

## Money Fountain...

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duced currently through PG&E, serves some 100,00 homes and businesses. This American River Middle Fork Project is a vital resource for Placer. Future proceeds from this power project could be devoted to water and sewer treatment facilities and to improve and lower the cost of water services from many small water districts and treatment facilities in the County.

The League of Taxpayers is actively proceeding to insure that the funding uses from the Middle Fork Project are not hijacked by pet projects of Placer County Supervisors or other County and State agencies. We continue to alert the public to this vital resource and are increasing our efforts to so. Your support and donations to The League will benefit you. All contributions and League membership are tax deductible on your Federal IRS return.

- Wally Reemelin



*“Not on the mattress where we keep all our money!”*

## Pork at ARD

The December, 2008 meeting of the Auburn Recreation District (ARD) Board of Directors foreshadowed what was to come. Concerned that the wishes of the people as a whole might be quite different from the directions the Board and Staff were choosing for ARD, I made a motion to survey the electorate to find out where you, the people, want us to spend your money. It was voted down 4:1. Board member Jim Farris spoke for the majority, “I am unwilling to spend any money whatsoever on any kind of survey.”

That vote speaks volumes about the arrogance of the current Board members—they don’t want to expose themselves to the knowledge of what you, the people, want. Why? I think it’s because having that knowledge published might get in the way of the pork-ridden plan they have for ARD.

The problems at ARD today fall into three categories: 1) the Board has given up its decision-making powers to the Administration; 2) the Board is comfortable with doing things according to “standard operating policy” even if it’s the most expensive way possible; 3) the Board demonstrates indifference bordering on disdain toward the will of the people.

All three of these major errors in the role

of a Board of Directors were clearly demonstrated in the decision process to remodel the locker room and snack/lifeguard building. The ARD Board 1) never asked for, nor got, any justification for why \$800,000 was budgeted for this remodel; 2) never reviewed the top 3 proposals from competing architectural firms to see why the Administration favored one over the others, but just blindly and obediently voted “yes” on a \$762,500 proposal; and 3) turned a deaf ear to a public outcry that requested reconsideration based on economical alternatives suggested by obvious experts that would save more than half a million dollars on that price for getting the project done.

Auburn’s most respected architect, Michael Kent Murphy, volunteered 8-10 hours of his time and suggested a plan that would cost \$150,000-\$200,000. Newcastle contractor Rick Hubbard, who constructs rest stop buildings and bathrooms on California and Federal highways, said he could do the whole project for \$180,000, including architecture fees. General contractor William Wauters suggested that, for much less than the preferred and approved proposal’s architecture fee of \$90,000, ARD could hire a highly skilled, but unemployed, general contractor (he knows several) for a whole year, to work on and supervise this and other projects to completion.

But the Board majority chose to turn a deaf ear to the experts and the public, and voted to approve the hyper-expensive proposal that follows “Standard Operating Procedure.”

Here’s how “standard operating procedures” turn into “bloated government contracts.” An architect is hired to plan and supervise the construction, and traditionally, gets paid about one-eighth of the total project cost. The architect that ARD chose says he will do the architecture and supervise the project for \$90,000. ARD Administrators say they can get him down to \$50,000-\$75,000. Let’s say that they settle on \$68,000. For this, the architect is going to design a project that can be built for about \$450,000-\$500,000 in order to justify his fee. He won’t design a project that can be built for \$200,000 because that would only justify a \$25,000-\$30,000 fee and consequently he would be criticized for overcharging, and ARD for overpaying, on his \$68,000 fee.

So now the question becomes, how can an architect take a project that rest-stop constructor Hubbard can build for \$200,000, and turn it into a project that nobody can build for less than about \$450,000, and thereby justify his \$68,000 fee? Well, among other inflations, he can declare the snack/lifeguard building unusable

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