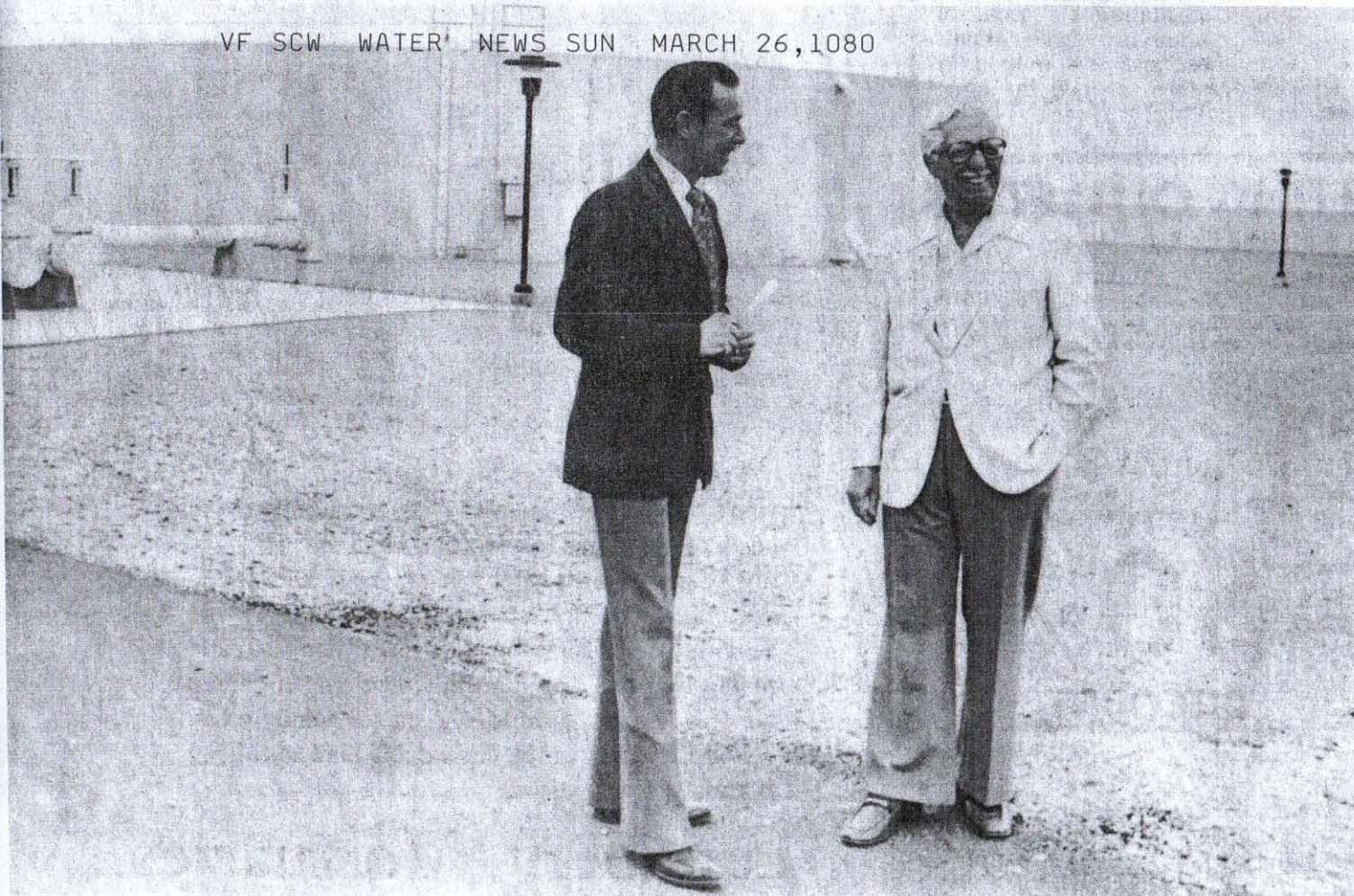
The plant facility in Sun City West is equipped with a sand cleaner to purify the water. Since any groundwater here

is virtually uncontaminated, filtration and purification costs for water treatment is nominally low.

"WE'RE QUITE fortunate in Arizona," Raymo said. "Usually groundwater in most areas, except the Great Lakes region and Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, is pure and requires little purification."

The water is pumped from the ground wells into the large storage tank and then is channeled to the consumers.

VF SCW WATER NEWS SUN MARCH 26, 1980



William Raymo, left, manager of Citizens Utilities, and George Eldin, chairman of the Property Owners and Residents Association utilities committee, inspect the completed water

plant northwest of the Meeker Boulevard extension in Sun City West. The facility will handle the water supply for the community. It is the first of four plants planned for the area.



Steve Chernick/Daily News

Marion Mahoney, seated, and standing from left, Kurt Straus, Don Gladding and Keith Freelin display medals they won in the National Senior Sports Classic V in San Antonio earlier this month.

Nation's best

SC area athletes bring home medals

By ANN T. DALEY
Assistant sports editor

Marion Mahoney came, saw and conquered her race walking events at the National Senior Sports Classic V in San Antonio earlier this month.

So did Mahoney's Sun Cities area neighbors Kurt Straus, Don Gladding and Keith Freelin, who were among the 209 senior athletes from Arizona who competed in the event and brought home 82 medals including 38 golds and 27 silvers.

Arizona's 200-plus athletes competed against seniors ages 50 and older from around the country. More than 8,000 participated in this year's event.

"We worked hard for it this

year," said Mahoney, 70, who won two silver medals in the 1,500 and 5,000 race walk in times of 10:23 and 36:39, respectively.

"We spent more time training vigorously. There's a lot more competition out there now than before."

Freelin, a 69-year-old who teamed with Sun Lakes' Jack Dunn to defend their men's 65-69 title, added, "To repeat as champs we had to beat the guys who won the (60-64) at Baton Rouge (in 1993). It was tough."

Athletes qualified for the event by medaling in the 1993 National Games or at the 1994 Arizona Senior Olympics. Not all medal winners chose to travel to the national competition, however.

In 1993, Arizona sent 128 athletes

and won 54 medals (21 gold).

"This was one of the bigger contingencies we've ever taken," said Sharon Englehardt, director of Arizona Senior Olympics.

Englehardt and other organizers expect Arizona to be well-represented in the 1997 National Senior Sports Classic to be staged in Tucson. All 1995 medal winners qualify for the 1997 event. Athletes also may qualify for the next national event by medaling at the state level.

California athletes led the way 379 of them combining for 24 medals — 84 golds.

A state-high 620 athletes from Texas netted 184 medals, including 60 golds.

► See Seniors enjoy. C2

Seniors enjoy winning

■ From C1

Winning isn't everything, Gladding noted.

"About 7,000 athletes came home with nothing, but they were still winners for being out there," said Gladding, who won bronze medals in the 1,500 (:08:59) and 5,000 (:31:33).

But winning is fun, they agreed.

"I'm expecting big things next time," said Straus, who won a gold medal in the 5,000-meter race walk (:39.13).

Wilma Cory and Albert Simpson of Sun City West combined for a gold medal in the 60-64 mixed shuffleboard doubles.

Charles Obye of Sun City won a gold for his 4 feet, 6 inches mark in the high jump in the men's 70-74 division. Obye also won a pair of silvers for a leap of 13 101/4 inches in the long jump and a heave of 112-8 in the javelin.

Surprise cyclist William Brusasco won a bronze medal for his effort in the mile (:05:54.88).

Peoria golfer Leroy Kerr won a gold medal in the men's 85-89 age division.

Area expert favors CAP water

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Dess Chappelle had hoped he could retire to Sun City West to play golf with his wife, Retha, and paint.

But when members of the community learned that Chappelle had retired from a 13-year career as assistant project manager with the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Arizona Project, they called on his expertise to address area concerns about water resources.

The demand for Chappelle's knowledge has resulted in his service on several area water panels. He serves on the Property Owners and Residents Association's Utilities and Water Resources Committee, the Recreation Centers of Sun City West Water Resources Committee and the Sun Cities Water Resources Council.

"When we learned about him, we got him on the committee right away," said Virginia Smith, former PORA Utilities Committee chairwoman.

Dick Egan, PORA Utilities Committee chairman and past PORA president has made community water issues a top priority. Egan quickly worked Chappelle into the water conservation and preservation loop.

Chappelle admits it didn't take much persuasion to get involved and share his expertise with reclamation water and engineering projects.

As assistant project manager with Central Arizona Project, Chappelle had technical and administrative supervision over the Office of Distribution Systems, Environmental Division, Operations Division and Advanced Planning Division.

Before retirement, Chappelle was awarded the Meritorious Service Award by the Secretary of the Interior for his engineering and management career with the Bureau of



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dess Chappelle, a retired project manager with Central Arizona Project and Bureau of Reclamation, has immersed himself in various water issues since moving to Sun City West.

Reclamation.

"I'm trying to be as helpful as I can as far as the water resource needs of this community are concerned," Chappelle said. "I've gotten so busy that I haven't had time to do my artwork."

Chappelle takes time out to play golf and is involved in researching the computerized tee time proposal for rec centers courses.

"What motivates me as far as the water business is that I've always had a great interest in it and when I look at this community, I think it's vulnerable," Chappelle said.

"The only water source we have is groundwater," he said. "We supposedly have a 100-year supply but I don't think that's adequate for a community. You must have a sustainable supply."

That means putting back in the ground what is taken out. Chappelle said the time is now to plan for Sun City West's future water needs to ensure a sustainable supply and maintain a water quality standard that has been rated one of the state's best.

"You can't go along and then shut down in 100 years or develop water

quality problems," Chappelle said. "I'd like to be able to bring in CAP (Central Arizona Project) water and use it on these golf courses. In doing that, we, in effect, could double our groundwater supply."

Chappelle said many concerns also remain over the proposed use of effluent (treated waste water) on area golf courses that would likely require building a new treatment plant. He thinks it would be more cost effective to bring in CAP water because of the canals already in place.

"For some communities it might not be cost effective. But for this community it is because we have a use for CAP water without taking it through a water treatment plant," he said. "CAP water is very suitable for growing grass on golf courses."

He said recent conversations between water committee members and Maricopa County Water Conservation District officials have shown that a canal turnout off the existing Beardsley Canal north of Sun City West could be used to bring CAP water without additional costs.

Sun Cities residents warned to reduce use of groundwater

Experts discuss proposed 'Replenishment Tax,' other concerns

By Jack Hawn

While virtually no news emerged from a meeting last Friday at Palm Ridge Recreation Center that was called to discuss a proposed Arizona water "Replenishment Tax," strong warnings were issued about the future availability of ground water in the Sun Cities.

"The falling ground water table is a serious issue," said attorney Bill Beyer, who formerly represented the SCW Recreation Centers and has become an expert on water issues after 10 years of study.

"In the long term," he continued, "the Sun Cities will have to

do something in the water replenishment program. Long term mining of ground water will have its consequences."

Beyer, who served on Gov. Hull's Water Management Commission that was formed about 18 months ago and included about 70 people, called it "a dreary process." He said there was "a resentment against the Sun Cities" because of the area's apparent disregard for conservation of ground water.

He reported that the Sun Cities together pump 21,800 acre feet of ground water a year (33,600 with golf courses), which is far greater than the entire city of

Phoenix, which pumps 15,370 acre feet. By comparison, Glendale pumps only 7,700 acre feet.

The meeting was called by geologist Bob Jones, a member of the Rec. Centers' Governing Board and chairman of the Water Committee.

He reported earlier that a "serious tax" could be levied against SCW residents if and when the current proposal is passed by the legislature.

Jones explained that the "Replenishment Tax" is primarily aimed at communities that pump more ground water than that which is recharged, such as in both Sun Cities.

State Sen. Ed Cirillo, who attended Friday's meeting, said he could not predict when the pro-

posal will be acted upon by Gov. Hull.

"She may decide to pass it on to the next governor," he added. "Water is one of the biggest problems we have in the state of Arizona."

Cirillo noted that the proposal is strictly a "punitive tax" which will not generate any additional water.

"If we do go to this tax," he speculated, "I think it will end up on the water bill. It might start with a small amount and get to \$5 in five years or so."

Cirillo said he will "be on the defensive" in arguing against the tax at the state capital.

"Why should the Sun Cities use twice the ground water that Phoenix does?" he asked rhetori-

"Why should the Sun Cities use twice the groundwater that Phoenix does? I don't have an answer."

—Ed Cirillo,
State Senator



cally. "I don't have an answer."

It was noted that the present legislation does not include two key elements: who will collect the tax and how the money will be used.

At the outset of the meeting, Jones provided background information and commented about the need to replenish the water supply with CAP water. He also talked about arsenic being "widely distributed throughout the earth's crust" which may be removed by the process of reverse osmosis.

Citizens Water Resources Manager Keith Larson gave a slide presentation with numerous facts and figures covering current

See RESIDENTS, Page 2

RESIDENTS: to reduce groundwater use, from Page 1

and proposed obligations and other information.

Rec Centers' Governing Board Pres. Dee Hjermstad, who attended with several other directors, said she will appoint an ad hoc committee to work with the Water Committee to outline a comprehensive water conservation and replenishment program for the Sun Cities in conjunction with Citizens.

"I will make an announcement at the Dec. 13 (Board) meeting," she said. "The citizens of Sun City West are aware but never have communicated our concerns to the legislature."

State Rep. Mike Gleason came to the meeting but left before it started, explaining that because he is involved with the state budget process, his attendance might be a conflict of interest.

PORA was represented by Bob

McCurdy.

Earlier, Jones called the proposed tax "a step in the right direction."

"Not speaking as a potential SCW taxpayer," he continued, "but as a geologist, I'd say it's appropriate. How else are we going to cut down on this use of ground water?"

"We're very close," he said, to getting the OK to proceed with plans to bring CAP water to Sun City West.

"We expect it to be approved in January," he added.

He estimated it would take about two years to build a pipe line to the community. Jones also guessed it might take even longer before a "Replenishment Tax" is approved, if at all.

"You know how the legislature works," he said. "I would guess it would be three to five years."

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2001

Measures taken to secure water resources

Water from the Central Arizona Project canal enters the Beardsley Canal at Lake Pleasant, north of Sun City West.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

NEW WORLD:
Supplies constantly monitored but officials leave nothing to doubt

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

With fears of biological terrorist attacks increasing in the United States, some of the state's companies are going into lock-down mode.

The Central Arizona

Project, which has a 336-mile canal to carry Colorado River water from Lake Havasu City to Tucson, beefed up its security in recent weeks.

The canal delivers millions of gallons of water to Arizona cities.

Troy Day, environmental engineer and compliance supervisor for Citizens Water Resources, said there are several stop-gap measures to defend against biochemical warfare in the state's water supply, including monitoring the fish population and chlorine demand in water tests.

"If you suddenly see a lot

of dead fish in the reservoirs or other water supplies, it gives a real indicator that something is wrong," he said. "We also monitor how much chlorine is needed to cleanse the water. If too much chlorine is needed, it shows that there is something wrong with the water."

Day said the possibility of some sort of biochemical agent getting through the tests is very slim, but even that small factor is something that needs to be monitored.

"It's something that we

See Agencies boost, A5

OVER

From A1

need to be aware of and not dismiss entirely," he said. "This is the new world that we live in now and the possibility of such a plot is something that needs to be addressed."

Bob Barrett, CAP spokesman and a Peoria City Council member, said the canal does not serve as a good agent for delivering biological weapons as the water is closely monitored and treated regularly. CAP pumping stations, though, have been locked down since the attacks.

"The entire canal system is fenced with a six- to seven-foot high wire mesh with barbed wire on top," Barrett said. "The pumping stations are locked down and our armed security agents are putting in a lot of overtime patrolling the perimeter."

From October through March, CAP's storage reservoir is Lake Pleasant, which is patrolled by the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. Although public parts to the lake are patrolled regularly, there are several unpatrolled areas that have

access to the water system as well.

If some sort of chemical or biological agent were released in the water, though, Barrett said, the chance of it doing any harm is very slim.

"Water is not a good transmitting agent for a biological attack," he said. "Anthrax has to be distributed in an aerosol fashion, and there really isn't anything that does well in water."

At any one time, the CAP canal holds 170 billion gallons of water, which would greatly dilute any agent released in it.

"It would take truckloads to make any sort of impact," Barrett said. "And we provide our water to utility companies and cities, which then test and treat and retest the water again before it is pumped to homes or industries."

Ray Jones of Citizens Water Resources, which provides water to the Sun Cities and manages wells for Surprise, said the Sun Cities do not directly use CAP water for drinking, but the water that is delivered for drinking in other communities goes through a series of tests for

impurities.

Peoria and Glendale both use some mix of CAP water and groundwater for household use.

"In the West Valley, in the parts we serve, we are just using groundwater," he said. "That water is tested for hundreds of different things before it is delivered to people's homes."

In Peoria, drinking water comes primarily from wells, but is chlorinated before being sent to homes or industries, according to Dave Van Fleet, environmental quality assurance officer for Peoria.

"We add chlorine for disinfection and we take a biological sample to test for micro-bacteria," he said. "Any water that is sent out for drinking is tested and treated weekly."

According to Barrett, chlorine will kill most biological agents that are harmful to humans.

Worried about the potential for terror attacks, however, the nation's water system operators are seeking up to \$5 billion from Congress to upgrade drinking water and wastewater facilities, plus \$155 million — a 62-fold increase — in Environmental

Protection Agency security-planning funds.

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, which serves 160 million people, recommended that Congress take the measures to boost security for the nation's water supplies. The request was being made Wednesday before the House Transportation and Infrastructure water resources and environment subcommittee.

The hearing was called to explore the vulnerability of water supplies at dams and reservoirs, wastewater treatment plants, hazardous chemical operations and federally owned power plants.

Some major fears extending far beyond New York and Washington are that an explosion at a sewage plant along a river could contaminate the drinking water of millions downstream or that the catastrophic loss of major dams could wreak havoc on cities in the flow's path.

In a 1998 presidential directive by then-President Clinton, the EPA gained responsibility for protecting the nation's water supply from terrorist attack, including biological contamination.

The agency received \$2.5 million to combat bioterrorism this year.

Before that it received as little as \$10,000 to protect water supply infrastructure in 1998, no funding for that purpose in 1999 and \$100,000 in 2000 — money that mostly went toward assessing vulnerability and conducting a water protection workshop, according to EPA figures.

Aside from water companies taking precautions against possible biological terrorists attacks, other industries throughout Arizona remain on high alert as well.

The FBI requested that all policing agencies throughout the country be put on the highest possible alert. Although no specific threats have been made locally, the heightened security measures are something agencies are taking very seriously.

In Glendale, about one-eighth of a mile of 57th Drive remains closed to the public to allow emergency vehicles easy access to the public safety building, said Glendale Police Department spokesman Matt Brown.

"The front and the back of the public safety building is kept free of traffic and parked cars in case we need to get our vehicles out of there in a hurry," he said. "We certainly don't expect anything here, but we are taking the necessary precautions."

At the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, which is 38 miles southwest of the Sun Cities, security remains at the highest possible level to guard against potential terrorist attacks.

In addition to armed guards at the plant, there also is a series of checkpoints that stop people from getting near the plant without proper identification.

Similar measures are in place at Luke Air Force Base, where strict security measures do not allow the public onto the base or into its stores. The base does remain open for retired military personnel on a limited basis. A section of Glendale Avenue and Litchfield Road remains closed to through traffic around the base entry gates.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, June 21, 2000

Citizens plans pipeline use

CENTRAL ARIZONA PROJECT: Water will traverse Agua Fria via unused effluent line

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

An existing but unused pipeline across the Agua Fria River will be put to work carrying Central Arizona Project water to Sun City West golf courses under a plan unveiled this week.

The plan to use CAP water was developed by HDR Engineering Inc. and presented to a group of major Sun Cities-area water users.

CAP water comes from the Colorado River via a multibillion-dollar federal canal project and is allocated to users based on their "purchase" of capacity more than a decade ago. Payments must be made to cover canal-construction costs regardless of water actually used.

Two weeks ago, the same engineering firm said the best route to get CAP water to the area was with a pipeline down Lake Pleasant Road (North 99th Avenue) to about Rose Garden Lane in Peoria.

To carry part of that water to seven Sun City West golf courses, said engineer Dave Buras, the long-unused line across the river will finally be put to

work, taking water to golf-course lakes and reservoirs from where it will be pumped onto courses.

The line was built in 1980 by Del Webb Corp., and was originally intended to carry effluent from the Sun City West sewage-treatment plant, which is near 111th Avenue and Rose Garden Lane, back across the river for irrigation.

Although Buras said it had never been used, other long-time Sun City West residents said the effluent had been tried, but its nitrate-rich content encouraged the growth of algae and mold, which plugged the irrigation

original community, and to privately owned Hillcrest and Briarwood golf courses.

The systems and lines have been tested and are in good working order, they said.

All that's needed is water-flow meters, some controls to move the water flow from one reservoir to another, automated valves, and a telemetry system and central control panel. The engineers put the cost of the items at about \$360,000.

Courses in the expansion area — Deer Valley and Desert Trails — do not qualify for CAP water under state rules, and, having been built last, aren't connected to the pipeline anyway, the consultants said.

The pipeline across the river, at Beardsley Road, limits the amount of CAP water that can be used. The line was built to accommodate the effluent quantity, rather than the golf-course needs.

Another meeting of the group, on July 7 at 2 p.m. in the Hoover Room of the Sun City Library, will examine how water will get to Sun City golf courses.

When the studies are complete, Citizens Water Resources will take the data to the Arizona Corporation Commission, to meet the commission's instructions to show just how CAP water will be put to use, thereby justifying an earlier rate increase based on CAP water costs.

The pipeline across the river, at Beardsley Road, limits the amount of CAP water that can be used. The line was built to accommodate the effluent quantity, rather than the golf-course needs.

sprinklers.

Because the CAP water is to flow downhill from the CAP Canal about 10 miles north, with a vertical drop of more than 200 feet, it won't need to be pumped to the courses, engineers said.

The existing distribution lines, also part of the effluent reuse system, will move the water to the five Recreation Centers of Sun City West courses in the

THE WESTER Thursday, September 2, 1999

Hubbs elated long fight to resolve water issue has ended

More than three years later, deal approved by commission

By Jack Hawn

Recreation Centers' Governing Board Pres. Carole Hubbs still "can't believe" the long fight is over.

It seemed so routine last Tuesday, when the Arizona Corporation Commission voted unanimously to approve the agreement among the Rec Centers, Del Webb Corp. and Citizens Utilities to transfer control of the ef-

fluent recharge fields and water reuse credits from Webb to the Rec Centers of Sun City West.

Negotiations started in the spring of 1996, and an agreement was submitted to the commission for approval almost a year ago.

The final approval by Commission chairman Carl Kunasek, Jim Irvin and Bill Mundell guarantees free ground water for perpetuity on the Deer Valley and

Desert Trails golf courses in the Sun City West expansion area.

"After all this time, I couldn't believe it," Hubbs said during a phone conversation Saturday. "I would have been very disturbed if I had gone off (the Board) without finalizing it."

She will complete four years on the Board Dec. 31.

Hubbs said the commissioners seemed impressed by the yellow-shirted SCW residents who attended the meeting to support the issue, most of them arriving by chartered bus.

"There were about 40 people there," she estimated, "a lot of golfers. They (commissioners) were impressed that they gave up their tee times (to attend)."

Black letters on the yellow T-shirts read: "Vote yes! Protect our water supply."

Only about 20 minutes were required to persuade the commission to give its stamp of approval. Among the speakers were Hubbs, Rep. Mike Gleason, an attorney representing the Del Webb Corp. and a Citizens repre-

sentative.

It was reported in a local newspaper that Bill Sullivan, a lawyer representing the Sun City Taxpayers Assn., had filed a letter to the commission the day preceding the meeting expressing concern that the SCW deal would unfairly affect rates for Sun Citians.

At the meeting, Irvin addressed the concern, saying the commission would make certain Sun Citians were charged fairly.

Before voting, Irvin said, "This is an important first step in protecting the water supply of the Northwest Valley."

Initially, the Rec Centers of SCW were to have taken posses-

sion of and operated the recharge facility at about 107th Avenue and Beardsley Road, across the Agua Fria River from the community.

The facility receives secondary effluent from the SCW treatment plant which Citizens operates near that site. Raw sewage from SCW is pumped about two miles across the river valley to the plant. But operation of the recharge field by the Rec Centers would be impractical.

Negotiations finally resolved an agreement whereby Citizens would assume operation of the recharge field, with credits to withdraw ground water made available to the Rec Centers.

Commission approves water pact

Recharge credits OK'd for golf courses

By JOSH KRIST
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Wearing yellow T-shirts with black letters that read: "Vote yes! Protect our water supply," nearly 30 people from Sun City West stepped off of a chartered bus in Phoenix Tuesday morning and filed into the Arizona Corporation Commission hearing room.

They were there to see the long struggle over control of the effluent recharge fields and water reuse credits at the Sun City West sewage treatment plant come to an end.

Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the agreement between Del Webb Corp., the Recreation Centers of Sun City West Inc. and Citizens Utilities which will establish the Rec Centers' right to use groundwater for Deer Valley and Desert Trails golf courses.

Bill Sullivan, a lawyer representing

the Sun City Taxpayers Association, told commissioners, "We want to make sure our clients are properly treated in a rate forum."

Sullivan filed a letter to the commission on Monday expressing the concern that the Sun City West deal would unfairly affect rates for Sun Citians.



Irvin

Commissioner Jim Irvin assured Sullivan that it was the commission's job to make sure Sun Citians were charged fairly.

Carole Hubbs, president of the governing board of Sun City West, said, "We have strong community support, as you can see by our



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Sun City West residents wearing their yellow T-shirts filled the Arizona Corporation Commission hearing room Tuesday. They supported agreements between the Recreation Centers of Sun City West and Citizens Utilities.

yellow-shirted contingent."

Before voting yes to the agreement, Irvin said, "This is an important first step in protecting the water supply of the Northwest Valley."

A tentative agreement was announced in August 1998.

Initially, the Rec Centers were to have taken possession of and operate the recharge facility, which is at about 107th Avenue and Beardsley

Road, across the Agua Fria River from Sun City West. It receives secondary effluent from the Sun City West treatment plant which Citizens operates near that site.

Raw sewage from Sun City West is pumped about two miles across the river valley to the plant.

But having the Centers operate the recharge field proved impractical, and after extended negotiations, the parties agreed that Citizens would take

over operation of the recharge field, if credits to withdraw ground water could be made available to the Centers.

In a previously released statement, the Centers said the governing board had reviewed the agreements "and believes they are in the best interests of all the residents of the community, especially since they assure a firm water supply in perpetuity" for the two golf courses.

SCW leaders disclaim signing appeal

By BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A full-page ad asking Sun City West residents to "protect your water supply" by writing Corporation Commission members has some folks raising questions about the ad's source.

Apparently "signed" by the directors of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, the Property Owners and Residents Association, and the PORA/Rec Centers Water Committee, the ad in *The Wester* urged residents to call or write commissioners and ask them to approve an agreement about use of effluent from the Sun City West sewage treatment plant.

But some board members in the groups whose names appear in the ad say they didn't know about it, and don't agree with its suggestion that they made the appeal. They don't disagree with the ad's substance.

The ad was placed and paid for by Del Webb Corp., the developer of Sun City West, but it doesn't say so.

Webb, the centers and Citizens Utilities have been negotiating for about three years on a plan that would let the centers use recharge credits from the sewage facility (operated by Citizens Utilities) to withdraw well water to use on Deer Valley and Desert Trails golf courses.

Copies of the accords among the Recreation Centers of Sun City Webb, Del Webb Corp. and Citizens Utilities, which outline how improvements to the sewage treatment plant will be built and paid for, who will operate the recharge fields and what will become of their water credits are available to the public in the R. H. Johnson Library in Sun City West.

Technical issues about how the sewer plant and the recharge field would be operated, and the need for environmental approvals, have delayed the process interminably.

But almost a year ago, a final accord was reached that must be approved by the Corporation Commission.

However, hearings have been slow to take place, and Webb and the Centers would like to see the pacts approved.

As a result, said Webb spokesman John Waldron, "we put the ad in the paper so that people would recognize the importance of this issue and let the commissioners know that they'd like

to see it acted on soon."

Waldron said he believed the centers and PORA both knew the ad was to be printed in the July 15 edition of *The Wester*, a weekly paper serving Sun City West, and had approved of it. Copies of it were faxed to both, he said.

But some rec centers board members say they weren't aware of the appeal, and PORA President Phil Garner said he didn't see it, adding that PORA has no connection with the matter.

Both Garner and Centers spokeswoman Mauryne Young said the boards of their respective groups did not formally act to OK the ad.

Young said Centers President Carole Hubbs approved it.

Hubbs is on vacation and could not be reached.

Centers Vice President John Firestone said Friday that some board members had complained to him about the ad.

"They don't worry so much about the content — we'd all like to see this matter resolved — but about how it got into the paper," he said.

PORA's Garner said he thought the ad would have brought fewer raised eyebrows had it said that Webb, an interested party, would like to see the pacts approved, and had urged

residents to act.

One PORA board member, Fred Berkenkamp, who is vacationing out of state, called a reporter to complain about the ad, which someone sent him, saying it didn't represent his views on the matter.

Waldron said that Hubbs, the Centers attorney (Bill Beyer) and Chuck Roach, Webb's vice president, met before the ad was drafted and talked about how they could garner public support for the approval.

He said he believed PORA's Garner had been made aware of those plans.

There is little disagreement over the substance of the ad which simply asks residents to let commissioners know they want the pacts approved, and includes a coupon to be mailed to them.

Copies of the accords among the Centers, Webb and Citizens, which outline how improvements to the sewage treatment plant will be built and paid for, who will operate the recharge fields and what will become of their water credits are available to the public in the R. H. Johnson Library in Sun City West and at other public sites in that community.

At last month's Rec Board meeting, Hubbs explained that she — and former board president Larry Watts, who stayed on the negotiating team

after his board term expired — were thankful, very thankful, that the matter was near its end. All that stood in the way, she said, was commission action.

She said the accords would guarantee the recharge credits needed to continue to use well water for the two expansion area courses at no cost.

An original agreement between developer Webb and its creation, the Recreation Centers, said the recharge fields would be given to the Centers, but that was changed starting three years ago when the extensive renovations and improvements to meet environmental regulations were found necessary and when questions of potential pollution liability arose.

In addition, any expansion of the treatment plant by Citizens Utilities would have required expansion of the recharge fields. Any failure of the recharge process would have left the treatment plant with no way to dispose of effluent.

Now Citizens takes on all responsibility for treatment and recharge after Webb pays for the improvements and renovations.

The centers get the water credits they need for the golf courses, and other parties keep the excess credits which allow a certain amount of well water withdrawals anywhere in the watershed.

Input needed for Del Webb, Rec Centers water agreement

Backers urge residents to contact ACC

By Diane Holloway

As Sun City West weans itself from the breast of Del Webb Corporation, it must supply its own water, treat it and regulate it. But just as any child being weaned argues with a parent over rights and privileges, a dispute must be settled between the two entities, the Rec Centers of Sun City West and the Del Webb Development Corporation.

A year ago, the Recreation Centers worked out an agreement to settle this dispute with the Del Webb Corporation that was sent to the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) for approval. After many months, it may finally be reviewed by the Commission in August. The ACC Commissioners, Chmn. Carl Kunasek and Commissioners Jim Irving and Bill Mundell need input from citizens to decide whether to approve it.

The Board of Directors of the SCW Rec Centers, the PORA Board of Directors, the PORA Water Committee, Rec Centers Atty. Bill Beyer and the Del Webb Corporation are all encouraging Sun City West residents to contact the ACC to give them input for two reasons. First, the ACC has a record of putting off things they don't see as very important. Second, they like to make decisions based on the good of the people instead of a select few who present a proposal.

Attorney Beyer said, "I don't think enough people are adequately informed about this issue. It's a good deal for Sun City West."

The agreement is on file to be read in the SCW Library or at any Recreation Centers facility. It

is highlighted here but residents are urged to read it in its entirety.

The history is that in 1978, Del Webb Home Construction and Citizens Utilities (parent company of Sun City West Utilities Company) agreed that Del Webb would furnish water and wastewater utility services to Sun City West. The Rec Centers operate recreational facilities and as time passed, the two golf courses in the "expansion area" were included. However, these golf courses fall under a Maricopa County requirement that they be irrigated with "renewable" water. The ground water 1,200 feet beneath Sun City West is not renewable.

Del Webb Home Construction had operated a recharge facility and effluent water storage system so it had accumulated credits. The credits were extended to the Rec Centers, which permitted it to use groundwater to irrigate the two golf courses. (Credits are part of the way the State of Arizona ensures that water is conserved adequately in high use areas like Phoenix, Tucson and

See INPUT, Page 2

OVER

In 1995, a memorandum of understanding was prepared concerning the transfer of Del Webb's recharge facility to the Rec Centers. After this, the Rec Centers and Del Webb disagreed about their rights and obligations. Del Webb's recharge facility had too great a concentration of nitrates and a de-nitrification facility needed to be built. The Rec Centers wanted Del Webb to construct the facility and upgrade it as needed while letting the Sun City West Utility Company and the Rec Centers run it. That was unacceptable to Del Webb Home Construction.

To resolve this, two agreements were drawn up for which approval is now sought by the ACC. The first agreement is that Del Webb will build the de-nitrification facility, close the existing wastewater treatment lagoons and install a generator at the treatment plant. The cost will be refunded to Del Webb in several payments over a period of time. In return, Del Webb will transfer ownership of the land (leach field) used to recharge the effluent, including permits, equipment, and 4,600 acre-feet of storage credits from the past. They will be paid \$540,000 (\$420,000 of which is allocated for the storage credits) to acquire the recharge facility, the rights, and the accrued credits.

These credits satisfy the water conservation requirements of the Arizona Department of Water Resources under the Groundwater Code ARS statutes 45-401. The statute states that because the people and the economy of Arizona depend on groundwater, and its withdrawal is in excess of the safe annual yield, the legislature will evoke its police power to proscribe which uses of groundwater are most beneficial. Violations of these proscriptions result in fines for municipalities which can be as high as \$10,000 per day.

While water problems are more acute in Arizona than many states, the decline of renewable water throughout the world in-

earth. Groundwater and renewable water supplies cannot keep pace with development so more parts of the world are devising conservation requirements and penalties for non-compliance.

The second or Effluent Delivery Agreement promises that in return for effluent storage credits, the Rec Centers waive certain claims against Del Webb Corporation. These credits allow the Rec Centers to irrigate the expansion golf courses with groundwater. The agreement also allows the Sun City West Utility Company to own and operate the recharge facility.

An amendment on Feb. 8, 1999, to the application sent to the ACC was made because the original cost estimate of the de-nitrification facility was too low (\$2,500,000) and the cost was increased to \$4,500,000. This figure was a firm bid by the lowest bidder, Courier Construction Company. In addition to this, Del Webb agreed to provide \$500,000 of the cost as a non-refundable contribution, as well as 50% of cost overruns and any excess engineering fees over \$340,000.

John Waldron, director of public relations for Del Webb's Sun Cities, said, "This agreement is a very positive outcome for the problems that surfaced. Del Webb will be giving the recharge fields to Sun City West, as well as access to them and credits, so the expansion golf courses will continue to have water supply at minimum cost. Carole Hubbs and the Rec Centers are thrilled by this agreement and we helped them by printing up flyers to encourage people to contact the Commission about it."

To give your input about the Sun City West Effluent Settlement, ACC Chairman Carl Kunasek (542-3933) or ckunasek@cc.state.az.us. Commissioner Bill Mundell can be reached at 542-3623 or wmundell@cc.state.az.us. The address of the Arizona Corporation Commission is 1200 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

SCW leaders disclaim signing appeal

7-99

By BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A full-page ad asking Sun City West residents to "protect your water supply" by writing Corporation Commission members has some folks raising questions about the ad's source.

Apparently "signed" by the directors of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, the Property Owners and Residents Association, and the PORA/Rec Centers Water Committee, the ad in *The Wester* urged residents to call or write commissioners and ask them to approve an agreement about use of effluent from the Sun City West sewage treatment plant.

But some board members in the groups whose names appear in the ad say they didn't know about it, and don't agree with its suggestion that they made the appeal. They don't disagree with the ad's substance.

The ad was placed and paid for by Del Webb Corp., the developer of Sun City West, but it doesn't say so.

Webb, the centers and Citizens Utilities have been negotiating for about three years on a plan that would let the centers use recharge credits from the sewage facility (operated by Citizens Utilities) to withdraw well water to use on Deer Valley and Desert Trails golf courses.

Copies of the accords among the Recreation Centers of Sun City Webb, Del Webb Corp. and Citizens Utilities, which outline how improvements to the sewage treatment plant will be built and paid for, who will operate the recharge fields and what will become of their water credits are available to the public in the R. H. Johnson Library in Sun City West.

Technical issues about how the sewer plant and the recharge field would be operated, and the need for environmental approvals, have delayed the process interminably.

But almost a year ago, a final accord was reached that must be approved by the Corporation Commission.

However, hearings have been slow to take place, and Webb and the Centers would like to see the pacts approved.

As a result, said Webb spokesman John Waldron, "we put the ad in the paper so that people would recognize the importance of this issue and let commissioners know that they'd like

to see it acted on soon."

Waldron said he believed the centers and PORA both knew the ad was to be printed in the July 15 edition of *The Wester*, a weekly paper serving Sun City West, and had approved of it. Copies of it were faxed to both, he said.

But some rec centers board members say they weren't aware of the appeal, and PORA President Phil Garner said he didn't see it, adding that PORA has no connection with the matter.

Both Garner and Centers spokeswoman Mauryne Young said the boards of their respective groups did not formally act to OK the ad.

Young said Centers President Carole Hubbs approved it.

Hubbs is on vacation and could not be reached.

Centers Vice President John Firestone said Friday that some board members had complained to him about the ad.

"They don't worry so much about the content — we'd all like to see this matter resolved — but about how it got into the paper," he said.

PORA's Garner said he thought the ad would have brought fewer raised eyebrows had it said that Webb, an interested party, would like to see the pacts approved, and had urged

residents to act.

One PORA board member, Fred Berkenkamp, who is vacationing out of state, called a reporter to complain about the ad, which someone sent him, saying it didn't represent his views on the matter.

Waldron said that Hubbs, the Centers attorney (Bill Beyer) and Chuck Roach, Webb's vice president, met before the ad was drafted and talked about how they could garner public support for the approval.

He said he believed PORA's Garner had been made aware of those plans.

There is little disagreement over the substance of the ad which simply asks residents to let commissioners know they want the pacts approved, and includes a coupon to be mailed to them.

Copies of the accords among the Centers, Webb and Citizens, which outline how improvements to the sewage treatment plant will be built and paid for, who will operate the recharge fields and what will become of their water credits are available to the public in the R. H. Johnson Library in Sun City West and at other public sites in that community.

At last month's Rec Board meeting, Hubbs explained that she — and former board president Larry Watts, who stayed on the negotiating team

after his board term expired — were thankful, very thankful, that the matter was near its end. All that stood in the way, she said, was commission action.

She said the accords would guarantee the recharge credits needed to continue to use well water for the two expansion area courses at no cost.

An original agreement between developer Webb and its creation, the Recreation Centers, said the recharge fields would be given to the Centers, but that was changed starting three years ago when the extensive renovations and improvements to meet environmental regulations were found necessary and when questions of potential pollution liability arose.

In addition, any expansion of the treatment plant by Citizens Utilities would have required expansion of the recharge fields. Any failure of the recharge process would have left the treatment plant with no way to dispose of effluent.

Now Citizens takes on all responsibility for treatment and recharge after Webb pays for the improvements and renovations.

The centers get the water credits they need for the golf courses, and other parties keep the excess credits which allow a certain amount of well water withdrawals anywhere in the watershed.

Rec Centers turn attention to SCW water

Sun City West Rec Board supports CAP task force

By CHRIS RASMUSSEN
Independent Newspapers

Sun City West Rec Center officials want to make sure their community has enough water to last residents far into the distant future.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West Inc. Board of Directors returned from its summer hiatus and last week held its first monthly meeting of the fall. The issue of water, a topic that garnered headlines last spring, continued to dominate the discussion.

During the meeting, Vice President Carole Hubbs entered a motion to establish a committee to deal with the different water issues affecting Sun City West residents and the community's golf courses.

"We have spent two years negotiating in the water issue," Ms. Hubbs says. "It would have been helpful to have a standing committee.

"Water will be the most critical issue now and in the future," she adds.

Ms. Hubbs says the committee would work with outside agencies to guarantee a water supply for Sun City West.

The board will vote on whether or not to establish the committee during its October regular monthly meeting.

In addition to establishing a standing committee on the water issue, the board is being asked to establish a \$6,000 fund to promote and educate the public on the use of Central Arizona Project water in Sun City West.

"The CAP Task Force has concluded that we should retain our allotted 2,370 acre feet of water

per year," says Board President Larry Watts. The task force is recommending the retirement communities use CAP water to irrigate local golf courses.

"This amount of water is approximately half of the water used on our seven courses," Mr. Watts added.

Mr. Watts said he expected the CAP water would need minimal treatment to be used for irrigation purposes.

The board unanimously approved the task force's recommendation of using CAP water on five Sun City West golf courses.

In other business:

- Golf Director Dirk Prather asked the board approve closing one golf course each summer to allow comprehensive maintenance and to give the Bermuda grass a break from traffic.

Mr. Prather said doing so would increase the Bermuda grass base.

He also said management would arrange with the men's and women's clubs of the selected closed course to have priority tee times on select-ed open courses.

Selected open courses may be rotated each week and will include both executive and regulation courses. He says this priority would not interfere with the men's and women's clubs of the selected open course.

- In other golf actions, Mr. Prather asked the board to approve overseeding fairways.

Mr. Prather, who blamed bad weather on the course's current condition, feels overseeding would improve the fairways during summer months.

"Over 50 percent of us stay here in the summer and play golf," Mr. Prather says.

He also feels overseeding would reduce the golf budget by \$200,000.

Greens and tees would not be affected by overseeding.

The board will vote on the overseeding of fairways during its October regular monthly meeting.

"While not all of us play golf, all of us look at the courses," says Director Bob Beaupre.

- Director John Firestone has proposed setting up a contingency fund to help the Village Store cover operations costs.

The Village Store, located in the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center, sells arts and crafts made by chartered clubs. Sixteen percent of every

sale goes into a fund to pay for the operational costs of the store.

Mr. Firestone says, however, because of year-to-year variations, revenues generated from the 16 percent may not be enough to cover costs.

Mr. Firestone has proposed setting up a fund that will not exceed \$12,000. The contingency fund would draw its revenues from surplus Rec Centers revenue.

Board members will vote on the Village Store contingency fund during its October meeting

Treasurer Hal Lind says he would support the fund.

"The Village Store operates on a break-even basis," Mr. Lind says. "The Village Store is not a source of funds for the Rec Centers."

- Completing a little "house cleaning," the board voted unanimously to delete Del Webb Corp. from all of its bylaws, therefore formally ending its relationship with the developer.

Del Webb, which began building Sun City West in 1979, recently

sold its last home and sold its Sun Cities headquarters on Meeker Boulevard to move across the street to its newest development, Sun City Grand.

- Subcommittees of the Long Range Planning Committee met several times over the summer, Mr. Beaupre announced.

Mr. Beaupre says the groups would meet in September and October before hosting an open house to present its findings to the community.

- Ms. Hubbs, who chairs the Legal Affairs Committee, announced the committee was looking at rewriting ways to recall a board director.

"The more we work at it, the more complicated it gets," Ms. Hubbs says.

Bylaws which chart out how a director may be recalled, drew criticism earlier this year after an unsuccessful attempt to recall Mr. Lind.

Mr. Watts said the current bylaws are faulted because it only takes one person to initiate a recall drive.

Citizens sends alert to Sun Citians

By BRUCE ELLISON

If the Sun Cities turn down proposed use of Central Arizona Project water, and instead continue to pump groundwater for drinking and irrigation, "you may have a political problem that soon will become acute," a Citizens Utilities executive warned Thursday.

Terri Sue Rossi, a Citizens water use planner, told about 75 members of the Property Owners and Residents Association of Sun City West that unless a communitywide water planning forum that starts next week succeeds, Citizens will make no more payments for CAP water, and instead allow the allocation for the Sun Cities to lapse.

"Unless that planning group comes up with a way to let us recover our costs of maintaining that allocation, we will not use CAP water in Sun City or Sun City West," she said.

Its cost last year was \$760,000.

Getting access to CAP water later, if it's needed, would be extremely costly and difficult, Rossi said, and could be almost impossible.

Thus, while a lack of CAP access

"won't matter initially" since there is enough well water now, she warned that "the water supply is and will continue to be a chronic problem. It won't be acute soon, but you also have a political problem, and that problem will be very acute," rather soon.

"Give it five more years of groundwater pumping, as other communities around you are forced to use CAP water, and they (law-makers) will do something about your use of groundwater," Rossi said.

That something, she said, could be a strict limit on how much can be pumped, enforced conservation measures, or a mandatory requirement for aquifer replenishment. The first two would force alteration of Sun Cities lifestyles, the last would be extremely costly since there would be no CAP allocation that could be used for replenishment.

"Recognize that you are losing political clout," Rossi said.

The Sun Cities had quite a large political voice when they were the only major population center in the

Northwest Valley, she said, "but there are more and more people out here now, in Peoria, in Surprise in Glendale, and they have many more votes than you and much more (political) power than before.

"If you don't use CAP water, and they are required to do so" — as many already are — "they will see that you are restricted," Rossi said.

Municipal water suppliers, such as Surprise, Peoria and Phoenix, are not subject to rate regulation, so neither their use of CAP water nor its cost needed to be considered by the state Corporation Commission.

"If you want to control your own future, you need to protect yourself" by keeping the CAP water available, Rossi said.

After a two-year rate case that ended in 1997, and in which Citizens was denied the right to charge customers for its rights to CAP water, the utility executives "were very upset, stunned and disbelieving," said Ray Jones, the company's chief engineer.

Directors decided to turn in the CAP water allocation — which others

would snap up eagerly — get their payments back and deal with future political or physical problems years from now, he said. They intended not to pay the 1997 assessment.

"But some of us, like me, saw it as too valuable to let go," Jones said. "We convinced them to make the December payment, but we have made our last payment" to preserve access to CAP water — unless the community comes up with an acceptable way to recover costs.

Citizens already has proposed shifting much of the allocation to its Agua Fria division, where the future water supply would benefit growth areas of Surprise, Waddell and the far west Valley north of Interstate 10.

Because developers there need and want adequate water for planned housing projects, they would be much more amenable to the CAP access payments than the Sun Cities seemed to be, Jones said.

Only a small fraction of the CAP allocation, if it's kept, would be assigned to the Sun Cities, where its

► See Price increases, A5



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Rossi of Citizens Utilities speaks to the PORA general membership meeting in Sun City Thursday morning.

(over)

cost would be about \$1.50 per customer each month, the officials said.

It was that cost-recovery plan that the Arizona Corporation Commission turned down last fall, even though a hearing examiner had recommended it as fair. The Commission said there would be no cost recovery until the CAP water was used.

The rejection, Jones said, came after "a relative handful of Sun Cities residents, acting on their own," went before the Commission and pleaded about unreasonable rate hikes, inadequate planning and similar matters that had been discussed for years. The Commission, "responding politically," rejected the plan that had been crafted after two years of hearings that same day. Jones didn't identify the "individuals" he said caused the rejection, but others said they included the late Les Merydith, a long-time critic of Citizens operations, who founded the Sun City Water Users Association, now defunct.

"So we have made our last CAP payment," Jones said. "The board was very firm on that."

The price to preserve access to CAP water has increased each year, as the water becomes more valuable. Citizens' December 1997 billing from the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, which operates the CAP system, was \$760,080, and it will be about a million dollars a year by 2000. In 1996, it was \$617,585.

Like many homeowners, Citizens arranged to pay half the bill in December and the rest in June 1998.

Meetings of the planning group, which includes repre-

owners associations, the utility, the recreation centers and others, get under way Tuesday.

There is no set deadline for action, but Rossi said the company plans to file anew with the Corporation Commission in September for a method to recover the costs. After the meeting, Jones said that action might be deferred if a plan looked like it would be developed.

The officials, answering questions from audience members, said that CAP water is now used by many communities in the Valley, including Phoenix, and in Tucson. Although the water has some displeasing physical characteristics, it is perfectly safe to drink, they said.

In fact, the utility will have 3,000 bottles of treated CAP water at the March 6 at a Health and Beauty Fair at the Sundome, for people to sample.

If Citizens uses the water available under its CAP allocation, the officials said, that water could be used for farm irrigation by someone who would then agree "to turn off his own pump," — a move that would allow Citizens to remove an equal amount of groundwater from its own wells. Or the water could be put into a yet-to-be-built treatment plant for household use. It also could go directly on local golf courses, all of which now are watered from irrigation wells, something the state may prohibit in its next groundwater management plan.

Building a treatment plant would add about \$5 or \$6 to each monthly residential water bill, Jones said "as an off-the-cuff calculation."

The Sun Cities are not running out of water

Geologists are funny people. We have a strange way of looking at the world.

I received my bachelor of arts degree, cum laude, from Marietta College in 1927 with a major in mathematics and a minor in geology.

Of course the geology that I learned 70 years ago is far different from the geology in use today. But there is one thing about the natural sciences. The basic laws of mathematics, physics and chemistry remain essentially unchanged. We just have better and faster and more accurate tools to work with.

My physics professor in 1928 taught us that molecular adhesion will keep water from moving underground unless the ground is completely saturated. This is still what is happening down under Sun City today.

I think it is important today to point out that a geologist thinks in terms of millions of years. A century or a human lifetime is but a

blink of an eye on a geologist's calendar.

Now let's talk about Sun City and the ancient body of water that underlies our properties.

The Sun Cities are located over the largest and deepest aquifer in the state of Arizona. For more than 40 million years, rainfall and snow melt from surrounding mountains have moved, with the help of gravity, countless cubic miles of particles, pebbles, rocks and boulders down from the surrounding mountains and filled up the deep mountain valley to the almost level landscape where we now live.

Mankind's deepest wells drilled in the Sun City area during the last century only go down 1,500 feet but we have learned by detonating explosives that the Sun City aquifer is hundreds of feet deeper than that.

We also know that our aquifer is not a big tank that can be filled and emptied at the whim of a state governor, a state bureaucracy, a predatory water company or even a state legislature.

The cave woman who carried

water from a running stream back to her cave in a tared basket knew two things about water that Arizona's water authorities apparently don't know. When water leaves mankind's containers, it is gone, kaput, disappeared. It evaporates into the air or soaks into the dry ground.

The Sun Cities' aquifer is a huge conglomeration of water-soaked mountain debris that has been replenished by rainfall and snow melt from the Bradshaw Mountains over four million years. On the lower, southern edge of the aquifer the filtered and purified groundwater moves on down through what is now Peoria, Glendale, Avondale, and Litchfield Park to Buckeye where it comes out on top of the ground and spills into the Gila River and then moves on its way to Mexico and the Pacific Ocean.

It should be obvious to everyone that if the people of Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown are forced to quit using groundwater and start using imported CAP water, the groundwater they do not

use will just move on downhill to be used by others to raise cotton and cattle feed or end up in the Pacific Ocean via the Gila and Colorado rivers.

Mankind has been withdrawing and using groundwater from the top 400 or 500 feet of the Sun Cities aquifer for less than 100 years and the average groundwater level in Sun City wells today is 22 feet higher than it was 12 years ago.

The Sun Cities are not running out of water. Our cup is overflowing.

Let's insist that Citizens Utilities cease providing erroneous information about "falling water levels" and "dangerous and costly land subsidence" to its customers, to the governor, to the Department of Water Resources, and to the state Legislature.

LES MERYDITH
SUN CITY

Editor's note: Mr. Merydith is secretary-treasurer and designated intervener for the Sun City Water User's Association.

PORA plans study on CAP water use

Committee hopes for grant funding to investigate golf course irrigation

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

NS 11/11/95

SUN CITY WEST — The water committee at PORA plans to apply for a \$25,000 state grant to study how Central Arizona Project water might be used for golf course irrigation.

Property Owners and Residents Association board members approved the grant application at their meeting Tuesday.

Sun City West, which gets drinking water from an affiliate of Citizens Utilities, uses about 5,500 acre-feet of well water on its nine golf courses, water committee chairman Arve Dahl said.

But the Beardsley Canal, which runs from Lake Pleasant along the west edge of much of Sun City West, may carry Central Arizona Project water past the community.

Using that CAP water, instead of the dwindling supply of well water, could forestall the need for finding other ways of finding acceptable drinking water, Dahl argued.

Right now, he said, CAP water could be recharged into the ground at some remote location to obtain recharge credits that would allow continued well-water use in Sun City West.

Or, the CAP water, which comes from the Colorado River, not wells, could be treated at a new plant and piped to Sun City West for irrigation.

The PORA water committee wants the grant to study a third method — directly taking CAP water to the golf

course.

Trouble is, as Tucson found, CAP water may not work well that way. Because of impurities, chemicals and sediment, it might not be feasible to use directly on golf courses.

The study would look at that, Dahl said. Effects on turf, on accumulation of pollutants in the soil, and on possible clogging of irrigation sprinklers by particles in the water.

It also will look at three possible ways of getting CAP water to the golf courses. Suggestions are:

- Use the Maricopa Water District's Beardsley Canal to get the water to about 161st Avenue at Grand Avenue, then pipe it to the courses.

- Take water from the CAP canal where it crosses Grand Avenue (U.S. 60) near 211th Avenue, and convey it along the railroad tracks to Sun City West.

- Transfer water by way of the Agua Fria River to the golf course irrigation pumps near the intersection of El Mirage and Beardsley roads.

The grant comes from the state's Water Resources Board, and many communities are likely to apply for limited funds.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West operates seven golf courses, Del Webb Corp. owns and operates Hillcrest Golf Course, and there is one private golf club in the community.

Circle of waste

Water flow pays dividends for SCW

By PAUL DAGOSTINO
Staff writer

When Sun City West residents flush their toilets, wash dishes or water their lawns, they are helping to create a better environment.

That's because the wastewater doesn't go to waste. It goes back into the ground to help replenish groundwater supplies as part of Del Webb Corp.'s water recharge system.

Del Webb owns 76 acres just east of 115th Avenue that is dedicated for recharging treated wastewater from a Citizens Utilities Co. wastewater treatment plant several hundred yards away, said Larry Coppinger, who is in charge of Webb's land development department.

Coppinger said the state Department of Water Resources gives Webb credit for recharging water into the aquifer. That, in turn, allows the company to continue pumping ground water to keep Sun City West golf courses green.

"If we recharge 5,000 acre feet, they will allow us to take out 5,000 acre feet," Coppinger said.

An acre foot of water is about 345,000 gallons.

Steve Olsen, executive assistant to the director at the Department of Water Resources, said the agency and the Maricopa County Department of Environmental Quality monitor the quality of effluent from the sewage plant.

Several cities have been recharging effluent for several years, and federal and state agencies have done many studies on the practice, verifying that it works, Olsen said.

Citizens Utilities treats about three million gallons of Sun City West

► See Soil filters, A5

Soil filters waste

■ From A1

sewage a day. Much of the wastewater ends up in the holding ponds, where the standing water slowly percolates through the soil and eventually reaches the aquifer, Coppinger said. He said it could take three years for the water to reach its destination.

The retention area contains 26 holding ponds, which are four to six acres each. The ponds are tapped on a rotation basis, two or three at a time, Coppinger said.

Marvin Collins, manager of administration at Citizens Utilities, said the wastewater goes through five processes from removing solids to improving the quality.

"It's not a drinkable quality water but it does have to meet certain standards," Collins said.

Nature takes care of the last process as the water goes through about 450 feet of soil that sifts out impurities before it reaches the aquifer, Collins said.

"The migration is slow," Collins said.

People's Perspective: Water Study Grant Application Explanation

By The PORA Water Committee

Wester
10/20/95

In the Oct. 19 Wester article, regarding the Recreation Centers review of the PORA Water Committees' proposed application for a Central Arizona Project (CAP) water study grant, several stated opinions may have misled some of our residents. The following clarifying information should be helpful in understanding this water issue.

The PORA Water Committee has been actively following the legislative and neighboring communities actions related to water for the past four years. Recently we were made aware of an Arizona Department of Water Resources program which would provide study money for communities interested in trying to use CAP water and reduce the pumping of groundwater. Therefore a Conservation Assistance Grant request has been prepared by the PORA water committee seeking \$25,000 for such a study.

There is a strong desire to maintain the high quality water which all Sun City West residents enjoy by reducing the pumping of groundwater for use on our golf courses. This appeared to be opportunity to gain valuable factual information regarding CAP water. Can we use CAP water on the golf courses?, how could we get the CAP water to our golf courses?, what would it cost to implement such a program?, and what would it cost to operate?

During the past eight years since we have been keeping water usage records, our average usage has been 91 percent of our allocations. With the new program of overseeding all of the golf courses the water usage will increase significantly. If we can use CAP water we will stay below our allocation of pumped groundwater and not be subject to penalties.

The use of effluent water on our golf courses was tried back in the mid 80s and proved to be non-successful because water lines and sprinkler nozzles plugged. But effluent water is not CAP water. There is a big difference. CAP water is Colorado River water. Effluent is the by-product of sewage processed through a wastewater treatment plant. We know that there are more than 10 golf courses in north Scottsdale that are currently using CAP water directly on the golf courses. The grant will provide us the opportunity to develop factual information which can be used to make better future decisions regarding the use of CAP water on our golf courses.

Gaining a CAP water allocation would be a step taken after we made the study and have much more information. The current CAP allocation held by Citizens Utilities was awarded using the original Sun City West land area as part of the justification. Citizens Utilities has requested in a recent rate increase

that a separate fee of \$1.64 per year per customer be allowed to cover the cost of retaining its CAP allocation.

The Federal government is asking for \$2.3 billion for repayment of the Central Arizona Project, not \$250,000 as mentioned in the article. The Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) believes the bill is more like \$1.8 billion. The case is now being adjudicated in a court in Tucson.

This study grant application was initiated to gain valuable information to make decisions for our future. There are a number of concerns being addressed in the community related to the adequacy of SCW groundwater supplies and the future need, if any, of using Central Arizona Project water both for municipal and industrial uses, and for use on golf courses. There are many members of the community that are ready to take at face value the developers assertion that there is a 100-year supply of groundwater. This may have been acceptable 10 years ago but in the light of two recent studies completed this year it is prudent to reevaluate the situation.

The Arizona Department of Water Resources prepared the Western Maricopa County Water Resources Study, authorized by H.R.2239. The report projects the population in western communities to increase by 2.5 times by the year 2025. It develops two

scenarios which indicate falling water levels. Citizen Utilities had a separate study done by the consulting firm, Water Resources Associates, which addressed future water needs in the service area of CU. From the reports recommendations, CU has concluded there is a need for more water conservation and a need to retain its CAP water allocation. It is considering a CAP water recharge program to avoid the high cost of a water treatment plant and to reduce the lowering of the aquifer water table.

The grant money will pay for expenses incurred for the study with the PORA water committee members providing their expertise at no cost.

The Recreation Center was provided a draft copy of the application and several members were briefed as to the content and purpose. We wanted them to be aware of the grant request as the study and final report will pertain to the Sun City West golf courses. No costs or obligations are requested of the Recreation Centers, we do however believe that their endorsement of this application will be beneficial to the total Sun City West community. Undertaking this feasibility study would make no future obligations to take any further action but could provide valuable recommendations on any feasible alternatives.

Pipeline to ship water out of Sun Cities

By PHILIP H. VISION

It appears that serious concerns of our communities of Sun City and Sun City West

My view

are being clouded in the latest activities of Citizens Utilities Co., resulting in the announcement that, "water and sewer rate increases are on tap for Citizens Utilities customers in the Northwest Valley."

It appears that the company filed a combined water-sewer request on Aug. 17 with the Arizona Corporation Commission seeking rate increases for all of its Northwest Valley

utilities, affecting customers in Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, Youngtown, Peoria and northwest Maricopa County. A hearing date is to be scheduled within 30 days.

Citizens is asking for water-rate increases of as much as 35 percent for its Agua Fria Division and sewer-rate increases of as much as 57 percent for its Sun City West Utilities Co. division.

In addition, Citizens Utilities is asking the corporation commission for permission to begin billing all water customers for Central Arizona Project canal water the company has reserved, but never used (a 5.5 billion-gallon al-

location) costing \$500,000 annually.

Citizens Utilities and Sun City Water Co. both have CAP allocations in an agreement signed on Aug. 13, 1985. Sun City Water Co. is assessed a "Take-or-pay" of \$2 per acre foot for the CAP water, whether or not the allocation is used.

According to a public statement by Fred Kriess, (May 7, 1990) general manager of the Sun City Water Co., "It's (CAP water) purchased with the anticipation that the company could expand its service area where groundwater may not be abundant," Kriess said. "The 'CAP take-or-pay charge' is not part of Sun City people's rates."

(Sun City West does not have a CAP allocation. The community has a treatment plant and is re-using effluent water.)

Kriess also said no CAP water is used in Sun City because the community has plenty of groundwater reserves.

"We have ample groundwater reserves to satisfy the existing and projected demands of both communities for at least 100 years," Kriess said after a hydrogeologic study in 1989.

In March of this year, the community learned of the existence of a 16-inch pipeline connected to the Sun City West water system at Meeker Boulevard and Grand Avenue that travels to Radnor Sun Village in Surprise, and — eventually — to Del Webb's

proposed Sun City Grand.

It seems obvious that they plan to move considerable quantities of water — either groundwater out or CAP water in, or they wouldn't have built such a big line! (Because Sun City pipelines are only 10 inches in diameter and adequately serves the community, is the size of the Sun City West pipeline at Grand Avenue and Meeker Boulevard an indication the Sun City West Utilities Co. intends to serve other areas in Surprise?)

In my investigation it was learned that the installation of the 16-inch pipeline in the early 1990s was discussed beforehand with officers of the Property Owners and Residents Association of Sun City West — and with executives of Del Webb!

According to Les Merydith, a Sun City water expert, "If the water company ships any considerable quantities of Sun City West water into Surprise, then it's going to have to bring in CAP water to replace it."

Further investigation and subsequent articles will attempt to resolve several concerns in the community that perhaps PORA will agree to address regardless of the outcome of the rate increase request and the CAP allocation issue. Here are just a few:

■ Should Sun City West homeowners be concerned about helping to pay Sun City Grand's water bills, or to share our groundwater rights with Sun Village and Sun City Grand in Surprise? How will Citizens Utilities sort out our

costs from Sun City Grand's costs?

■ Will the Citizens Utilities subsidiaries (Sun City Water Co. and Sun City West Utilities) keep its books in Arizona and not in Connecticut, and keep our costs meticulously separate from other non-contiguous and dissimilar areas? We cannot oppose Citizens Utilities serving Sun City Grand, but why doesn't the company do it with a new subsidiary servicing a new use by a new entity, as it did when Sun City West was developed? Then, Citizens Utilities most likely will provide another water and sewer operation or merge with Surprise's to serve Sun City Grand's waste water needs. In other words, will they establish a "Sun City Grand Water and Sewer Co."

Homeowners should organize (and use that power of organization) to oppose the construction of miles of pipeline between the Sun Cities and the CAP canal, at a cost of millions of dollars to be recovered in increased rates from the water users. Do we want to be connected directly to a CAP water source, which the utilities company and developers intend to be filled primarily with CAP water?

Time after time after time, we have been assured that Sun City West's supply of groundwater will be adequate for the next 100 years.

This does not indicate a severe overdraft in Sun City West that would necessitate use of CAP water.

CAP water is about four

times as expensive to buy, treat and deliver as Sun Cities well water. Even after treatment, CAP water is still low quality and should be blended with well water to make it satisfactory for household use.

Looking at the situation from the water company's viewpoint: Why not blend inexpensive and high quality well water from the Sun Cities with its large surplus of expensive, low-quality CAP water, and then sell the resulting product throughout the Northwest Valley to developers of desert land (like Del Webb), who must have an assured water supply before they can develop their land?

A pipeline that could bring CAP water to the Sun Cities as well as to other desert developments, should not be acceptable to the residents of the Sun Cities. Such a "16-inch pipeline" would either bring CAP water into the Sun Cities, or take water out of the Sun Cities, or both.

Finally, what action can we in Sun City West take to avoid being saddled in the future with the cost of CAP water that we have not contracted for and probably will never need?

As a property owner or resident (renter) in Sun City West, what actions would you recommend for PORA? For the Recreation Centers of Sun City West Governing Board? Or, for a new citizens action group?

The writer is a resident of Sun City West and a former director of PORA.

Water law undergoes change

West Valley leaders hail dilution of '91 act

By Lori Baker
and Susan Felt
Staff writers

Some West Valley leaders are claiming a victory in disabling a state water law they say called for unfair taxes.

But officials from major Valley cities like Glendale are skeptical about the latest changes, which effectively dilute the water law.

Legislation that Gov. Fife Symington signed Monday now makes compliance with the 1991 Ground Water Replenishment Act voluntary, rather than mandatory.

The 1991 law created a taxing mechanism that penalized municipalities for withdrawing ground water. The taxes collected would in turn be used to buy other water resources to replenish the water withdrawn.

West Valley communities like Sun City, Peoria, Litchfield Park and Buckeye called the 1991 law unfair and costly.

Cities like Glendale, Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa had supported the 1991 law. However, in the face of growing support for the changes, the cities opted to not oppose what seemed inevitable.

The new law does away with taxes on ground-water use unless communities opt to join the replenishment district.

"Under the old law, the Sun Cities were going to be forced to pay the tax, because ground water is our only source of water," said Dick Egan, a Sun City West resident and member of Westmarc's water resources committee. Westmarc, also known

See WATER, Page 7

WATER

From Page 1

as Western Maricopa Coalition, is a lobbying group that includes West Valley cities, towns and unincorporated communities like the Sun Cities.

Communities such as Peoria, the Sun Cities, Litchfield Park, Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage and Surprise stood to pay a heftier tax than their East Valley counterparts. That's because they rely almost entirely on pumping water out of the ground.

Those communities faced the prospect of having to invest in water treatment plants, pipes and other infrastructure to take advantage of other renewable water resources like Central Arizona Project water — a commodity they would also have to buy, according to Doug Kukino, in charge of environmental issues for Glendale.

Of the west-side cities, only Glendale uses sources like CAP, Salt River Project and treated waste water as its primary water sources, with ground-water getting only modest use.

An unlikely coalition of several organizations formed to support the new law.

Westmarc and Sun Cities organizations were joined by the Agribusiness Council, Arizona Department of Water Resources, Arizona Public Service Co., city of Tucson, Central Arizona Water Conservation District, Homeowners Association of Central Arizona, and Del Webb Corp.

"This group usually fights like cats and dogs, but we said we need — to get together and do something," said Bill Beyer, a member of Westmarc's water resources committee.

Skeptical of new law

However, major Valley cities note that it was in those groups' best interest to get the 1991 law changed.

"The law doesn't do anything right now about ground water being mined and only promises to replenish in the future," said Bob McCain of the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association. The group represents the Valley's largest cities.

"Somebody needs to get a handle on that."

The state water department concedes that ground water will not be replaced as rapidly as the 1991 law proposed, but then the 1991 law had not been implemented yet either.

"The new law is pro-development," Steve Olson, executive director of the state Department of Water Resources, said.

"There was a lot of resistance to the old law from communities that weren't going to be developing but would have had to pay the tax," he said.

The state water department supported the new law in part because the 1991 law never was implemented.

"The new law will benefit smaller west-side communities — like Surprise — that want to grow but don't have access to Central Arizona Project water," Olson said.

Olson said a community like Sun City, which is not growing, would not have to join the replenishment district.

However, Sun City would continue to be under a state mandate to conserve water.

The new law calls for creating the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District. It will be managed by the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, which administers the Central Arizona Project.

The exact impact of the new law remains unclear because it refers to state water department guidelines that have not yet been written.

Preliminary rules are being reviewed and revised proposals will be released in July or August.

"We've been playing by the rules and we would like other people to play by the rules," Kukino said.

"But those rules have changed to allow the Sun Cities of the world to utilize ground water as a

Water and Effluent Resources in Sun City West

Story by
Mildred Baker

During the past several months there has been talk, rumors and stories related to our water resources in Sun City West. To more fully understand the actual situations and conditions related to our water needs, sources of water, water/sewer treatments, and how we pay for our water, Dick Egan and Harry Spence provide this joint Water Resources Report.

They are members of the Sun City West Advisory Board Water Resources Committee and PORA Water Resources Committee.

Currently all water consumed and used in our households, businesses, churches and recreation center facilities is groundwater that is located in the ground beneath us. It is provided by the Sun City West Utilities Company, a subsidiary of Citizens Utilities Co. It is pumped from eight wells and stored in two reservoir tanks located in Sun City West...one on Meeker Blvd. and the other on Stardust Blvd. It is then provided under pressure via underground pipes to each user.

Cost of this service appears in your monthly water utility bill in the block titled "water". This "water" revenue is used to maintain our water distribution system. The water is actually free. What we pay for is the cost of its delivery.

Water used for golf courses irrigation is also groundwater, pumped from wells located on each golf course by recreation center owned pumps. This system is entirely separate from the Citizens Utility system.

Wells for both personal requirements and golf courses go to the same underground aquifer located 400-500 feet beneath us. The purity and quality of

this water is very high, and the source was recently estimated to have an assured water supply for more than 100 years.

What is effluent water? Effluent is the water which is the end product that is discharged from the sewage treatment plant. Homes, businesses, churches and recreation centers facilities are all connected to an underground sewage collection system, and sewage water is collected and piped through this system to the Citizens Utilities Sewage treatment plant, which is located approximately one mile east of the corner of Beardsley and El Mirage Roads.

This sewage water is processed or treated in several stages: removing solids, adding chemicals and water produce the liquid product we call "effluent water". This effluent water is discharged onto the leaching fields, or percolation fields, located adjacent to the treatment plant for absorption into the aquifer located beneath us. The charge for sewage treatment is in the block titled "sewer" on your monthly water bill. Currently it costs each Sun City West household just over \$12 per month.

Effluent water on the leaching fields seeps or infiltrates into the ground and gradually makes its way to our underground aquifer some 400 feet below. As effluent sinks into the ground, it gradually loses its chemicals so that by the time it reaches the water level in the aquifer, it is substantially purified.

Currently we do not apply or use effluent water directly to our golf courses. It has been tried here, but the results were negative. Present plans do not include using effluent water directly on golf courses.

What do we intend to do with effluent water? in 1991, Maricopa County

enacted a regulation which requires that all new golf courses to be built in the future in Maricopa County must use (or utilize) "a renewable source of water for golf course irrigation". Effluent water is such a renewable source. There are three ways to meet this new requirement: (1) Use effluent water directly on the golf course, (2) use what is called a Recharge and Recovery Program, which is currently planned, or (3) use Central Arizona Project (CAP) water. Use of CAP water is several years away, but does have some promising aspects.

As mentioned, current plans call for use of the Recharge and Recovery Program to irrigate our golf courses. Details of this program are now being studied to assure that this program is environmentally

WATER and EFFLUENT
Continued on Page 8

Water and Effluent

Continued from Page 6

safe and efficiently utilized. This program will operate basically as follows:

Effluent water from the wastewater plant will be poured onto the leach field adjacent to the wastewater plant and permitted to sink into the ground and into the aquifer beneath Sun City West. The amount of effluent water that reaches our aquifer will be recorded, and under Arizona Water Law, we will be permitted to pump the same amount of water out of the aquifer from each of the wells located on the golf courses. Another way of saying the same thing is, we will be given a "credit" for each gallon of effluent water we return to the aquifer. We can then pump out an equal number of gallons of water from the aquifer without penalty. Water that is actually pumped from wells on the golf courses will be the same quality that is being used today and under Arizona law will be considered to be "effluent water".

With this Recharge and Recovery Program, we will

Oct. 8-14, 1992

THE WESTER

be able to use the effluent in the most efficient manner to help us comply with the law and to enable us to irrigate our golf courses at a minimum cost.

Editor's note: Although this information has already been published in the PORA Newsletter, we feel it is of sufficient importance to repeat for those that may have missed it.

Del Webb to transfer effluent Deal reduces taxes on water for courses

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — Effluent generated by Sun City West households will be provided free to the Recreation Centers of Sun City West Inc. starting in about three years.

A "memorandum of understanding" between the recreation centers and Del Webb Corp. was approved Tuesday by the recreation centers' advisory board. Effluent is treated sewage.

The effluent is valuable, board member Al Spanjer said, because it can be applied toward credits to reduce taxes on ground water that will be assessed under new groundwater replenishment legislation. The community's golf courses depend on ground water for irrigation.

Keith Hook, chairman of the recreation centers' water resources committee, estimates the savings would be \$176,000 to \$343,000 annually, depending on whether the tax was assessed at \$100 or \$200 per acre foot.

The recreation centers will negotiate a contract to share effluent with Briarwood Country Club, which has a private golf course, and Hillcrest Golf Course, a public course owned by Webb.

Since 1978, Webb has owned the effluent through an agreement with Citizens Utilities Co., which provides water and sewer service in Sun City West.

Citizens Utilities treats the sewage, and the resulting effluent is put into percolation fields, where See EFFLUENT, Page 6.

From Page 1

EFFLUENT

it seeps into the ground-water table. Webb and Citizens Utilities are negotiating to renew the agreement, which is due to expire Dec. 31.

Under the agreement with the recreation centers, Webb will turn over the effluent, pumps, leeching fields and distribution system to the recreation centers. The recreation centers will pay the cost of operating the pumps.

The transfer of the effluent system will occur within 24 months after Webb transfers ownership of the golf course being built in the expansion area to the recreation centers.

The recreation centers corporation is expected to take possession of the course during the first

quarter of 1994. Therefore, the recreation centers will take over the effluent system in 1996.

The new course is in the expansion area, where Webb is developing 1,320 acres of property north of Deer Valley Drive between 135th and 151st avenues.

A county ordinance requires that new golf courses be irrigated with a "renewable" water source such as effluent.

Webb has asked county and state officials for permission to allow an exchange of the effluent in the percolation fields for an equal amount of ground water being pumped for the golf course. The effluent cannot be applied directly to the course because algae growth would plug sprin-

klers, a recreation centers official said.

Meanwhile, the advisory board created a water resources task force, which will oversee Webb's effluent storage and recovery program.

The committee also will try to obtain a Central Arizona Project allocation for irrigating Sun City West golf courses. Sun City West does not have an allocation.

Hook will be the panel's chairman. The committee will include five recreation centers members and one representative from the recreation centers governing board, Briarwood Golf Course, the Webb-owned Hillcrest Golf Course, and the Property Owners and Residents Association.

Del Webb Addresses Effluent Ownership Issue

Editor's Note: In the last issue of The Wester, several paragraphs of this story were inadvertently transposed. Because of the complex nature of this issue and its importance to the community, we are running it again in its entirety.

The question of effluent ownership has been the subject of extensive discussions in Sun City West with several differing opinions being presented. "No one owns water in Arizona, but they have the beneficial right of its use," said Fred Kriess, general manager of Citizens Utilities, the utility company servicing the Sun Cities.

"Del Webb has the legal right to use the effluent produced by the Sun City West wastewater treatment plant by virtue of a contract with Citizens Utilities," said Chuck Roach, Del Webb's Sun City West executive

vice president and general manager. The issue of effluent control and rightful use has been tried in the Arizona Supreme Court and is reflected in the decision of "Arizona Public Service Co. vs Long".

This 1989 opinion gave wastewater operators broad control over the effluent that emerges from their treatment plants. The Long case dealt with transfers of effluent from various cities to the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Plant for the purpose of providing a cooling agent for that operation. That decision was further confirmed by "Arizona Water Company vs the City of Bisbee".

Del Webb built the wastewater treatment plant concurrent with the development of Sun City West but transferred the facility to Sun City West Utilities Company, a subsidiary of Citizens Utilities, in 1982 in

exchange for, among other things, receiving the right to use the effluent. Del Webb also built and owns the effluent fields, effluent distribution pumps, piping systems and easements, which serve the SCW golf courses.

Del Webb has been working with the community for a number of years to transfer its ownership of the effluent distribution system and its right of effluent use to Sun City West's golf course owners, including the Recreation Center, Briarwood Country Club and Hillcrest Golf Club.

"We continue to work with Arizona State regulatory authorities in order to obtain approval of our proposed underground recharge and recovery project. This would formalize our program to recharge the aquifer with purified

water. Upon approval, it is our intention to transfer the project and all its assets to the community," said Roach.

The importance of effluent may increase if the Groundwater Replenishment District, a proposed taxing authority, becomes a reality. As proposed by the State of Arizona, a Groundwater Replenishment District would monitor groundwater usage and impose a tax for its consumption. The use of effluent instead of groundwater would provide a credit to offset that groundwater tax. The formation of the District would first need approval from the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

The effluent system is designed to provide a source of water for golf course irrigation as future water regulations may dictate. "It

EFFLUENT
Continued on Page 2

EFFLUENT
Continued from Page 1

is not a source of profit for us. In fact, we spend approximately \$30,000 annually to operate the effluent system," noted Roach. This is sole and separate from Sun City West Utilities' budget for operating the wastewater treatment plant.

Effluent proposed for golf courses

Saturday, Nov. 14, 1992

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

Battle looms over effluent

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — A battle over rights to effluent in Sun City West could end up in Maricopa County Superior Court.

At stake is \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually that could benefit the owners of the effluent rights.

The rights to the effluent hinge on who has the rights to use of water in the area, the community or Citizens Utilities, the private water company that services the Sun Cities.

The dispute will go to court

if the Arizona Corporation Commission decides against making a jurisdictional ruling.

A court ruling may be the only way to resolve the unprecedented issue because it's not covered by state laws, said Dick Egan, president of the Property Owners and Residents Association at a PORA Utilities and Water Resources Committee meeting Friday.

Egan said he expects the corporation commission to issue a ruling shortly. PORA has intervened in Citizens Utilities' certificate of convenience of necessity extension

See Effluent proposed, A5

—From A1

application to add the Sun City West expansion north of Deer Valley Road to its service area.

"If the Corporation Commission says thanks but no thanks, go somewhere else, then we'll have to sit down and decide what we'll do next and whether we (PORA) have the resources to take the issue to court," he said.

"This question of ownership has never appeared in the courts," Egan said. "Under Arizona laws, we understand we don't own water. We only have the right to its use.

At issue is whether the community has the right to its use or does Citizens Utilities.

"If so, does the water company also have ownership rights to the use of effluent," Egan asked.

He said such rights could generate \$300,000 to \$400,000 in revenues a year. "Consideration should be given to giving some of that back to the residents who help pay the water processing bills instead of letting Citizens or Del Webb make all the profits."

The use of effluent (treated wastewater) has been proposed using a recharge-recovery system on the community's eight golf courses (including the new course in the expansion area) as a way to reduce groundwater replenishment taxes and build up credits under the 1990 state Groundwater Replenishment District Act.

That act will tax heavy groundwater users. Both Sun Cities rely solely on groundwater pumping as their sole water source.

Egan said the corporation commission may be the last state or county agency left since PORA has already failed to get a ruling from the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, the state Department of Water Resources and Department of Environmental Quality.

What makes the issue so complex is the number of parties involved in the sewage treatment process and the

number of area water resource groups seeking solutions to the problem.

Del Webb Corp. owns two of the community golf courses and the treatment plant near El Mirage Road, north of Bell Road, where the effluent would be treated.

Citizens Utilities provides the water that would be used for treatment and the Recreation Centers of Sun City West owns five of the community golf courses and has its own water resources committee headed by Keith Hook.

Sun City, the Western Maricopa Coalition and another West Valley group also have their own water committees working on the issue.

"We (residents) generate all the waste and sewage in the community and pay for its transportation over to the treatment plant," Egan said. "We pay \$11 a month (each) for its processing."

"What we're trying to find out is how effluent would be identified in their (Citizens) books? Is it an asset that would offset the costs of our processing it?" Egan asked.

"If they (Citizens) make a half million (dollars) on effluent, do they then say here's your proportionate share and we'll cut your bill."

Citizens Utilities' Sun City West Utilities Co. manager Fred Kriess thinks the issue can be resolved if all parties sit down and work out a mutual agreement.

"We've submitted to PORA a draft agreement that covers how this recharge and recovery project would be operated," Kriess said. "We'd like to take the position of working this issue out with PORA and Webb and come to some understanding in terms of a three-party discussion."

Kriess said preliminary discussions among the three parties have occurred and more meetings are planned.

Egan said PORA is also exploring possible applications of using Central Arizona Project water for local irrigation and private uses.

UN CITIES INDEPENDENT--SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 6, 1992

PORA to intervene in water company request to service SC West expansion

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

The Property Owners and Residents Association plans to continue monitoring the Sun City West expansion by intervening in the Sun City West Water Company's application for water and sewer services in the new area.

PORA plans to approach both the Arizona Corporation Commission and the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors for assistance, PORA President Dick Egan says. The state commission regulates private water and sewer

companies.

"It's our responsibility to be sure everyone understands the procedures underway for expansion of the community. Whatever procedures they bring to the table, we'll be there as a part," he says.

Mr. Egan says he does not expect the process to be controversial, rather he believes it is PORA's responsibility to monitor the situation and get answers to any questions residents may have.

The Sun City West Water Co., a division of Citizen's Utilities, provides service to 12,000

units in Sun City West. It filed an application with the Arizona Corporation Commission to extend water and sewer service into the 1,320-acre expansion area Aug. 28. Del Webb Corporation's planned expansion is expected to add 6,000 residents to the community.

Marvin Collins, manager of administration for Citizen's Utilities, says it is not uncommon for organizations to intervene before the commission.

By intervening, PORA receives full legal

See ■ WATER, Page 7

■ WATER

From Page 1

standing as a participating party in the case, says Jon Poston, commission spokesman. He says while all documents are open to the public, intervening will allow PORA to ask questions of the parties involved. In addition, Mr. Egan says PORA plans to continue relaying its concerns to Del Webb and various state agencies about the use and control of effluent (treated wastewater).

Currently, golf courses in Sun City West are irrigated with groundwater. A new regulation passed by Maricopa County last year, however, prohibits the use of groundwater irrigation for new golf courses. In addition, an as-yet-underdetermined groundwater tax is influencing many golf course operators to seek alternative water sources.

The only other source of water now available for irrigating the

new golf course in the expansion area which will be owned and operated by the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc. is effluent.

Del Webb Corp. has applied for a permit from the Arizona Department of Water Resources to use the effluent in an indirect application process on the new golf course.

According to Chuck Roach, Del Webb Corp. vice president and Sun City West general manager, the use of effluent water is governed by an agreement between Citizen's Utilities, a private water company, and Del Webb.

"Del Webb has the right to determine how the effluent will be used and has stated on many occasions we intend to transfer that right to the Recreation Centers of Sun City West for the express purpose of providing an alternate source of irrigation for the golf

courses of the community including Briarwood and Hillcrest."

PORA has questioned why the effluent, which is a byproduct of water residents have already paid for, should be taken from the system and applied to a separate recreational purpose that benefits only those residents who golf, and of which two golf courses, Hillcrest and Briarwood, are not owned by the Recreation Centers of Sun City West.

Briarwood is a private country club owned by its membership and Hillcrest is owned by Del Webb Corp. and is the community's only public course.

Martha Moyer, Del Webb manager of public and community relations, says the effluent credits will be issued to the Recreation Centers, rather than individual homeowners, because it is the major water user in the community.

"With the increasing regulation on water consumption on golf courses, all golf course owners are seeking other methods to provide irrigation to their courses."

Company officials say they do not plan to transfer effluent rights to the Recreation Centers until all matters are resolved to the satisfaction of the Recreation Center's resident-elected representatives.

PORA stirs water debate

By MIKE GARRETT

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Property Owners and Residents Association officials vow to make a nuisance of themselves until they start getting answers to their continuing concerns about the expansion of their community.

PORA President Dick Egan said at Tuesday's monthly board meeting that PORA continues to look for answers to its questions on water rights, school taxes and other expansion-related issues.

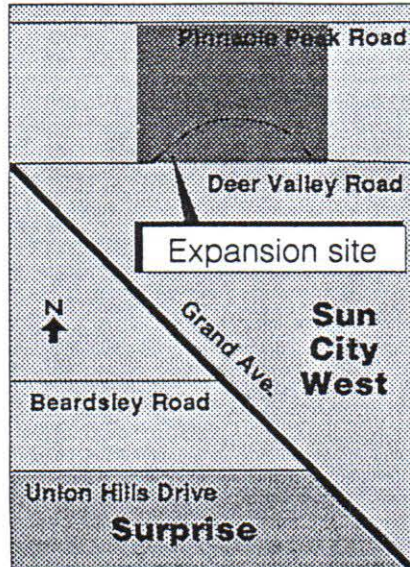
Del Webb Corp. has begun site preparation on 1,300 acres north of Deer Valley Road between 135th and 151st avenues for expansion of Sun City West. When complete, the expansion could swell Sun City West's population by 10,000 to about 30,000 residents.

Egan said one of PORA's chief concerns is the question of ownership rights to the effluent that would be produced from Sun City West's reclaimed treated sewage and whether the community would get tax credits under the state's new Groundwater Replenishment Act.

The use of effluent on Sun City West's seven existing golf courses, plus the new course planned in the expansion area, is under consideration by the rec centers board.

"We haven't been able to get anybody to stand up and give us an opinion because this is the first time this has ever been presented," Egan said.

Egan said PORA would also like to be directly involved when Citizens Utilities, represented by its subsidiary, Sun City West



Utilities Co., comes before Arizona Corporation Commission and Maricopa County Board of Supervisors for approval to amend its certification permits in order to operate in the expansion area north of Deer Valley Road.

Resident activist Phil Vision said the effluent issue might have to be settled in court. "The individual residents have already paid for the water so how can they (Webb) claim ownership because if we had not bought that water, there would not be any effluent," he said. Vision said he did not think it was "equitable or fair" for Webb to claim ownership of the waste water after residents had paid for it.

"Do the costs include pumping sewage away from community to the wastewater treatment plant or does it also include the processing of that water?" Egan

asked. "We're trying to find out whether we're paying for the processing of that sewage to produce effluent and, if we are, do we benefit from it?"

PORA has also been involved in setting up an expansion area school taxes committee chaired by Sandy Goldstein, president of the Sun City West Foundation.

During several meetings with Peoria and Dysart school district officials, committee members have tried to learn how much the recreation centers and expansion area homeowners will have to pay in school taxes.

"We are finding that both school districts are very much interested in maintaining a good relationship us," Egan said, noting that PORA was originally formed 12 years ago to get the Dysart School District to justify its taxes to SCW residents. The main question is, which of four district tax rates will apply to the non-profit rec centers.

In other action, PORA directors:

- Discussed a rental policy for its enlarged meeting room that would be equitable to all area service clubs and organizations.

- Voted to draft a letter to Del Webb asking Webb to approve required deed restriction changes that would allow Sun City West True Value hardware store to move from Sun West Plaza (at Meeker and Camino del Sol) into a larger 13,000 square-foot building to be constructed on a vacant lot at the northwest corner of Spanish Garden Drive and Camino del Sol.

SCW thirsts for water conservation plan

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Community leaders put several key issues aside this week to consider water conservation efforts.

The community's proposed expansion, efforts to attract a full-service postal service and the uncertain future of the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts have dominated discussions by both the Property Owners and Residents Association and the Recreation Centers Advisory Boards.

But Sun City West's failure to comply with Arizona Department of Water Resources allocations and the proposed water replenishment bill in the state Legislature took precedence this past week.

Passage of the bill could add significant taxes to the community's water bill because of its dependence on groundwater, said Dick Egan, PORA second vice president, at last week's

PORA meeting.

"We're trying to set up a community-wide water conservation plan where we will include all the major water users," Egan said.

At Tuesday's meeting of the rec centers advisory board, water resources chairman Keith Hook outlined a new golf course irrigation plan that calls for the use of effluent (treated sewage water) to replace up to 50 percent of the ground or well water used on SCW's five recreation center courses.

The Department of Water Resources recently notified Citizens Utilities Co., which services Sun City West water needs, that SCW was surpassing its groundwater allocation.

Failure to comply with DWR water allocation standards could result in a fine of up to \$1 million for both the Sun Cities, said Egan.

"They (DWR) have indicated to us they will not try to collect

on that assessment provided that we come up with a meaningful water conservation program," said Egan.

An initial effort in that plan is the reduction of golf course groundwater usage.

PORA and Sun City West recreation centers officials said they are also closely monitoring the Phoenix Water Replenishment bill (HB2499) in the Legislature. If passed as originally proposed, it has been estimated to add \$150 in taxes per acre foot of water used beyond the community's allocation.

"We would be assessed a certain amount based upon the number of (additional) gallons of groundwater each resident uses," said Egan, noting the bill is at an apparent standoff between East and West Valley forces.

Fred Kriess, manager of Citizens Utilities, said his staff has been working with DWR to develop a fair water conservation

program to meet mandatory water conservation goals for both Sun Cities.

"It's a program we think is reasonable and will be accepted by DWR," said Kriess. The principle tool used to gain compliance will be water audits and educational water bills containing useful information on how to conserve water, he said.

DWR's current golf course allocation of irrigation water plan calls for the use of 2,979 acre feet of water for Sun City West's five recreation center courses.

Hook said that in 1989, the five courses used 3,190 acre feet and in 1990 they used 2,709 acre feet because of more favorable weather conditions.

That translates to 883 million gallons of groundwater for the five courses or 47,000 for every recreation center member. In contrast, Hook said most Sun City West households use

50,000 to 100,000 gallons a year.

Because DWR uses a three-year average of groundwater usage to measure compliance, it is imperative that Sun City West be at or under its allocated 2,979 acre feet this year, Hook said.

To meet DWR requirements, Hook said the Recreation Centers Irrigation Management Program will address four areas: upgrade of the irrigation control systems; use of effluent credits; transformation of grassy areas not used for play into low-water use desert landscaping; and minimum overseeding of tees and greens.

"We are now negotiating an agreement with Citizens Utilities to supply effluent to be used on the courses," said Hook. "We are not now nor have we in the past used effluent on our golf courses except for a couple of test periods."

Cool Well Water sale OK'd by state panel

By CHRISTINE SELIGA
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — The Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) has approved an agreement allowing Sun City West Utilities Co. to purchase Cool Well Water Co.

Sun City West Utilities Co. is a subsidiary of Citizens Utilities Co., which also owns the Sun City Water and Sewer Co.

After the ACC's ruling last week, all that remains is closing the transaction. That should take place in two weeks, said Fred Kriess, manager of Citizens' Maricopa County operations.

Kriess said Cool Well Water Co. will be operated by Sun City West Utilities Co. as a separate entity with its own rate structure and separate accounting records.

Cool Well Water Co. covers an area of about one square mile contiguous to the northeast corner of Sun City West.

The company serves 16 residential and two commercial customers.

Kriess said the company was approached by the owners of Cool Well Water Co., who wanted to sell.

Water office won't be taking bills

SUN CITY WEST — After Monday, Arizona Public Service customers living in Sun City West will no longer be able to pay their electric bills at the Sun City West Water Co. pay station.

The office will remain open but will not accept payments.

Customers can pay their bills at any First Interstate Bank branch. One is at the corner of Camino Del Sol and R.H. Johnson Boulevard.

Customers with questions about paying their bill or who would like to have their bank automatically pay their bills can contact the Sun City business office at 846-8698 or stop by at 10765 Grand Ave., in Sun City.

Its location between the two Sun Cities makes it a natural area for Citizens to serve, Kriess said this morning.

"It's immediately contiguous to our Sun City West area and we feel that area is going to

experience future growth," he said.

The acquisition of Cool Well will have no impact on the utility rates of people in Sun City or Sun City West because Cool Well will be operated separately.

The operations and administration of Cool Well will be conducted out of Citizens' Sun City office, which is the administration center for all of Citizens' Maricopa County operations.

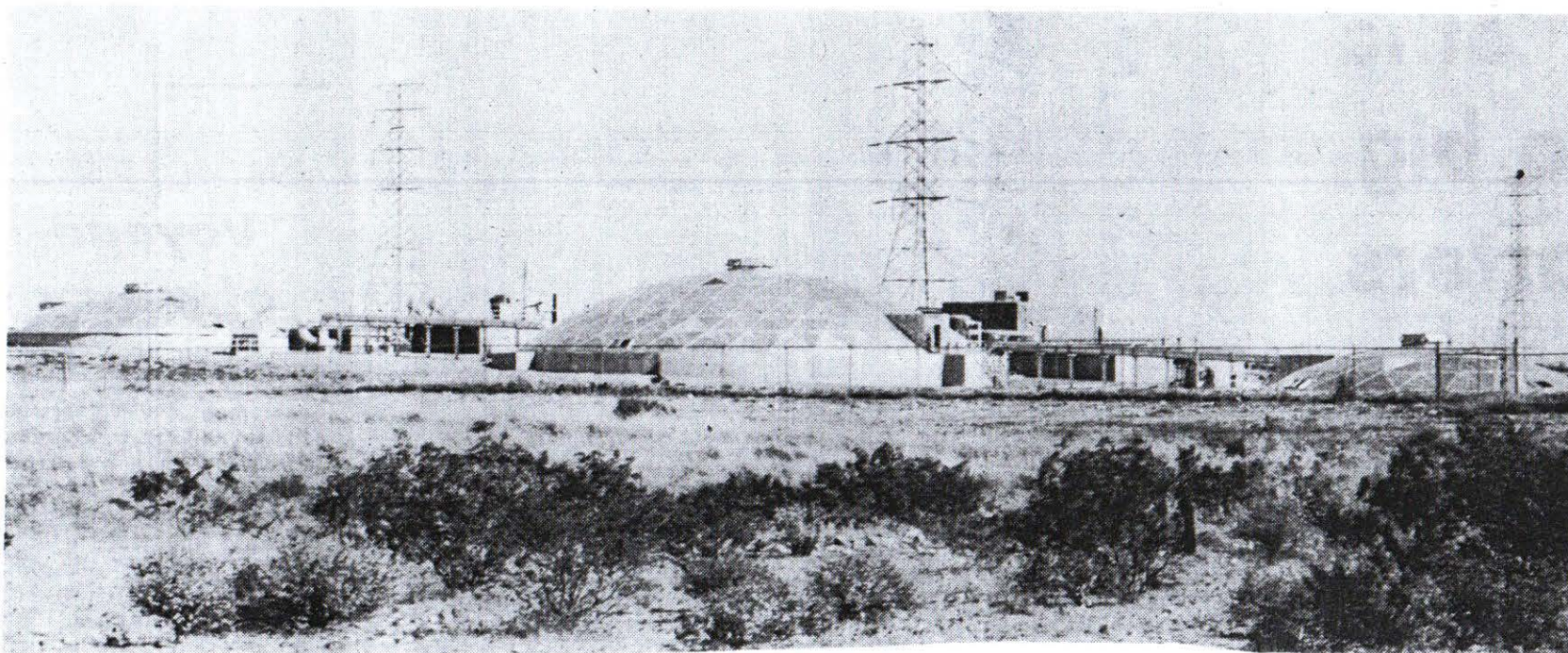
William Turrie, one of the owners of Cool Well, said several weeks ago that the owners don't want to keep investing to improve the water service.

Cool Well Water Co. is a partnership of Turrie and four other people who took over operation of the facility in September 1986.

"A small water company like that requires a great deal of expertise, more than we have," he said. "It gets too much, of course, to handle."

Turrie said the owners wanted to sell to the Sun City West Utilities Co. because it was a neighboring company and it is well-qualified to take over operation of the facility.

The company had been for sale for several years, Turrie said.



Surrounded by cactus and sand, the Sun City West sewage treatment facility is less than a mile northwest of Sun City. Built along the Agua Fria River, the plant includes 30 acres of alfalfa fields on the river's floodplain. Treated effluent from the plant is used to water the crops and, one day, will be used to water the golf courses in Sun City West.

(News-Sun Photo)

5-17-83

Wastewater not wasted at SC West

By LINDA VON TERSCH
Water is valuable in Arizona's desert.

It has been a daily routine for Sun City West residents to conserve the clear liquid and now they are able to reuse it.

Del E. Webb Corporation has built a wastewater plant with units that return effluent to golf courses and hay fields.

"By developing a re-use system with the community we are able to reuse water in an economic manner," said Tom Ryan, engineering vice president for Del E. Webb Development Co.

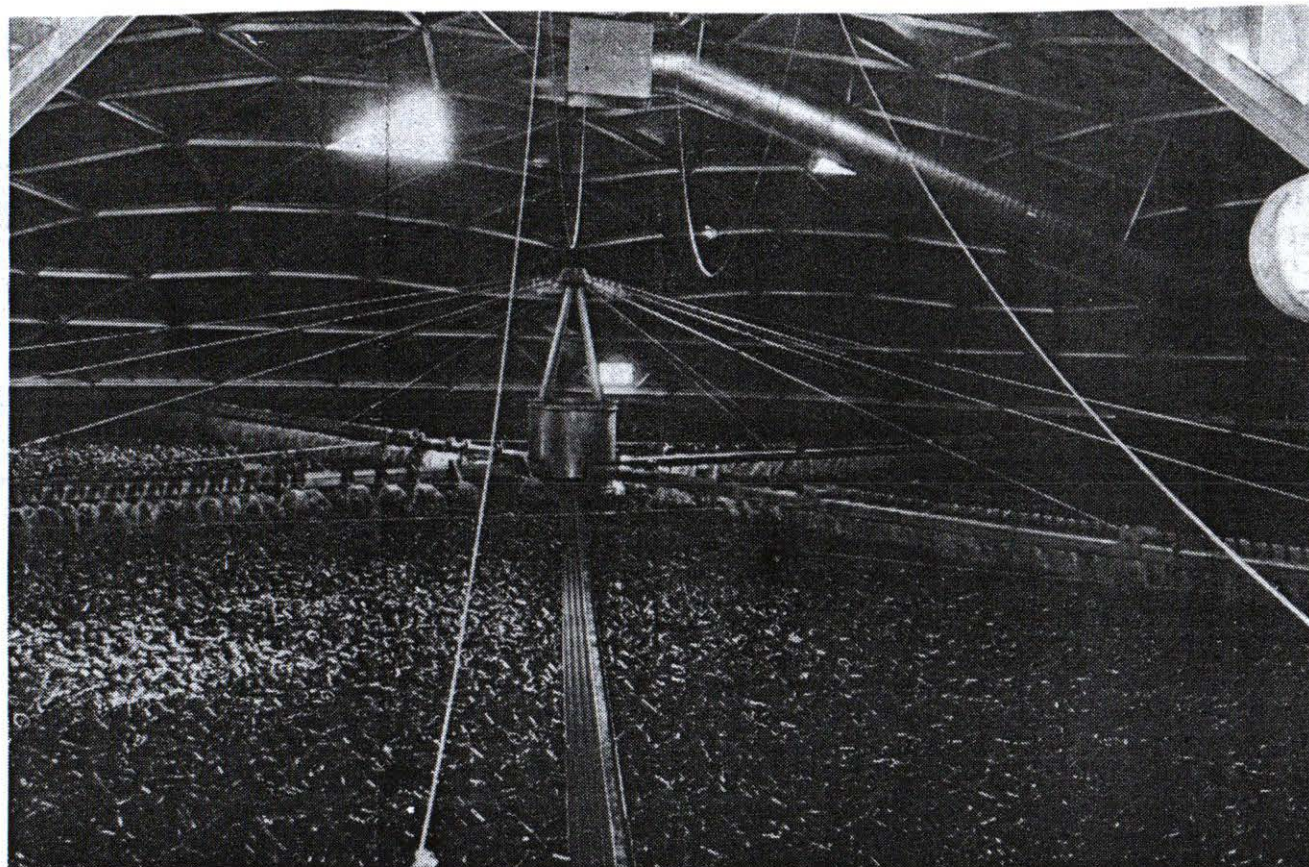
Construction of the \$5 million facility began in 1978 and the first phase of the 2.2 billion gallons re-use system for agriculture and golf courses was recently completed. The system has three phases

and will ultimately reuse 6.6 billion gallons.

Sun City West wastewater reclamation plant was designed for the community, which is located too far west to hook onto another system. Housing developments are required to have a 100-year water supply and so the system was necessary.

"Before we even planned Sun City West we decided the new community would have its own waste water reclamation plant. Then the 100-year water study reinforced it," Ryan said of the plant's development.

Odors and pollutants from the system are closely monitored. The enclosed treatment units remove pungent smells and soil and groundwater samples are tested for potential waste problems.



THE SUN CITY WASTEWATER Plant from inside (above), outside (center) and an aerial shot (bottom). This plant was built by Del E. Webb Development Co.

"The plant must be a part of the neighborhood so we go to greater lengths to

remove the odor," Ryan said. "Part of the study on re-use includes a thorough investigation of the effects on soil and groundwater and we have set up a monitoring program to insure no problems in those areas."

Ryan added agriculture

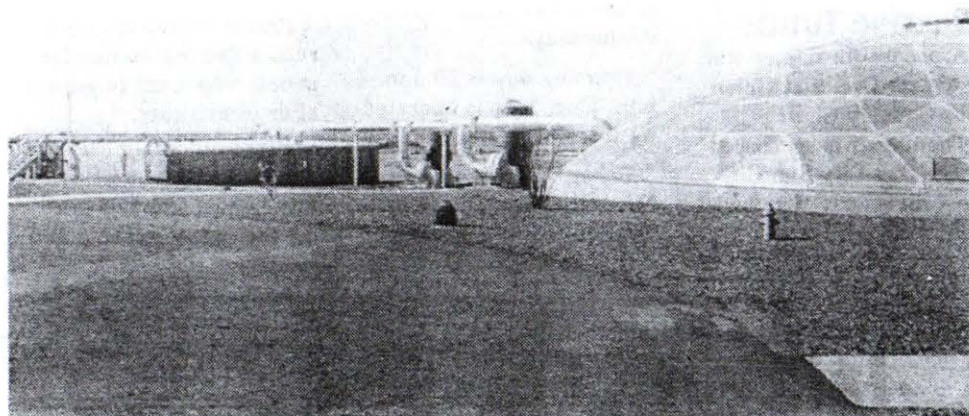
as a partial solution to the Southwest's shrinking ground water supply. This was the first such system in Arizona. The geodesic domes help control odor.

could benefit from the increase nitrate levels.

Other communities have constructed a re-use system on a smaller scale.

But at this time, water isn't valuable enough for communities to find it economically beneficial to convert to a re-use system.

"If the system is not developed with the community, it would be extremely expensive and difficult to develop later," Ryan said. "It is not an absolute necessity at the present time, but it's a prudent way to provide for the future."



Webb wastewater plants help solve shrinking water supply

Two Del E. Webb Corp. subsidiaries have come up with an intriguing answer to the Southwest's shrinking water supply—not simple, or cheap, but realistic.

Wastewater plants like Webb recently built in Sun City West—units which return effluent to the land while reducing odors—may someday be standard for community increments.

"Basically, we reuse effluent on our golf courses and hay fields and reduce odors by enclosing our plants with geodesic domes," explained Tom Ryan, engineering vice president for Del E. Webb Development Co.

"WE'VE put a lot of planning and engineering in our system, yet the idea is basic. What can become increasingly important is the groundwater we save."

When the Webb plant is expanded to serve its ultimate 39,000 housing units, it will return 2.05 billion gallons of effluent annually to golf courses and crops.

The system could be even more valuable to traditional communities than to resort-retirement towns like Sun City West, which has an average density of 2.5 residential units per gross acre and averages 1.7 residents per unit.

WHEN Sun City West is completed, maximum sewage run will be 11.5 miles. Considering that the average community has a density twice that of Sun City West, with more residents per unit, pipe costs would be less and groundwater savings more.

Arizona requires that for golf course irrigation, effluent can't puddle and children can't use the facility. Since Sun City West

uses it on hay fields and adult golf courses, this poses no problem.

Other Southwestern communities might use effluent on orchards, cotton or other crops, or fence their golf courses, which many do anyway. There is technology available to further purify effluent.

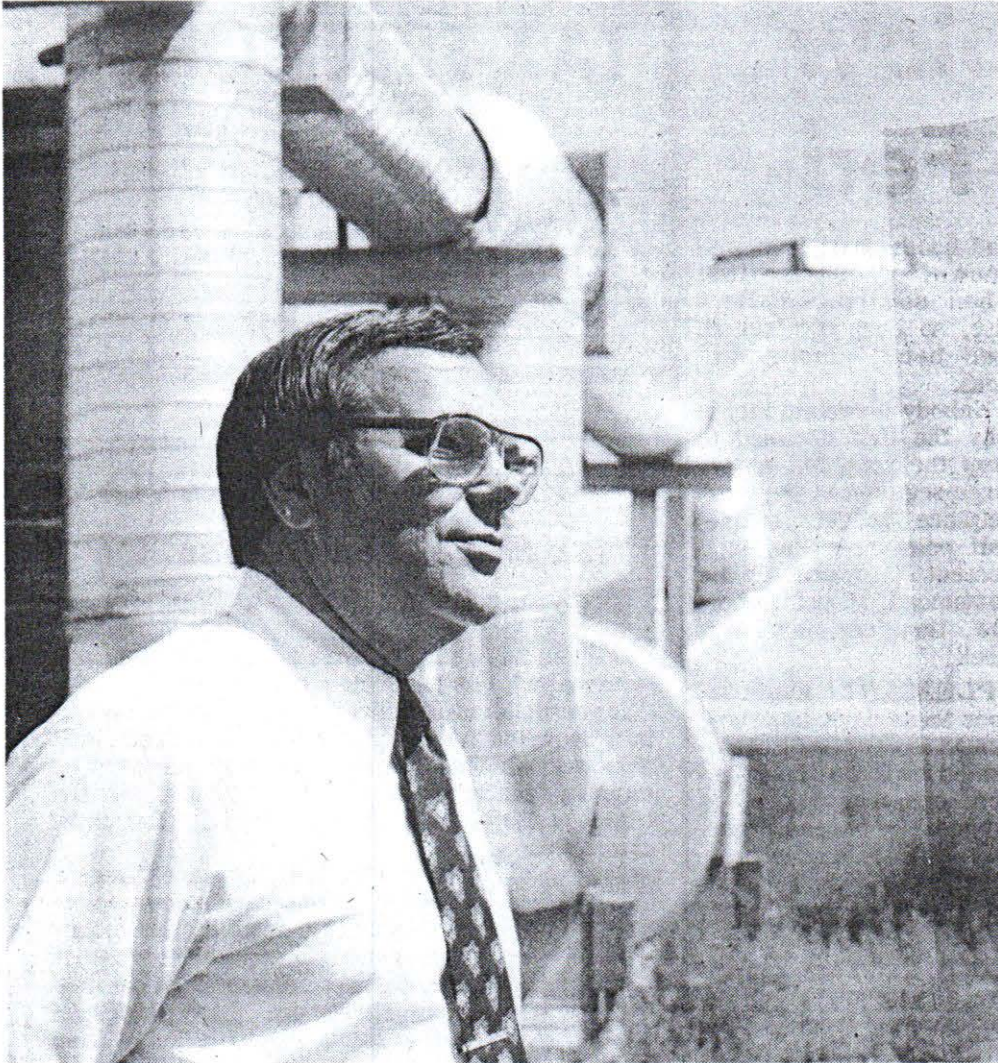
WITHOUT special engi-

neering, a centralized plant like that built by Webb in Sun City West would present an odor problem.

Whether effluent or gas-es-solids are main by-products—or whether future plants will assess and equal value to each—may depend on available groundwater.

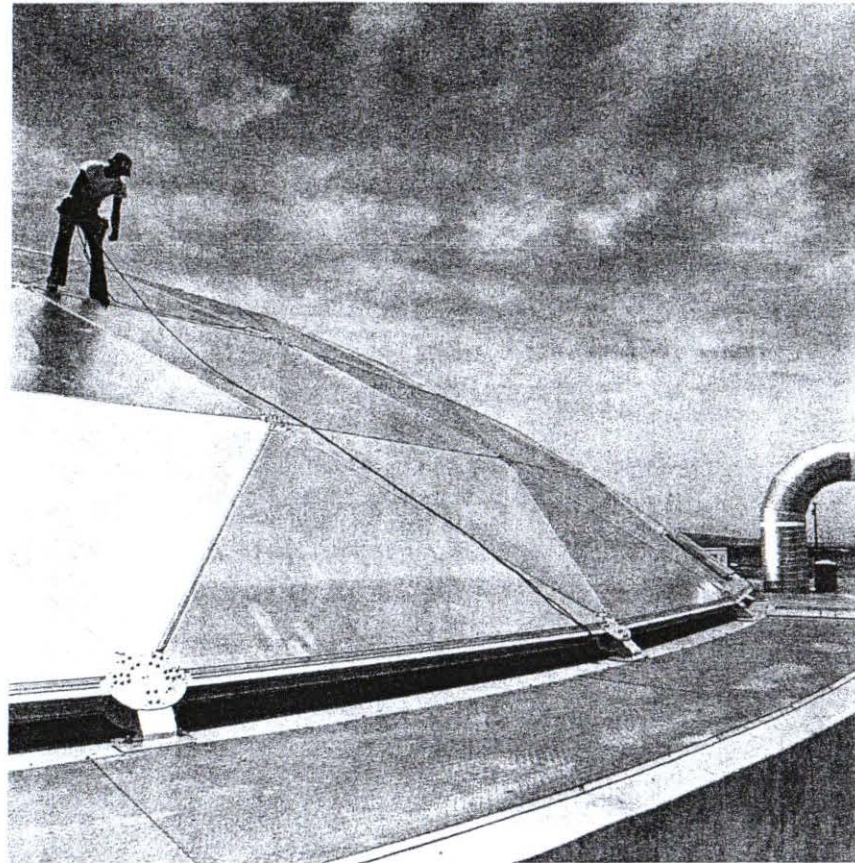
over

for mm



One answer to the Southwest's shrinking ground water supply is the type of wastewater treatment plant built by Del E. Webb Development Co. at its Sun City West site, the first such system in Arizona. Webb vice president Tom Ryan, standing near one of the plant's geodesic domes which helps control odors, says effluent is used on golf courses as well as hay fields.

Old Problem Solved With A New Solution



NAME-WISE, sewage treatment plants some time ago were escalated into "waste-water" treatment plants. At huge Sun City West, a new generation of refinements involves removing all sight and smell. Most apparent physical change there is covering of treatment pools by all-aluminum domes, fabricated on the ground and lifted into place. These "skins" cover 75-foot and 125-foot-diameter primary and final clarifiers and a trickling filter. Odors are "scrubbed" through hydrogen peroxide. The plant, scheduled for July 1 completion, is designed to handle wastewater from 15,000 homes. The Webb supervisory crew was Swen Johnson, superintendent; John Rechlin, operations manager; Dick McNeil, office manager and Craig Porter, engineer.

Judge says water trespasses

A Maricopa County Superior Court judge ruled today that water flowing through a drainage ditch in Sun City West is trespassing.

However, it has not been decided if the drainage ditch itself is in violation of a trespass suit filed last October by the Arizona Land Department against the Del E. Webb Corporation, said Judge Philip Marquardt.

Three lawsuits have been filed since Land Department officials became aware of the alleged trespass on state land in the Sun City West area north of

Bell Road at the Agua Fria River.

TWO CO-DEFENDANTS also were named in separate lawsuits.

An assistant attorney general representing the Land Department is preparing for a jury trial. But both sides hope to reach an agreement which would include a reasonable set amount in punitive damages less than the \$14.5 million being asked in the three lawsuits.

At this point, however, there has been no communication to reach an

out-of-court settlement, something Judge Marquardt had hoped would occur at the onset of hearings last month.

THE LAWSUITS have been amended to include additional alleged violations which were discovered after the original lawsuit was filed last October.

Hearings will continue May 13 in Judge Marquardt's chambers.

The judge said he still hopes the matter can be settled without going to trial.

4f-28-80

SC West water plant begins operation

The first of four planned water plants has been placed in service in Sun City West, a spokesman for the Sun City West Utilities Co. said today.

William Raymo, manager of Citizens Utilities, parent company to the Sun City West branch, said the facility northwest of the Meeker Boulevard extension, will serve all of Sun City West.

THE PLANT includes a 1.25 million-gallon storage tank; a 10,000-gallon hydropneumatic tank; three 100-horse-

power pumps, each with a capacity of 1,800 GPM; and one 75-horsepower pump with a capacity of 1,000 GPM.

An electrical control building, designed to handle three future plants planned for the community, also is on the three-acre site.

Placed into service March 4, construction costs for the facility were approximately \$640,000.

RAYMO SAID the water supply for the community comes from two ground wells controlled from the plant.

The groundwater level in the area is approximately 350 feet. There are 12 existing wells in the Sun City West area dug by the one-time area cotton and citrus farmers for irrigation purposes. As the development of Sun City West progresses, the utility company will be able to utilize those wells to expand their operations, reducing drastically their production and drilling costs.

The plant facility in Sun City West is equipped with a sand cleaner to purify the water. Since any groundwater here

is virtually uncontaminated, filtration and purification costs for water treatment is nominally low.

"WE'RE QUITE fortunate in Arizona," Raymo said. "Usually groundwater in most areas, except the Great Lakes region and Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, is pure and requires little purification."

The water is pumped from the ground wells into the large storage tank and then is channeled to the consumers.

3-26-80



Bill Raymo, left, manager of Citizens Utilities, and George Seldin, chairman of the Property Owners and Residents Association utilities committee, inspect the completed water plant northwest of the Meeker Boulevard extension in Sun City West. The facility will handle the water supply for the community. It is the first of four plants planned for the area. (News-Sun Photo)