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Apple Valley Ranchos Explains Proposed Rate Increase at Open House

by [admin](#) • April 13, 2014 • [0 Comments](#)

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By Janice Eck and Miguel Gonzalez

(Apple Valley)—Recently, Apple Valley Ranchos Water Company (AVRWC) hosted an informational open house at the Apple Valley Conference Center to share information with their customers on a variety of topics, including water system complexities, the pending rate case, and conservation.

Citing reductions in fixed cost recovery due to declining sales and increasing costs of infrastructure and operations, Apple Valley Ranchos Water Company (AVRWC) will seek

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to increase rates before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

If approved, the proposed three-year overall rate increase would add by 2017 an extra 69 cents a day to average bills for typical residential customers.

According to officials at the water company, the rate adjustment, though not popular, is necessary to guarantee water quality and service reliability for AVRWC customers.

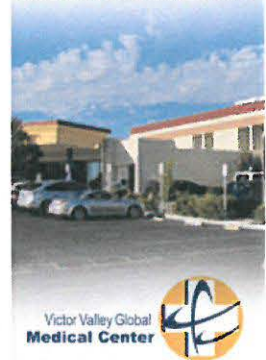
AVRWC is a complex service that's more than just pipes and water. "There's an awful lot involved in running a water company," Weldy explains to High Desert Daily. "The idea that we're taking water out of the ground and delivering it to you, safe to consume is kind of a big deal."

Operation costs are directly related to rates. Scott Weldy, AVRWC Manager, explains, "The cost of operating the system is inflationary-related to our cost of operation. It goes up periodically because our costs go up periodically."



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Just like your car needs maintenance and repairs, AVRWC requires repair or replacement to provide optimum water transport and quality. The main reason for the rate increase is to improve infrastructure. There are about 140 miles of old steel pipes that will need to be replaced soon and costs upwards of \$1,000,000 per mile to replace. New wells will be drilled and with each drilling costing close to \$2,000,000, AVRWC is asking for over \$35,000,000 in capital improvements. These improvements include wells, reservoirs and tanks, mains, main extension, and replacing old steel pipes with better modern technology.

There is no question that the AVRWC infrastructure needs to be improved and the only way to do that is to increase revenue. Rate increases are hardly ever welcomed, especially in Apple Valley, where residents took

conservation to heart so much so, that Weldy called Apple Valley the “poster child of water conservation.”

After being so successful in water conservation and utilizing Mojave Water Agency’s Cash for Grass program and other conservation efforts, some customers came to the Open House to ask questions regarding the rate increase like Apple Valley resident, Kim Bruny, who voiced her concerns with High Desert Daily, “We took our grass out and put in desert-friendly plants and now I feel since I’ve taken my grass out and everyone’s taken their grass out, the rates are going up because we’re not using as much water.”

Claudine Austin, who shared Bruny’s concerns also participated in the Cash for Grass Program and understood the rate has to be increased to improve infrastructure for the growing community.

With Governor Brown declaring California in a Drought Emergency, you may be looking for ways to conserve water. Be sure to head to Lions Park on April 26 for Apple Valley Ranchos’ Spring Conservation Fair to learn the best ways to conserve water.

The third annual Spring Conservation Fair by the Apple Valley Ranchos Water Company is sure to offer knowledge, music, plants, fun and even prizes.

The event will be aimed at informing the community on various tips and strategies on how best to conserve water, especially out here in the unique environment known as the High Desert. From low flow toilets, to landscaping,

pool safety and more, the event will offer plenty of information to help everyone conserve a bit more. Kids will also be offered fun and educational activities.

The 3rd Annual Spring Conservation Fair will take place on April 26, 2014 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Lion's Park in Apple Valley. Many opportunities will be available to the public:

- No-cost conservation workshops
- Water-wise native plant displays
- Children's activities (Bounce house, Balloon artist, face painting and much more)
- Raffles and giveaways
- Come vote for your favorite landscaped home (People's Choice Award)
- Kid's poster coloring contest will be announced
- Vote for your favorite Water Conservation Display

The event is sponsored by:

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