

it's flight test center, equipped with a sophisticated complex of computers and data acquisition equipment to record the TriStar's flight test program. Paint hangar for the wide-bodied TriStar between the two larger buildings.

quested by the Fire Department.

The Fire Department administration continues to work closely with the community.

AVEK Citizens for Water And Jobs Pushes for Votes

A quarter-century of effort to meet the water needs of the Antelope Valley-East Kern area reaches a climax on Feb. 16 when voters go to the polls to decide whether the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency will be authorized to sell bonds to finance a system to distribute State Project water.

As early as World War II days, it was recognized that the groundwater resources of Antelope Valley-East Kern were inadequate to support indefinitely the growth destined for this region. More water was being pumped out of the ground than nature was putting back. This caused a constant decline in the groundwater level, a decline that has been gaining speed in recent years.

In the early 1950's, the movement to solve the local water deficiency gained new momentum when the State Water Project became an issue before the California Legislature. Antelope Valley people were prominent in the state-wide drive to gain legislative approval of the State Water Project.

At about the same time that the State Project emerged from the legislative chambers, in 1959, a large body of Antelope Valley-East Kern citizens were holding countless meetings to reach agreement on some kind of local governmental agency that could gain the maximum benefit from this promised water supply. The result was creation of the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency.

A year later, Antelope Valley voters gave resounding support to the State Water Bond Act, which officially launched construction of the

State Water Project. Then in 1963, the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) signed a contract for water service from the State Project.

Shortly after AVEK signed up for State Project water, other regions of the state contracted for all the water available from the huge state system. Had AVEK delayed in taking this action, this area would have been "high and dry"—in the most literal sense—within a few months.

In the intervening years, AVEK has studied local water needs and analyzed probable trends of the future in order to devise the most efficient system for local distribution of State Project water. The result of this exhaustive study will go before voters on February 16.

A large citizens committee has organized to seek approval of the AVEK project proposal at next month's election. Headed by Lancaster businessman Charles W. Taylor, the group is known as "AVEK Citizens for Water and Jobs". Included in its leadership are prominent representatives of business, labor unions, the professions and nearly every major interest group within AVEK.

Taylor says his organization has reviewed the water conditions here and the proposed AVEK solution. He says the following conclusions have been reached:

—We must have more water to keep the area from stagnating economically.

—If our economy cannot grow at a reasonable rate because of continued lack of water, we will find ourselves existing in a state of perennial depression and unsteady em-

ployment.

—If we continue to over-pump our groundwater basins, home water bills will keep going up. On the other hand, supplemental water through the AVEK system will stabilize water costs.

—With the AVEK system in operation, we will be assured of good quality water. Continued overdrafting of the groundwater supply will almost certainly lead to poorer quality water.

—Building the AVEK water system to permit economic growth will result in lower taxes and lower water bills for the homeowner than would be the case without the AVEK system.

Commenting on the economic improvement that is expected as a result of the AVEK project, Taylor says:

"The majority of us who are concerned about the future of this area and its people don't have to be reminded that the greatest problem who have is unpredictable employment. We have what could be called a single-industry economy. We need to augment this basic industry with more diversified industries that will improve the 'feast-or-famine' job situation that has been typical of this area for so long."

Taylor goes on to warn that we can't hope to attract the new industry and improve our job situation if we don't provide a dependable water supply through the AVEK water project. He claims that firms won't invest millions of dollars in job-creating plants in areas with an uncertain water supply.

If the AVEK project is built, according to Taylor, it has been calculated that Antelope Valley-East Kern will gain 149,000 man-years of employment in the next nine years alone.

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