

# Water and oil stories are similar

Just 365 days ago, hardly anybody was willing to believe this nation was going to run short of oil. Amazingly, a few people still won't believe it.

Today in Antelope Valley, some people still won't accept the demonstrated fact we're running out of water.

There's a good deal of similarity in these situations.

For at least ten years, informed authorities have tried to tell us we were on a collision course with a petroleum crisis. But who could believe such discouraging words in the midst of gasoline price wars, triple trading stamps at the corner gas station and booming sales of big cars?

## Water Experts

During that same period, water experts have been warning that groundwater supplies in Antelope Valley - East Kern are being consumed much faster than they are being replenished. That grim prediction has also been treated with skepticism by people who have always had — and continue to have — all the water they want whenever they turn on the faucet.

Happily, our water shortage can be surmounted a great deal more successfully than the oil

shortage—if we'll do what has to be done.

No matter the the Middle East peace negotiations turn out; no matter how charming Henry Kissinger can be; it is obvious we can never again treat petroleum as a plentiful resource. We must allocate carefully the oil that's left while we expand other energy sources as fast as we can. Certainly we are going to have to be thrifter in our use of all kinds of energy. "Turn out the lights" is going to be our survival creed for many years to come, it appears.

## Flowing in Aqueduct

On the other hand, all the supplemental water we'll need in Antelope Valley - East Kern for at least the next couple of generations is already flowing through here in the State Water Project aqueduct.

But we can't use a drop of it until we build the pipelines and other works to get the water out of the aqueduct and to the many community water systems that need it for survival.

While we know we'll have to reduce consumption of oil in the future, there is no good reason why water should ever have to be rationed in An-

telope Valley - East Kern — if we act now to avoid the crisis that is surely coming.

Surmounting the oil crisis is going to cost everybody a great deal more for energy and in fundamental changes in our ways of living. By contrast, it will actually be cheaper to solve our local water shortage than to keep on depleting our remaining groundwater supplies, and take a chance on the miserable consequences of water shortage (a shortage that could last a minimum of two years after everybody agrees something Antelope Valley-East Kern are already paying millions of dollars a year for the assurance of water from the State Water Project. While we're paying for State Project water we can't get, we are paying more and more in energy charges to lift well-water from deeper in the ground. Community water systems have to keep drilling new wells at costs that can exceed \$100,000 for each new well and pump tied into the system.

## Paying More

But those kinds of costs are hidden. The lesser cost of building the system to use

State Project water, on the other hand, is clearly set forth for everybody to see. Therefore it might be argued that many people would rather pay higher costs they can't see in preference to lower costs honestly revealed. The local water shortage is going to be solved sooner or later because, like the oil crunch, there will come a day soon when it will be painfully obvious to everybody.

Further delay in building the system to use State Project water is so costly and dangerous that officials of

Antelope Valley - East Kern Water Agency are convinced they cannot wait until faucets quit running to take constructive action.

It's possible, therefore, they may again submit the Water Agency delivery system proposal to the electorate sometime this year.

If that happens, local voters may recall last year's doubts about the oil shortage in deciding how to cast their ballots on a plan to avert another shortage they can't personally see — water.

## AV bank deposits up

BY R. L. BIRD  
Assistant Vice President  
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Antelope Valley continued to grow during 1973 even though there was a slow down at year's end due to a cut back at Lockheed and the energy crisis.

Bank deposits in the Valley increased by approximately 13 per cent and loans showed an increase of 10 per cent.

Both of the indicators are

at an all time high, and for the second year, deposits exceeded loans.

During the past year, there was considerable construction in multiple units plus motel complexes. Most of these are nearing completion.

There appears to be an increased interest in land sales. Several large alfalfa ranches have recently been sold and apparently, the new owners intend to keep the farms in production.

## California City looks to first public mayor's election

CALIFORNIA CITY — Looming on the progressive horizon here in Antelope Valley's second and largest incorporated city, is the first public election for mayor.

The mayoral election is one of the final steps taken by city government late in 1972 and 1973 to realign local government — divorce it from a "company town" image — and give citizens an opportunity to elect their own top civic leader.

The election for mayor comes Mar. 5 and goes a date

Truitt, Norey Latona, Roland Toler, Charles Elfsten, and Danny Fitzpatrick.

Another phase of city streamlining are the two ballot propositions which, if approved by citizens, will create the city's own fire department without an increase in the city tax rate. The council has already approved formation of the municipal fire department. Kern County protection, provided now at a tax rate of 70 cents, will end this June 30. But the city will continue to levy that 70-cent tax rate

Many thousands of dollars are earmarked for development of the airport and adjacent industrial land and civic officials are continually searching for business and industries interested in relocating there.

Already, Mission Airlines — which does contract work with the U.S. Navy, in addition to providing regular flight service and aircraft sales — is preparing to move into new quarters being built at the air facility.

included installation of vital storm drains to handle run-off water from sudden desert storms.

Many miles of residential streets were, and continue to be, repaved out of funds from that same bond issue. When completed, every home here will have new pavement in front of it.

Elsewhere on the civic level, work has been completed on a huge water reservoir out near Borax Bill Park, and plans are set for the second increment

public works maintenance yard and refuse disposal site, is also being financed through local bond issues.

The city now has its own new and modern health center, completed last spring and staffed on a daily basis by a resident doctor.

The center is the nucleus of a planned medical complex that will eventually include a hospital, convalescent care, and 24-hour emergency service.

The center will also include a PWS-0168-0001

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