

**MONTEREY**  
**PENINSULA**  
**WATER**  
**“BUBBLE”**  
**ISSUES**

**Peter M. Fallon**  
**December 14, 2009**

# Water plan moves ahead

## PROGRAM ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO TEMPORARILY TAP FUNDING

By **JIM JOHNSON**  
*Herald Salinas Bureau*

In an attempt to show what it is like to live without running water, north Monterey County resident Suzy Petersen delivered small buckets to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

Petersen told the supervisors to try using the buckets to catch water when they wash up, brush their teeth or take a shower, and they might get an inkling of what

she and her family have endured for years since their well went dry.

Petersen told the board that a pilot program aimed at defraying a portion of the cost of trucking water to her Via Del Sol Road home in the so-called Granite Ridge area was "nice," but it wouldn't solve the problem and change her circumstances.

"What would really change my life is to have a

long-term water solution," she said, and asked the board to "move quicker" on a more sustainable fix.

On Tuesday, the board unanimously approved a six-month pilot program that would allow residents whose wells have gone dry to tap county funding to help pay for water deliveries. The board authorized the use of \$30,000 from county coffers to pay those who could prove they had been forced to

truck in water. They would receive about 30 percent of the cost of doing so, up to \$300.

More than a dozen families are known to have been without a reliable water source for years, and county officials believe there are more who are short of water but reluctant to admit it because of concerns about how it will affect their

*Please see Wells page A5*

property values.

Drilling new wells in the Granite Ridge area is an expensive task that holds no guarantee of finding a water source because of its geological composition. County officials have acknowledged development in the area helped contribute to the water shortage.

County Environmental Health director Allen Stroh and Assistant County Counsel Les Girard called the situation a threat to public health and safety that justified spending county funds. Though the pilot program only applies to

those who live in the Granite Ridge area, Girard acknowledged that the program could serve as a precedent for those

who live elsewhere and are short on water.

While Petersen and several North County residents said the subsidy program is a step forward, they said it represents a short-term fix.

Prunedale resident Ed Mitchell, who is running for supervisor, called the plan a "Band-Aid" and told the board it should support including a water allocation for North County from the proposed Regional Water Project. Mitchell said any new water source should benefit existing homeowners before going to new development.

Supervisor Jane Parker noted that the Granite Ridge subsidy shared Tuesday's agenda with the proposed Heritage Oaks project, a 35-unit housing subdivision near Aromas that was denied by the Planning Commission the long-term availability of water and appealed to the board. A late letter from developer Wayne Holman's attorney John Bridges prompted the board to continue the appeal until March 2 to allow staff members to respond.

Parker said the experience with dry wells in North County should serve as a reminder to the county that it needs appropriate development safeguards in place "so we don't create another Granite Ridge."

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Supervisor Lou Calcagno said he wasn't sure North County should be included in the Regional Water Project. He said plans are in the works for a pipeline that would deliver water to the region from the reservoir behind the Salinas Valley Water Project's rubber dam or from wells along the Salinas River. Calcagno said that water could be available as soon as next year.

Calcagno said the board next week will consider another pipeline project that would deliver water to the Granite Ridge area from a well on county-owned property off Castroville Boulevard. First proposed nearly three years ago, the \$18 million proposal has been held up by legal issues and opposition, as well as funding constraints. Calcagno said the county is working on a proposal to

**Action part of utility's efforts to reduce pumping**

## Cal Am cracks down on water stealers

By **LARRY PARSONS**  
*Herald Staff Writer*

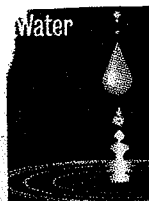
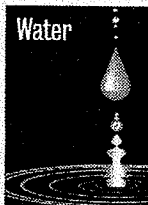
California American Water says it is keeping a sharp lookout for thieves making off with one of the Peninsula's most precious commodities — water.

Cal Am announced Friday that it is making a concerted effort to deter the theft of water from its system — most typically by tapping fire hydrants without required permits and meters.

employees to be on the lookout in the past couple of months," said Cal Am spokeswoman Catherine Bowie.

The utility, which serves most of the Peninsula, is under standing state orders to reduce pumping from the Carmel River, conserve water and to reduce losses from its system.

Bowie said losses to the water supply have run as high as



**"We just trust people will abide by the rules."**

**Catherine Bowie**  
Cal Am  
spokeswoman

## **CURRENT STATUS:**

**More Rationing Coming**

**No New Source - Yet**

**Private Well “Gold Rush”**

**No County Water Plan**

**No US Open Plan**

**Granite Ridge Issue**

## **COMING CHANGES:**

**20 % State Reductions**

**Limited River Supply**

**Connection Moratorium**

**New Lower Watering Limits**

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

**Moratorium Immediately**

**Create LT Water Plan**

**Save Underground Sources**

**Business Limits – US Open**

**New Water Source**

**Cal Am Monitor all Wells**

**Water Security**