



*Mark West Area
Community Services Committee*

4787 Old Redwood Hwy, Ste 101
Larkfield, CA. 95403
(707) 546-8000



www.markwestcsd.org

September & October
2007

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District Formation is Underway

The Mark West Community Services Committee has been meeting with the community as well as Supervisor Paul Kelley in preparation for a Community Services District Formation.

The Board of Supervisors is looking into potential funds to provide the MWCSC for use on an additional feasibility study. This study would be prepared to assist in determining the annual cost for running the district and potential services. The committee and Supervisor Paul Kelley will be meeting again in early September to discuss the status of the funds.

A timeline is also being developed in which to complete the LAFCO application and gather up signatures before a desired November 2008 ballot election.

The Committee will be holding a meeting in October of 2007, which will be the beginning of our petition drive to gather signatures in support of the district. In addition, we will be gathering feedback as to what services the community would most like to see in the Larkfield/Wikiup area.

Following our community meeting, we will be calling on all of the volunteers we can to help circulate a petition in support of district formation. If you are interested in helping, please send us an email at: mwscsd@markwestcsd.org.

These and other issues will be discussed in more detail at our upcoming community meeting in October. See the Upcoming Events Calendar on page 2 for date and time.

Optional Community Services

- (a) Supply water
- (b) Dispose of sewage, recycled water
- (c) Dispose of solid waste
- (e) Recreation facilities (parks)
- (f) Community recreation
- (g) Street lighting and landscaping
- (i) Police protection and law enforcement
- (j) Security services
- (k) Library services
- (l) Maintain streets
- (m) Place utilities underground
- (o) Provide and maintain public airports
- (p) Provide transportation services
- (q) Abate graffiti
- (r) Flood protection
- (s) Operate community facilities
(including community centers)
- (aa) Provide mail delivery service
- (ab) Operate cemeteries
- (ac) Finance area planning commissions
(Section 65101)
- (ad) Finance municipal advisory councils
(Section 31010)

For a more detailed list of services, click on the link below or contact the MWCSC via email at: mwscsd@markwestcsd.org or by phone at 707/546-8000.

[Abbreviated List of CSD Services](#)

Mark West CSC
4787 Old Redwood Hwy, Ste 101
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Cal American Water and You

By Kitty Freeman

Who is Cal American Water and why should you care? That is a question that you as a resident of this area may be asking. You no doubt have seen the large glossy signs advertising, "Lower your water bill by 40%. That sounds really good. Who wouldn't want that? But who is it that wants to give us that break. I asked that question to a man who came to my door carrying those glossy flyers. He told me he represented my water company. I questioned him further and discovered to my dismay that in my area we have a private water company. I just moved into the area. Before my move I had done a lot of research into the ills of privatized water companies but wasn't concerned about my own well being because we were on a public water system.

These are some of the things I discovered about private water companies.

1. Private water companies are in the business of making money. That means that money, often in large amounts, are taken out of the community. We will see this in the form of rising water bills.
2. Every three years the company can petition the Public Utilities Commission for a rate increase. The PUC isn't always public friendly and sometimes favors industries. The water companies are often very large (in our case one of the three largest in the world) and well funded. They show up with a band of slick lawyers to make their case to the PUC. All the public typically has is a bunch of untrained citizens who don't want to be bullied by big business.
3. Private water companies do not have any incentive to take care of the public. First of all their bottom line is money. Their public is the stock holders. They are often located far distant from the people they serve. In our case Germany is

where the main office of the parent company is located. So they aren't exactly responsive or concerned about a small band of folks. So if equipment is old or failing the company will do a cost benefit analysis to see if it is worth bothering with. If not they will wait until public outcry forces them to do something. Our public oversight (policing on water quality) is generally under staffed and under funded, so good luck. This could mean poor water quality and poor service along with high prices for you.

4. This company, like all private water companies, has a history and it isn't pretty. I looked up Cal-American Water on the internet and discovered places where this company increased water prices by 1500% while delivering water services so bad that people complained of receiving brown water. In poor countries people have been forced to choose between water and food.

The public, meaning we who live in this area, would be better served if we ran our own water system by purchasing it ourselves and then hiring the same folks who have been running it so far to do the job. That way our money will go to running the water system, not to making CEOs, executives, and stock holders of big private water companies rich. Any initial cost that we may require will, in the end, pay for itself.

If you read the flyer Cal Am is sending out you will see 40% decrease with merger or 53% increase without. They are in a way threatening us. They want to merge our water system with a much larger one in Sacramento. They say that if we spread out the costs over a much larger district that will decrease our costs. First of all that isn't guaranteed even if it should happen that we merge, nor is the increase guaranteed if we don't. The company isn't bound legally to give you this decrease if the merger is approved. The PUC has not approved the increase either.

There is a problem with this requested merger for the people of this area. If the

PUC approves it (which is why Cal-Am is trying to get you to sign a petition and send in a post card to the PUC encouraging them to approve the merger) than our chances of purchasing our own water system through eminent domain from Cal-Am will become next to impossible. That is what they want, and why they are working so hard to misinform the people they serve about these issues.

A small core of local residents who see the dangers involved here have been fighting this battle for years alone. They have had general apathy as well as a lack of understanding of these issues by the local people as barriers to progress. If we educate ourselves on the issues and band together we can win. We all will gain something here. Not just lower water bills and local control and voice, but a sense of community and empowerment as well.

Kitty Freeman, author, is a newcomer to the area and has submitted this piece to us to share with the community.

Upcoming Events Calendar

September - October MWCSA Committee Meetings

Lesure Engineers
1st & 3rd Thursday of each
month 11:30 am – 1 pm

Community Meeting Saturday, October 27 at 10am

Evangelical Free Church @
Wikiup Dr./Old Redwood Hwy.

Discussion of potential district
services, district formation
petition drive kick-off, as well
as community feedback and
Q&A opportunities.

Bring a Neighbor!