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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 5, 2010

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AUBURN -- New technology is allowing the Placer County Water Agency to read more water meters, keep costs down, and provide more timely, accurate and reliable billing information to customers, it was reported at Thursday's (Feb. 4) meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors.

An overview of the water agency's Meter Automation Program was provided by Director of Customer Services John Kingsbury, who has overseen development of the program over the past eight years.

Until 2002, Kingsbury said, PCWA meter readers were scrambling up banks and digging through overgrowth to find and read meters. Meter readers would each read about 600 meters per day and manually record their numbers in notepads.

Through meter replacements and retrofitting in recent years, the agency has added electronic transmitters to meters and is now able to collect data on a drive-by basis, using vehicle-mounted or hand-held readers. Data from the readers is then electronically transferred into the agency's billing system.

"It's much more accurate and consistent," Kingsbury said. "Customers can be assured that their billings reflect the actual amount of water they have used."

Today, Kingsbury said, PCWA is using electronic meter reading on 33,411 accounts, while still manually reading a select group of commercial, fire service and irrigation water metered accounts.

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Kingsbury's presentation was one of three management reports on achievements of 2009 and issues anticipated in 2010. Director of Field Services Mike Nichol and Director of Technical Services Brian Martin also reported.

In other business, directors:

- heard an update from governmental affairs consultant Jason Larrabee on state and federal legislative efforts. Among other issues, Larrabee is assisting PCWA in its efforts to scale back significant land use fee increases the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is placing upon local agencies that use federal land as part of their power production activities.

- agreed to join with five other water suppliers in the region to retain a Sacramento-based consulting and lobbying firm. Director of Strategic Affairs Einar Maisch said the San Juan Water District would contract with Fernandez Government Solutions and that Sacramento Suburban Water District and the cities of Roseville, Folsom and Sacramento would also be part of the effort.

- adjourned the meeting in memory of R. Paul Williams, former 27-year member of the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District. Williams, who represented NID's Division IV in Placer County, became the longest serving elected director in NID history. He died Wednesday (Feb. 3) at his home in rural Lincoln. He was 84.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18, at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.

Information on PCWA board meetings may be obtained through the Clerk to the Board at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.