

Placitas Trails Water Co-Op
04 Dusty Trail Drive
Placitas, NM 87043

~~~~~Newsletter~~~~~

Summer 2007

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I. **Message from the President** – The **Placitas Trails “Water Coop” (PTWC)** is proud to present the **PTWC** website located at [www.placitastrails.com](http://www.placitastrails.com). Through the combined efforts of the **Placitas Trails “Homeowners Association” (PTHA)** and the “Water Coop,” you can find information, ask questions, and understand how our water system operates.

The website's home page lists a “Homeowners Association” (PTHA) Menu and a separate “Water Coop” (PTWC) Menu. The “Water Coop” Home Page gives a bit of history on our Coop along with a description of how the water system works. You can print and read the Articles of Incorporation, the Yearly Consumer Confidence Report, and the Rules and Regulations, which can be found in the Document section of the site. Newsletters and Meetings information will soon be added. Emergency procedures and contacts are listed in the Emergency Contacts portion. Using the Contact PTWC link, you can submit comments and email your questions, which will be answered via phone or email, or posted under Questions/Comments.

It is our goal to reduce the cost of printing and postage and have access for a more timely method of distributing information. In an effort to meet this goal, future newsletters will be posted on the website. (However, a printed copy of the Newsletter will be available to members upon request.) Announcements regarding newsletters and updates made to the website will be listed on your monthly billing invoice. We hope that you are pleased with our combined efforts with our Homeowners Association in serving our Placitas Trails community. The goal of the Board of Directors is to provide us with safe, good quality water at the most reasonable cost. – Rick Bela, President

II. **Summary of the Annual Membership Meeting** – Our Annual Membership Meeting was held at the Placitas Presbyterian Church on October 17, 2006. The number of members present did not constitute a quorum, and thus, no resolutions were adopted. However, information on the state of the Coop was presented. The hallmark of the board's operations during the last year was threefold and included: 1) A more professionally run organization operationally; 2) A more professionally run organization administratively; and 3) Continued efforts in addressing the arsenic abatement issue. It was also reported that we project using 15.5 million gallons of water this year with not more than a 10% water loss, which is well below the national average of 16.9%. The Board reported on the year's financials status and presented a budget for 2007 with

revenues at \$75,900, and expenses at \$74,200. Included in the budget is a capital reserve of \$15,000. The Arsenic Abatement Committee Chairman, Doyle Wise reported on the Souder Miller & Associates contract. Under this contract, the engineering firm will provide options for the most efficient and cost effective solutions reducing the level of naturally occurring arsenic in our water to the government approved level.

**III. Board Elections and Election of Officers** – The Board consists of five Board Members. There were three Board vacancies and three candidates. The four candidates were Rick Bela, Eddy Benz, and Carlos Perez. Due to a lack of quorum, the election was required to be conducted by mail ballot to the membership. A mailing was sent to each member with a deadline for receipt of the ballots set as November 9, 2006. The persons elected were Rick Bela, Eddy Benz, and Carlos Perez.

The newly elected board members were installed at the November and December Board Meetings. The new Board elected its officers for the year. They are: Rick Bela, President, Eddy Benz, Vice President, Bill Anders, Secretary/Treasurer, Rod Biddle, Director of Operations, and Carlos Perez, At Large.

#### **IV. Arsenic Abatement Committee - Progress Report**

**HISTORY** - The US Environmental Protection Agency recently reduced the maximum contamination level (MCL) for arsenic in drinking water to 10 parts per billion (ppb) from the previous 50 ppb. Our water contains about 35 ppb of arsenic. The State will begin sampling to encourage this new lower limit in December 2007. We will have to install a treatment system to meet the 10ppb standard.

The Co-Op formed an Arsenic Abatement Committee in the fall of 2005 to look into ways to comply with the lower arsenic standard. Members of the Committee attended training conferences, studied various arsenic removal processes, talked with vendors and visited several arsenic removal plants under evaluation in New Mexico. We also submitted samples of our water to Sandia Lab for analysis. The problem is complex. Arsenic removal is very dependent on trace components in the water. Our water contains a high level (70 ppm) of silica, which interferes with many arsenic removal processes.

PTWC submitted a request on June 27, 2005 for an Exemption from the January, 2006 deadline for compliance with the new arsenic limit and an Amended Exemption Request in September of 2005. Neither request was approved, and thus we proceeded with a remedial plan.

In anticipation of the need to install an arsenic removal system, the PTWC filed a Project Interest Form with the New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) in December 2005 indicating our interest in obtaining a low interest loan from the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund.

Water rates were increased effective January 1, 2006 in anticipation of the need for increased income to support arsenic removal, and our Capital Reserves have increased substantially.

By early 2006, it became obvious to those of us on the PTWC Arsenic Abatement Committee that we did not have the knowledge or resources to determine which treatment process would be best for our water and that we needed professional engineering help to study our system and recommend an appropriate treatment process. We began the search for an engineering firm with experience with arsenic removal to assist us.

PTWC also applied in July, 2006 for a Planning Grant from the NMFA Local Government Planning Fund for funds to assist with the Study & Planning phase of a project. However, the

State determined that family income levels in our Subdivision (census tract) are too high to qualify for grant assistance.

In June, 2007, we applied and made the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund 2007 Fundable List and subsequently submitted a loan request to NMFA. Because we were applying for a loan using public funds, we had to restart our search for an engineer following requirements of the New Mexico Procurement Act. We contacted the Professional Technical Advisor Board and requested assignment of a PTAB advisor to help us with the RFP process. Michael Malloy of Gannett Fleming was assigned as our advisor. An RFP for Engineering Services was published on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and again on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Five firms requested copies of the RFP, three attended a Pre-Proposal Meeting and two submitted proposals. Souder-Miller & Associates (SMA) was selected to provide engineering services and was notified on July 18, 2006.

**PROJECT STATUS** -NMFA approved a loan on January 18, 2007 and a Letter of Binding Commitment for a loan of approximately \$217,634, with a maturity of 22 years and an interest rate of 3.00 %, was issued on February 8, 2007.

A contract with Souder-Miller to provide Engineering Services for an arsenic removal project has been negotiated and reviewed by NMFA and the NMED Construction Programs Bureau.

PTWC will proceed with a project to install an arsenic removal system as expeditiously as possible. At this time there is no obvious choice of the best treatment system for removing arsenic from our water. It is not expected that an arsenic removal system will be in service by the end of 2007, however an operational system by mid-2008 should be attainable. Without a known process, a firm project schedule cannot be given at this time.

The first step in our plan is for SMA to conduct a study of our water system and recommend the best treatment option considering system limitations, capital cost and operating expenses. The contract allots up to 180 days to complete this study and prepare a Preliminary Engineering Report.

Assuming an acceptable treatment process is found, PTWC will then proceed with design, construction and startup of an arsenic removal project.

**V. Consumer Confidence Report** – We are pleased to report that the 2006 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for June 2007 is available. The report is a snapshot of last year’s water quality and includes details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by regulatory agencies. You may view the report at [www.placitastrails.com/PDF/ptwc/2006CCR.pdf](http://www.placitastrails.com/PDF/ptwc/2006CCR.pdf). Copies may also be obtained in printed or electronic form by calling or emailing a request to Diane Nunez at [dmnunez@comcast.net](mailto:dmnunez@comcast.net). Copies of the CCR may be mailed to PTWC members and others for a \$3.00 shipping and handling fee. We thank Rod Biddle, Operations Director, for preparing and submitting this report to the Drinking Water Bureau. Rod did an excellent job.



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| Rick Bela<br>President | Eddy Benz<br>Vice President | Bill Anders<br>Secretary/Treasurer | Rod Biddle<br>Operations Director | Carlos Perez<br>Board Member |
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Systems Operator, Michael Alvidrez  
Executive Director, Diane Nunez