

## How to reach us

If you have questions, comments or would like more information on water issues, please contact us or visit our web site.

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Soquel Creek Water District is a nonprofit, local government agency with a locally elected Board of Directors. The District provides water supply and water resource management to more than 45,000 customers within a 17-square mile area of mid-Santa Cruz County.

The Board of Directors meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00PM at the District's office at 5180 Soquel Drive. Meetings are open to everyone and comments from the public are heard at each meeting.

*Board of Directors*  
 Daniel F. Kriege, *President*  
 Gary E. Hazelton, *Vice President*  
 James M. Bargetto  
 John W. Beebe  
 Bruce Daniels

Laura D. Brown, *General Manager*

*What's on Tap* is an in-house publication for the customers of the District. Forward your comments to the editor at the address above.

Christopher J. Regan, *Editor*



## Rates to increase

District customers with a five-eighths inch meter will pay approximately 2.1 to 3.5 percent more for their water as of January 1 depending on the amount they use—as shown in the charts below. The increase, based on a study completed by a water rate consultant, is to meet operating expenses and finance capital improvements.

Percent change to bi-monthly water bill without fire service		
Usage Ccf*	New Rate (Effective January 1, 2002)	Percent Change
5	\$29.45	2.6%
10	\$39.80	2.9%
22	\$64.64	3.1%
75	\$218.35	3.4%

Percent change to bi-monthly water bill with fire service		
Usage Ccf*	New Rate (Effective January 1, 2002)	Percent Change
5	\$33.20	2.3%
10	\$43.55	2.6%
22	\$68.39	2.9%
75	\$222.10	3.3%

(\*1 Ccf equals 748 gallons)

Usage rates will increase from \$2.00 to \$2.07 per unit for 0-50 units; \$3.70 to \$3.83 per unit for 51 units and above for residential customers. (A unit of water equals 748 gallons.)

Customers with a five-eighths inch meter (a typical residential connection) will see their bimonthly service charge increase from \$18.70 to \$19.10, a 2.1 percent increase. The service charge covers costs the District incurs regardless of whether any water is sold. It includes the costs related to 24-hour emergency response, meter readings, billings, collections, and customer service inquiries and funds maintenance and improvements to District service lines, meters and partial repayment of debt on capital improvements.

Connection fees for new development will increase approximately 4 percent. The five-eighths inch meter connection will increase from \$4,500 to \$4,700.

**“PHG withdrawn”**  
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 also known as hexavalent chromium. The chromium 6 PHG, which OEHHA will develop by Spring 2003, will replace the withdrawn PHG for “total” chromium, which consists of both chromium 6 and chromium 3, an essential nutrient. DHS will use the new PHG to develop a chromium 6 drinking water standard. Legislation signed by Governor Gray Davis in October (Senate Bill 351 by Senator Deborah Ortiz) requires DHS to adopt a chromium 6 drinking water standard by January 2004.



# What's ON TAP

## At the Soquel Creek Water District

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## Public Health Goal for Chromium 6 withdrawn

The California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) announced in November that it is withdrawing its Public Health Goal (PHG) for total chromium in drinking water.

The decision comes three months after an expert panel—convened by the University of California on behalf of the California Environmental Protection Agency and OEHHA to review the chromium 6

science—released its report stating there is no evidence chromium 6 causes cancer in humans when consumed in water.

The PHG, adopted in February 1999, was 2.5 parts per billion (ppb). This number was based on OEHHA's assumption that chromium 6, the most harmful component of total chromium, caused cancer when consumed in drinking water.

Following the adoption of

this PHG, which received little attention, the public concern over chromium 6 in drinking water escalated coinciding with the release of the movie “Erin Brockovich.” As legislators, media, and the public became more concerned about chromium 6 in drinking water, the debate surrounding its true health effects became lost.

OEHHA and the Department of Health Services (DHS) committed in March to develop the nation's first PHG and drinking water standard for chromium 6,

**“PHG withdrawn”**  
*continued on back page*

## Jim Bargetto resigns from Board

After nearly 19 years of serving on the District's Board of Directors, Jim Bargetto announced his resignation at the District's December 4, Board meeting. It will be the first time in the District's 40-year history that a Bargetto has not held a seat on the board.

"It is with deep regret that we accept his resignation," said Dan Kriege, Board President. "Jim has faithfully served the customers of the District and continually brought to the Board his perspective as a financier and active community member."

Bargetto was appointed in 1983 to fill the vacant seat left by his uncle, Lawrence Bargetto, one of the District's original Directors. During Jim's tenure, he participated in many impor-

tant decisions, including labor negotiations, water supply planning to address the District's long-term water supply needs, groundwater management planning, water quality issues, and infrastructure improvements to the District's water distribution system.

In 1995, he served as Board President whereby he presided over the hiring of the current general manager. He served on the auditor selection committee and chaired the AB3030 Groundwater Management Plan committee.

"With his strong financial background, he maintained an astute observation of the District's financial picture, providing specific guidance in the area of investments,



management of the District's Bond issues and keeping a watchful eye on project costs and overruns," said Gary Hazelton, Board Vice President. "He has been an asset to this District and will be missed," said fellow Board Member Jack Beebe.

Bargetto cited increased personal and professional obligations as his reasons for resigning. ♦

## Cleanup at Quik Stop continues

### Additional actions to remove MtBE contamination recommended

Increased efforts to clean up MtBE contamination at the Quik Stop Market on Soquel Drive are progressing thanks to the work of an independent consultant hired by the District.

Last April, the District became the first public water agency in Santa Cruz County to hire an expert to review MtBE cleanup plans after being notified by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) that a leaking underground fuel tank had released the additive aimed to reduce vehicle emissions within one half-mile of three District wells. No MtBE has been detected in any

wells serving the District, which are tested regularly.

Since then, the District's consultant has been reviewing cleanup efforts and making additional recommendations to Quik Stop Market and the Central Coast RWQCB, which is responsible for overseeing MtBE cleanups in Santa Cruz County and five other counties.

The additional actions recommended include:

1. Installation of a continuous groundwater extraction and treatment system to remove and treat contaminated groundwater.
2. Installation of a continuous vapor extraction system.
3. Installation of subsurface sampling points on the east side of Nobel Creek to gather additional information on the extent of the contamination.
4. Conducting a follow-up of private well sampling. ♦

## Buying MtBE free gasoline in Santa Cruz County

Motorists looking to purchase MtBE free gasoline have over a dozen locations to choose from in Santa Cruz County.

A list of local service stations regularly selling MtBE free gasoline is posted on the county's web site at [www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us). The list is based on individual

gasoline stations' response to a survey conducted by Santa Cruz County Environmental Health in May 2001. While all stations indicated their interest in providing MtBE free fuel, many are unable to obtain it from their suppliers.

Since the availability of gasoline without MtBE can vary, consumers should check labels on gasoline pumps or ask the station operator.

Currently, California's 33 million residents use a total of 4 million gallons of MtBE daily to keep 25 million registered vehicles on the road. In 1999, California, which accounts for 40 percent of the nation's MtBE market, became the first state to ban the chemical, which is due to take effect by the end of 2002. ♦

