

Future Steps Under Study By AVEK

Further steps to meet local water needs are being reviewed by the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency, according to AVEK president Al E. Skelton.

However, Skelton doesn't see any reason for major changes in the plan which recently gained majority approval by voters, but fell short of the required two-thirds endorsement.

Skelton said that intensive study of other ways to meet the area's water shortage would "plow old ground" because all conceivable alternatives were considered before adoption of the existing plan to bring in water from the State Water Project.

"The AVEK board has no evidence that would change its conviction that the presently-adopted plan is the best way to solve our critical water needs," Skelton said.

Commenting on the failure of the AVEK water project bond issue to win two-thirds approval at the polls, Skelton said it was obvious that many voters were honestly confused. He noted that their confusion was aggravated by distortions from a group of perennial opponents.

Skelton said this confusion centered around the need for water and the role of AVEK in meeting this need.

"Those who have the barest knowledge of our water situation find it hard to believe that large numbers of voters would doubt the fact that we're running out of groundwater", Skelton said, "but it becomes more plausible when we stop to think that few people have any direct awareness of the seriousness of our groundwater overdraft. This lack of awareness was exploited by opponents through use of spurious data."

Skelton explained that opponents "doctored" well records from the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts to create the impression that groundwater levels are declining slowly. When this same data is examined in its entirety, he said, it proves that the water table is dropping at the alarming rate of nearly seven feet a year in the heavily-populated Lancaster area.

According to Skelton, many voters had no clear understanding of AVEK's "whole-sale" function in providing EK plan.

"This claim has been dis-supplemental water, nor did they under the partnership relations between their retail

water supplier and AVEK. He said this helps explain why many voters accepted the claim that some other entity, such as the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts, could provide supplemental water at less cost than under the AV-credited by the Waterworks Districts," said Skelton. "They have repeatedly stated that they look to AVEK to provide the necessary

supplemental water. One of the principal reasons for that position by the County is the fact that their own investigation shows that the AVEK plan will provide the least expensive solution to the water needs of their customers."

Skelton said the AVEK board will confer with local water companies and districts that have contracted to buy

State Project water before reaching any decisions about what to do next. He pointed out that these retail water purveyors consider AVEK to be their collective instrument for solving their individual water problems.

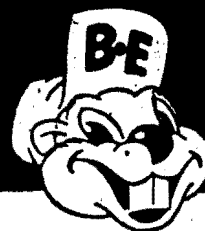
"Without AVEK, these water systems would find it financially difficult, if not impossible, to make use of State Project water," Skelton explained. "None of them would agree with the claim that AVEK's proposed system

is unnecessary. If that claim were true, AVEK would not have water service contracts with local systems serving water to more than 90 per cent of our people."

Skelton said the AVEK board of directors remains committed to a plan which can serve the entire Agency. He said any "piece-meal" alternatives, such as were hinted at by water project opponents, would not only fail to solve the widespread water problems here, but would also cost

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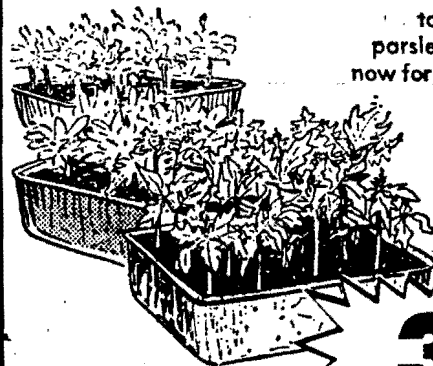
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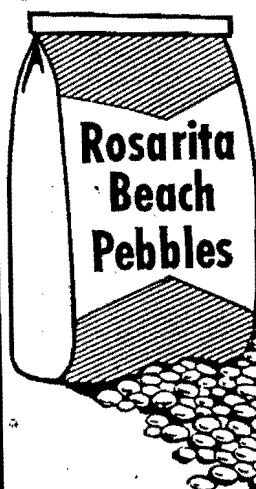
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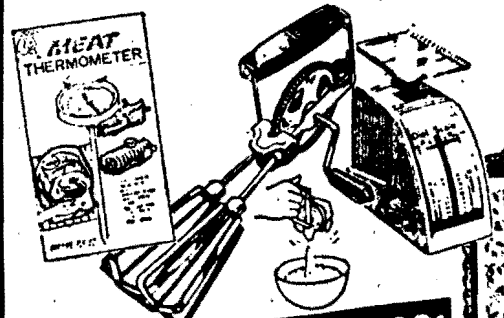
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end up costing water users a great deal more than the comprehensive AVEK solution will cost.

Skelton announced that AVEK will not take any hasty actions, but he warned that delay in meeting water needs will be expensive.

"Every day that we continue to over-pump our dwindling groundwater basin adds to our long-term water costs," he said. "When we add to this cost the large yearly pay-

ments we must make for our capacity in the State Project, it is easy to see how each month of delay in building a system to use State Project water adds thousands of dollars to our ultimate water costs."

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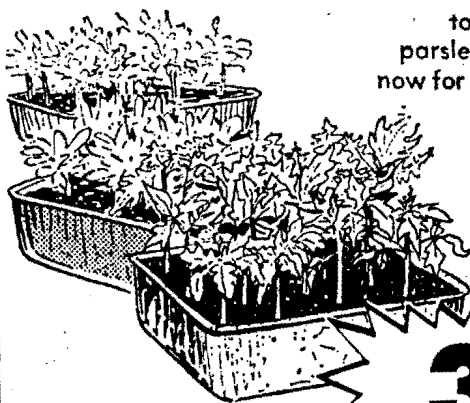
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