LAFCo’s Water Challenge:
Water as a Fundamental Planning Element in a Multi-Jurisdictional Landscape

By Robert Shibatani

Editor’s Note Following its well-received presentation at the Annual Conference, Mr. Shibatani prepared a paper for CALAFCO outlining some of the issues LAFCos face in water decisions. This article contains excerpts from that paper. The complete paper (along with other water-related material) is available on the CALAFCO website at www.calaanco.org/resources.

Water, and all of its associated uses, will continue to be the most important resource issue facing California for the next century. As California continues to grow, with current population estimates approaching 47 million by the year 2020, new water supplies, by necessity, will be aggressively pursued.

California’s unique climate, demographics, physiology, and water management infrastructure only serve to increase the importance of which water affects long-term resource/land use planning across the State.

With our existing water infrastructure, even in normal water years, we are losing carryover storage; in fact, there is a net loss of water storage across the State even during what we would consider “normal water years.”

These climatological and demographic facts are noteworthy in that they strongly influence water policy and associated water projects throughout the State.

With water representing a key element in virtually every form of land use and resource management planning in California today, major land use planning efforts involving residential development, commercial/industrial development, and agricultural development cannot ignore the wide-ranging influence of water supply management.

All of what we have been discussing poses some unique challenges to LAFCos across the State, challenges that will only increase as California’s population and land use pressures continue to escalate. As an agency vested with inimitable authority under Correia-Knox-Hertzberg, an individual LAFCo has the distinctive ability to shape and guide that portion of the mosaic with regard to special districts and other public water providers. With water playing a central role in so many planning realms, how then, can LAFCOs best use this knowledge in making its own determinations?

Increasing the level of scrutiny of LAFCo’s processes may represent one place to start. For example, what specific threshold criteria are applied when examining the merits of expanding a water district’s service area? Technically, such matters can be straightforward; the rigor of the investigation into firm yield water supplies; the metrics used in determining the probability for certain water year types; and how one water district’s long-term water supply plans influences an adjacent purveyor in the same or neighboring watershed are clear-cut. However, many of these

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Write Right: Get Mileage from LAFCo Reports

As you can see from this issue of The Sphere, interest in LAFCo Municipal Service Reviews continues to grow, particularly in how to increase the value of the incredible work being done around the state.

We've all learned that how something is said is as important as what is said. It's true with speaking and it's true with writing. With the investment LAFCOs make to prepare MSR reports— as well as other reports and documents— it is to our advantage to maximize the value and influence of these documents. Even with great content, paying attention to style, presentation of information and aesthetics of the document can add value to the work.

Here are a few reminders to help improve MSR and report writing.

1. Who's the Audience? Write to Their Needs!

Sure, this is an easy question … it's your Commissioners! But are they the only ones in the audience? Think about who should read the report and what needs to be included for the reader to understand the issue, its context, and the methodology and rationale for the report's conclusions.

Be careful about assumptions about the audience. It's easy to assume the audience knows— or remembers— much more about an issue than it actually does. This can be a trap particularly for staff who get immersed in an issue on a daily basis. They know the subject well and have probably read a number of drafts over time. It is easy to forget that commissioners (and the rest of the readers) may only touch the issue once a month or less frequently. Sometimes, with a goal of brevity or presenting ‘just the facts,’ too much background, context, or explanation is left out of a report, and its value suffers.

TIPS: Write like you would to explain an issue to your mother. Be concise but complete. Include a brief executive summary (one page maximum) which encapsulates the problem, background, approach, and conclusions.

2. Remove, Take Out and Eliminate Redundancies

Although writing to the needs of the audience can increase quantity, paying attention to redundancies can reduce volume and increase readability. Look for places where words are added to self-explanatory statements (such as time of, distance of, or quantity of). Here's an example: The water pipe extended for a distance of 25 feet. Look for excessive lists of examples where two or three adjectives are used. Can they be eliminated? One well-written sentence is more powerful than repeating a point multiple times. Say it well once.

TIPS: Have someone edit your work. They can often spot redundant words, phrases or sentences to eliminate.

3. Use an Active Voice—Add Power to the Points

An active voice is more direct and persuasive. Its emphasis is on action, rather than the passive voice of being acted upon. Good report writing prefers an active voice but does not use it exclusively. An active voice emphasizes the actor, while a passive voice directs attention to the actor. Here is an example: All the data is summarized in Appendix D (passive) vs. Appendix D summarizes the data (active). Sometimes a simple change in verb can improve the sentence: The operations center is connected connects to the district headquarters through a...

Watch for sentences with weak verbs that end in ‘-ing’. Eliminate the -ing form and turn it into a stronger statement. The fire chiefs were meeting to discuss consolidation vs. The fire chiefs met to discuss consolidation.

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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

CALAFCO’s New Chair Looks to the Future

I am honored to have been selected by the CALAFCO Board of Directors at our September Annual Conference to serve as the Chair for 2005/06. I look forward to serving along with Peter Herzog--Vice Chair, Roger Anderson--Secretary, and Susan Wilson as Treasurer. Following the excellent leadership of past Chair Tim Campbell, the entire Board has agreed upon strategic goals for the Association in the year ahead.

For those of you who attended the annual conference in Monterey, you learned of the prior accomplishments for CALAFCO and certainly heard of the pro-active legislative agenda we’ve enacted and the enhanced services for members the Board has proposed.

I hope you’ve taken the opportunity to give us feedback on the Monterey conference workshops. The conference organizers did an outstanding job with coordination of the site, the workshops, the materials and the overall content of the conference. Approximately 300 LAFCo commissioners and staff from 43 LAFCos were in attendance!

“Charting a Course Today, Lighting the Way Tomorrow” theme for the conference set the stage for discussion on agricultural/urban interface challenges, new state policies/trends for housing and development, island annexations, water rights and transfers, and challenges for special districts. Please let us know your thoughts, so we might prepare for the next conference to be even more informative and valuable for the work we all do as Commissioners.

During our Business meeting, the Board of Directors provided a report on Member Services for 2005, detailing the improved communication resources including The Sphere, the CALAFCO web site www.calafco.org, enhanced Staff Workshop opportunities, and our very pro-active legislative agenda and representation that has put us at the table with our legislative partners in Sacramento. We also reported on future member services and benefits, such as the CALAFCO University proposal, further member research resources to focus on timely topics, and the goal to facilitate community outreach efforts for member LAFCos.

Finally, the Board of Directors put forth at the Business Meeting, a proposal for bylaw changes for the membership categories and dues. The Association has operated historically from membership dues (34% of budget), Associate Memberships (13.5%) and conference revenues (52%) and publications (.5%). As the Board works to enhance opportunities for stronger participation by Associate Membership (sponsors) and to always improve on conference quality and participation, the bottom line needs to be stabilized to move forward with the Association’s goals.

Information on the proposed bylaw changes has been provided to the individual LAFCOs. It is important to hear back from your Commission as soon as you’ve had the opportunity to review and discuss the options. Our next Board meeting takes place in January. In order to move forward, so your bodies can plug in the possible changes with your 06/07 budgets, we need to hear back from you. The changes proposed include additional tiering in the classification of the counties, along with annual adjustments based on Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The Board fully understands what we are asking of the member LAFCOs in making these proposed changes. We are asking you to help your Association to continue providing quality member services, to make certain our voice is heard in Sacramento, to provide you research and technical assistance on issues important to your Commission, and to help you educate your constituency on the role and goals of local LAFCOs. As we all face the challenges ahead with growth pressures, water issues, protecting our state’s valuable agricultural industry, LAFCOs will be more and more on the front line.

Your CALFCO Association is poised, informed, and connected to help you reach your goals in your community. I look forward to serving with our dedicated Board of Directors and our very skilled Executive Director Bill Chiat over this next year. This is your Association -- let’s work to make it the best for all of us.
NEW LAFCO EXECUTIVE OFFICERS
Fall Brings Three New EO Appointments

Fall has been a busy time for LAFCos around the state as three LAFCos have made appointments of new Executive Officers. Congratulations and welcome to all the new executive officers!!

CONTRA COSTA
Lou Ann Texeira, former Alameda LAFCo Executive Officer, was appointed in September as the new Executive Officer of Contra Costa LAFCo. Lou Ann replaces Bob Braitman who had been serving as Executive Officer since the retirement of Annamaria Perrella.

ALAMEDA
In September Crystal Hishi da Graff was appointed Executive Officer of Alameda LAFCo. Crystal replaces Lou Ann Texeira who moved to Contra Costa LAFCo. Crystal has previously served in the Executive Officer role, and we welcome her back.

EL DORADO
El Dorado LAFCo is excited to announce that José Henríquez of Yolo LAFCo has been selected as Executive Officer. José will replace Roseanne Chamberlain, who plans to retire early next year.

Recruitments are also in the works for both the vacant Policy Analyst and the Commission Clerk positions. Corinne Fratini, former Policy Analyst, is working hard in her first year at Hastings Law School in San Francisco. Susan Stahmann, former Clerk, will not be returning to LAFCo following her coronary bypass surgery and the birth of a new granddaughter. New staff members will have some exciting work to do.

A tidal wave of boundary proposals applications are being submitted because the County General Plan has been affirmed by the courts and prohibitions on development have been lifted. New staff will have their hands full. The El Dorado Hills Incorporation appears on the November 8 ballot with the outcome very uncertain.

Submitted by Roseanne Chamberlain, Executive Officer

SAN DIEGO
Psychologist Joins the San Diego LAFCo Staff

The newest addition to the San Diego LAFCo staff is Claire Riley. Claire is a recent graduate of San Diego State University with dual degrees in Psychology and Public Administration. Prior to working for LAFCo, she had been employed as a personnel aide by the Office of the County Counsel in San Diego County. Based on the rather unique characteristics of LAFCo issues and staff, Claire’s background in the behavioral sciences will undoubtedly prove to be very beneficial.

Claire is currently filling an administrative support position with the San Diego LAFCo and is assigned to a major project involving the establishment of a master Sphere of Influence and Municipal Service Review database. When complete, this new system will be predicated on a regional approach towards collecting, reviewing and updating data. It is hoped that the new system will assist with the comprehensive evaluation of regional service provision characteristics and trends – and eliminate the data collection burdens and demands that have plagued previous programs.

Submitted by Mike Ott, Executive Officer

NAPA
Newest Member of the LAFCo Family Arrives

Napa LAFCo Executive Officer Dan Schwarz and his wife Robyn proudly welcomed the newest member of their family to the world— Sterling Daniel Schwarz—at 9:59 pm on Friday, October 21. According to Dan, “he weighed in at 5 pounds, 10 ounces—small, but strong.” Dan reports that both Sterling and his mommy are doing great. Congratulations to the Schwarz family!
Not Just for Putting Out Fires: MSR/SOIs as a Planning Tool for Special Districts’ Future

By Yolo County LAFCo Staff

Yolo County has its share of special districts whose creation preceded the Knox-Nisbet Act. A consequence of having been created so long ago is that some of these districts have service boundaries that no longer reflect current physical or fiscal realities. Certainly, the last 30 years have brought tremendous changes to the way local agencies are financed and governed, in addition to changes in their local economies, demographics and population. Most Yolo County special districts have adapted to their circumstances and continued to provide adequate services to their constituents. In fact, some of these districts have thrived and grown beyond their humble beginnings.

Other districts, however, may be in a difficult situation because statutory restrictions or insufficient resources have prevented them from being able to effectively respond to these changing times. For those districts, LAFCo Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) can be effective tools to identify challenges facing districts and provide possible solutions. MSR information can also result in sphere determinations that may help district service decisions.

Some local agencies are wary of the MSR/SOI process, so Yolo LAFCo staff endeavored to make the process not only painless but, more importantly, as relevant and beneficial to the district as possible. Some of the reports have been used to provide immediate help to districts in others, staff has applied the MSRs with a more long-term perspective in mind.

**MSRs for Long-Term Service Viability**

Fourteen volunteer firefighter districts provide fire protection throughout the unincorporated, and some incorporated, areas of Yolo County. So far, LAFCo has written and adopted MSRs for nine Fire Protection Districts (FPD). These MSRs have been instrumental from both short term and long term perspectives, such as:

- **Identify cost-saving measures.** An individual FPD may have instituted a practice that saved it money. By sharing this information, all other districts may implement and benefit from the innovation. Among the items shared are tips on charging the insurance companies of recipients who reside outside of the district and ways on improving the availability of water supplies in remote areas.

- **Identify possible boundary realignments.** Adjusting the service areas to conform to current physical limitations (e.g. road alignments and road access) would allow for quicker response times and more equitable service provision.

- **Discuss benefits of consolidation.** Of the nine FPDs studied so far, the MSRs have identified two possible consolidations affecting five FPDs. While the justification for these consolidations is different, the MSRs show that the impacted districts could benefit from pooling their resources.

The recommendations in the MSR/SOIs were, for the most part, to keep the sphere boundaries coterminous with current district boundaries. However, the studies also included analyses for consolidation and for boundary adjustments for the sake of starting a discussion. This attempt to start talks between districts results from the communities involved viewing their FPDs as an extension of their social culture with no history of working together. Naturally, these reorganization subjects are sensitive ones. However, the hope is that by using the MSRs to include cost-saving tips and other tools that have real impacts today, those districts see the reports in a positive light.

In addition, for the last two adopted MSRs, LAFCo has requested written responses to the MSR/SOI recommendations by the affected districts. The Commission hopes that this request, in turn, may prompt the decisionmakers to look at their districts’ structure, organization, and operations differently and in a way that will help them cope with the realities of the 21st Century.
CALAFCO BOARD ELECTS 2005-2006 OFFICERS

At its first meeting of the fiscal year following the Annual Conference, the CALAFCO Board of Directors elected its 2005-2006 Officers.

New officers include:

Chair Kathy Long (county-Ventura LAFCo)
Vice Chair Peter Herzog (city-Orange LAFCo)
Secretary Roger Anderson (public-Santa Cruz LAFCo)
Treasurer Susan Vicklund Wilson (public-Santa Clara LAFCo)

The Chair appointed Boardmember Paul Biane, from San Bernardino LAFCo, as program committee chair for the 2006 Annual Conference in San Diego.

The Board also established its meeting schedule for 2006. CALAFCO Board will meet on:

Friday, 13 January (Sacramento)
Friday, 21 April (Glendale)
Friday, 30 June (Sacramento)
Thursday, 7 Sept. (San Diego)

Meeting agendas and Board reports are posted on the CALAFCO website at least a week before each meeting.

A complete 2006 calendar of CALAFCO-related events and meetings is now available on the CALAFCO website. The calendar is updated as new meetings and workshops are added. Visit the website at www.calafo.org.

Write Right
Continued from page 2

TIP: Look for examples where the verb is preceded by is, are, will be, or for: Watch for verbs that end in -ing. Could they be turned into a more powerful statement with an active voice?

4. Use Lean Words

Remember the adage: KISS (keep it simple). Same thing applies to good writing. Why say utilize when use is clearer. Same thing with ensure (check), is provided with (has), furnish (give), disseminate (send), employ (use). Plain-speak works much better.

Use jargon, acronyms and other “shop talk” terms sparingly. Try descriptive words such as district instead of acronyms. Spell out acronyms, and be sure to explain any jargon. Don’t assume, for example, a reader will understand package treatment plants or biosolids without a brief explanation. Same with terms like sphere or C-K-H too. These are familiar to us but not to all who would benefit from reading the report.

TIPS: It’s not necessary to impress readers with big words; impress them with big ideas. Use terms that make it easy for readers to understand your ideas.

5. A Picture is Worth Thousands of Words

Many people are visual thinkers. Use maps, charts, photographs, and graphics to help tell the story. Of course it’s easy to overwhelm a report with too many visuals or too much data; so select those which emphasize key points. Simple charts and graphs work best.

TIPS: Excel has powerful, yet easy to use charting and graphing software. For graphics or photos, try the Microsoft clip art collection - http://office.microsoft.com/clipart. Also, GIS systems can produce some spectacular aerial photos and maps that help tell the story.

Make it Look Good!

Use the power of desktop publishing to turn a tedious report into an inviting read. First impressions, regardless of the content, often dictate whether a document gets read or shelved!

Format. Rather than full page lines, try columns like this newsletter, or margin note columns like the Assembly Guide to C-K-H. Put an eye-catching cover on your document. A photo or map previews the content and invites the readers.

Fonts. Try fonts other than 12 point Times New Roman. Font is the type style and point size is the size (this is Garamond 10.5 point). Try different sizes and styles for titles and the cover. A change in style, size or line spacing can put more words on a page and improve readability. Serif typefaces for text are most readable. Serifs are those little thingies at the end of letters. You see them in this typeface, but not in the san-serif type in the title font (Gill Sans). Check your software for available fonts. Avoid hard-to-read fonts.

Bold, Italics and Underline. Use them sparingly and only to emphasize a short phrase or word that makes a point. Resist the temptation to use them together. Readers interpret that as yelling.

Color. It’s great for on-screen and color printing. Check how the document looks on a black and white printer. Contrast can be adjusted with Word’s picture editor so that they don’t get too dark to see when printed.

Once you’ve picked your style, use it on all your documents for visual recognition of the work you produce.

Happy writing!
FIELD SURVEY
CALAFCO Study Examines Municipal Service Reviews
By David Church, San Luis Obispo LAFCo

Introduction
Surveys provide great information about the issues du jour and can raise a good number of questions as well. Such is the case with the Municipal Service Review (MSR) survey performed by the legislative subcommittee that is researching how LAFCos are doing in implementing the requirement to prepare an MSR in order to update a Sphere of Influence.

Several topics were covered in the survey regarding MSRs, including: purpose, effectiveness, reaction, written determinations, methodology, and timing. A total of 27 LAFCos (47%) participated. Most of the questions were formatted to use a scale with one representing strongly disagree and five representing strongly agree. The full report is available on the CALAFCO website.

Purpose of MSRs
Most LAFCos (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that MSRs were helpful to accomplish its overall responsibilities. It was agreed that the concept of a comprehensive service review is beneficial for LAFCo in light of its purposes under the CKH Act. Many LAFCos commented that while the MSR concept is good, fine tuning of the required content and the process needs to be considered for MSRs to be more effective.

Effectiveness/Results
When asked to what extent MSRs have been beneficial, LAFCOs strongly agreed that MSRs effectively inform LAFCo about agencies, services, and issues. 91% agreed that MSRs provide valuable information to support SOI updates. Survey results show that MSRs have been less informative to the public and other agencies with 18% scoring a one or two. When these two questions are evaluated together, it is apparent that most LAFCos agree that MSRs are a useful tool in concept and that much of the information gathered through the MSR process is helpful to LAFCo and others. However, the mechanics of the MSR process, including the link to SOIs and the practical applications, are in need of improvement.

Determinations
We asked LAFCos whether they thought each of the nine determinations in §56430 was useful and effective. The chart above shows the average scores for each determination given by the respondents. The following factors had an average score below three on the scale: (4) Cost avoidance opportunities, (5) Opportunities for rate restructuring, and (8) Evaluation of management efficiencies.

We asked LAFCos whether they agreed with the Subcommittee’s proposal for combining some of the determinations. Almost all LAFCos agreed that our suggested changes would make MSRs more effective. It is clear that some form of integrating the determinations would help streamline the process and bring more clarity to the determinations.

We received a mixed response on the question of whether the public finds them to be useful and effective. 48% responding that the public did not find them useful or effective.

The Sphere
be integrated. Those who agreed commented that there is a need to better integrate the MSR/ SOI process overall. Those who disagreed liked the separate nature of the determination because they were allowed discretion to choose when a SOI Update would be completed. Linking these determinations would take away that flexibility.

**MSR Methodology**

Most LAFCos (54%) are preparing MSRs concurrently with SOI updates. 46% are preparing MSRs separately from the SOI Update process. The question about how MSRs are being prepared was answered in a variety of ways with LAFCos preparing MSRs based on service, region, and agency. There is not a one size fits all way of doing MSRs.

**Timing**

Slightly more than half (54%) of the respondents indicated they do not think MSRs should be completed every five years, stating that MSRs should be completed only as needed and that the five-year requirement is arbitrary. Those that agreed that MSRs should be conducted on this timeline cited the benefits of MSRs. Most LAFCos (71%) agreed that MSRs should be completed in conjunction with SOI updates. However, most LAFCos disagreed that all agencies and services should be reviewed on the same schedule.

**Funding**

The funding questions received the most written comments, indicating that the issue is crucial for many LAFCos. In many cases, funding issues have a direct effect on a LAFCo’s ability and/or willingness to complete timely, useful MSRs. While LAFCos have the ability to adopt an annual budget that includes funding for MSRs, pressure from the funding agencies, taxpayer groups, LAFCo staff, LAFCo Commissioners, and others can frustrate the ability of an individual LAFCo to cover the full cost of MSRs. LAFCos also have the authority to charge fees, but similar pressures can prevent a LAFCo from adopting a fee schedule for MSRs/ SOIs.

**Funding Methodology**

When we asked LAFCos how they thought MSRs should be funded, we received an even broader range of responses. Many LAFCos suggested that the state should fund all or part of the cost and recommended various cost apportionment formulas. Some, but not all of the LAFCos responded that MSRs should be funded with the LAFCo budget, although most suggested alternate methods.

**Summary**

So what wisdom do we draw from this survey? Several points are pretty clear:

1) MSRs are a useful tool for updating a Sphere of Influence.
2) Maintaining flexibility is a key to success.
3) Fine tuning the determinations could help streamline the process.
4) Funding is an issue that needs more work and thought.

**Editor’s Note:** The CALAFCO Legislative Committee’s MSR Task Group continues to meet to develop recommendations on potential legislative changes. For more information, please contact the Group’s Chair, Sandy Winger (L.A. LAFCo) at slwinger@lalafco.org.

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**2006 CALAFCO Conference to be Held in San Diego**

The San Diego LAFCo is proud to announce that the 2006 CALAFCO Annual Conference will be held at the beautiful Westin Hotel in the historic Gaslamp District of downtown San Diego from September 5-7, 2006.

The Westin Hotel is within walking distance to the new home of the San Diego Padres - Petco Park, as well as first class restaurants, movie theaters, shopping - and a short drive to the San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park, SeaWorld, Del Mar Racetrack, and the San Diego Wild Animal Park.

The first Program Planning Committee meeting has been scheduled for November 10, 2005 at the San Diego LAFCo office. Conference program volunteers are needed and should contact the San Diego LAFCo at 619-531-5400 for further information.

Submitted by: Shirley Anderson and Mike Ott, San Diego LAFCo
CALAFCO Annual Business Meeting

As part of the annual conference, CALAFCO conducted its annual meeting and election for members of the Board of Directors on Thursday, September 9, 2005. Representatives from 43 LAFCOs participated in the annual conference and meeting.

In addition to the election of board members, outgoing Board Chair Tim Campbell reported on CALAFCO activities over the last year, including an overview of the Board’s strategic plan. Chair Campbell’s presentation was followed by a discussion led by Vice Chair Kathy Long and members of the finance committee on how to fund CALAFCO in the future. Board members shared their concerns that the current dues structure is not sufficient to cover the anticipated future service needs identified in the strategic plan to meet membership expectations (please see Kathy Long’s column on page 3).

Board members presented details of the current revenue and expenses of the association, along with a report on 2005 member services and a list of potential future member services and benefits under consideration. The Board presented its initial approach for a bylaws and dues structure change next year. All member LAFCOs were encouraged to continue the discussion among their commissioners and share ideas with the CALAFCO staff.

Membership Elects Seven Board Members

Seven seats on the CALAFCO Board of Directors were up for election at the annual meeting. The Recruitment Committee presented a slate of 13 LAFCo Commissioners, including five incumbent Board members, who had been nominated by their LAFCo for the seats. There were no nominations from the floor. The following Commissioners were elected to two-year terms on the CALAFCO Board:

- **Paul Biane***
  County-San Bernardino LAFCo
- **Tim Campbell***
  Special District-Santa Barbara LAFCo
- **Peter Herzog***
  City-Orange LAFCo
- **Elliot Mulberg***
  Special District-Sacramento LAFCo
- **Jerry Smith***
  County-Monterey LAFCo
- **Josh Susman***
  City-Nevada LAFCo
- **Susan Vicklund Wilson***
  Public-Santa Clara LAFCo
  * incumbent

**Congratulations** to the new and continuing members of the Board of Directors!

SMITH AND SUSMAN JOIN CALAFCO BOARD

Jerry Smith and Josh Susman are the two newest LAFCO Commissioners to be elected to the CALAFCO Board.

**Jerry Smith** was elected Monterey County’s 4th District Supervisor in November of 2004 and currently serves as Vice Chair. He serves on numerous public and community boards throughout Monterey County—including Monterey LAFCo.

Jerry brings a diverse professional background including experience in the hospitality, banking and auto industries as well as a 22 year career as a sworn peace officer with the California Department of Corrections. His community service includes three terms as Mayor of the City of Seaside.

**Josh Susman** comes to the CALAFCO Board as a member of the Truckee Town Council for three terms, having been first elected shortly in 1996, three years after the Town’s incorporation. Josh served as Truckee’s Mayor in 1998-99 and 2003-04.

A strong believer in community vision, Josh has continually worked with various groups to develop collaborative solutions to local challenges. In addition, Josh has continually maintained contact with legislators and active involvement with the League of California Cities.
LAFCo’s Water Challenge

Continued from the cover

analyses rely on traditional water accounting exercises based on some mass balance approach. Such analyses would only be acceptable if a water district was hydrologically isolated, which clearly they are not. How a particular water district’s intentions might inadvertently affect adjoining water purveyors is an exercise in hydrological analysis that LAFCos should embrace.

Do we really know the types of storage enhancements a water district is contemplating, assuming it has the capability to do so? And, if so, what kinds of conveyance infrastructure or augmentations to existing infrastructure would be contemplated and what would the environmental implications be of those new linear facilities? Again, the cumulative effects of what a particular water district intends to implement in the long-term should be something that LAFCos effectively clarify.

So, where does this all lead? Apart from specific applications coming before LAFCos which can be viewed as active efforts, municipal service reviews (MSRs) today provide the best single means of investigating the intricate, multifaceted, and multi-jurisdictional nature of the various planning entities providing municipal services; so many of which rely on our interconnected water resources. As a static effort, no other document has the potential to broadly and effectively provide this type of regular assessment.

The science and technology associated with natural resources management and the logical rationalization that our diverse planning mosaic is based on water resources would seem sufficient to warrant a commitment towards rightfully turning our attention to this reality. With the significant influence that LAFCos possess in shaping much of the resource landscape, this challenge is by no means small, but the long-term benefits to the people, resources, and quality of life for all Californians will be indisputably affected by it.

Robert Shibatani is a hydrologist and Technical Director for Special Water Projects at EIP Associates. He can be reached at rshibatani@epassociates.com.

IN MEMORIUM

LAFCo Loses Influential Leader, Valued Friend

By Amy Mickelson, Shasta LAFCo Executive Officer

Julie Howard, longtime leader in Northern California LAFCos passed away on August 30, 2005. Julie served as the Executive Officer for Shasta LAFCo for fourteen years prior to her retirement in December of 2003. Prior to being named Executive Officer, Julie worked in the CAO’s office and served Special Districts and local government in numerous capacities. She was born and raised in Shasta County and made it her focus to serve the area in which she lived and worked.

Julie was just 58 years old when she passed away. She had passionately played golf - almost daily - since her retirement. She was, for all appearances, the picture of health. In June, Julie thought that she had pulled a muscle while moving furniture. When the pain persisted, Julie went to see the doctor. She was diagnosed with lung cancer and immediately began treatment. The cancer, however, spread to her brain within weeks and Julie died less than two months after the original diagnosis. Neither Julie, nor her husband Ron, had ever smoked a day in their lives.

As many of you know, Julie asked for me to apply as her replacement when she retired ahead of schedule. I probably would not have even applied if it had not been for the consistent calls from her. Once I was named as her successor, the wheels turned quickly. Within just a couple of weeks of transitioning the office, a retirement party was planned and I began trying my darndest to live up to Julie’s name and history. I relied on her heavily in those first couple of months - we’d talk probably weekly and I’d run through the list of issues that had come up and she’d give me the history. While I could have been left to blindly weed my way through the long-standing politics between the City of Redding and Shasta County, Julie didn’t make me. She came in, we sat down and she walked me through the discussions that had taken place eight and twelve years prior.

It was an honor to be able to nominate Julie for the CALAFCO Professional of the Year after her retirement and be able to carry that accolade home to her. It’s not often that you are put in a position that allows you to respect your predecessor so incredibly much. We talked just two weeks prior to her death. She was so grateful for having taken early retirement and spending that time with her family. As much as she enjoyed her work with LAFCo, she never let it define her. She put her family first and worked diligently to honor them in all that she did.

I miss picking up the phone and catching her before she headed out to the golf course - or waiting until she got back to return my call! I miss her spunk and ability to stand up for what is right - even if it wasn’t popular. I miss her slightly southern drawl (from a native Redding girl?) saying just what needed to be said in that given moment. I miss watching her touch up her lipstick and slip on her blazer before each LAFCo meeting. And as difficult as it is to follow someone as talented and dedicated as Julie Howard, it gives me a compass to aim by.

Julie leaves behind her husband, Ron, of 40 years. Her son, Craig, is a nationally renowned golfer. Her mother, sister, brothers and their families miss her immensely. CALAFCO, the Shasta region, her friends, family and all of us that knew Julie have lost a true treasure.
The Sacramento LAFCo has established a Special District Advisory Committee (SDAC). The purpose of the committee is to aid the Executive Officer and the Special District Commissioners in establishing policies and procedures related to special districts. Key leadership for the SDAC is provided by Commissioners Elliot Mulberg, Chuck Rose, and Gay Jones, each of whom has been instrumental in the group’s continued success.

Committee members are appointed by the LAFCo special district Commissioners and ratified by the full Commission. Members of the committee serve “overlapping” two year terms. The committee consists of a minimum of 9 but no more than 17 board members. There is an ongoing commitment to ensure that a broad range of Special District interests are represented on the SDAC.

A primary role is to encourage two-way communication – both from and to the Commission. The SDAC meets quarterly and reviews budget matters, policy development and the staff workplan.

One of the earliest issues tackled by the SDAC was reviewing how Special Districts may fairly allocate their share costs. The SDAC pursued various innovative approaches, before agreeing to use a five year moving average instead of a single year. This approach continues to rely on data provided by the State Controller's Report.

Another achievement of the SDAC was to bring a policy to the Commission, which provides for early consultation, and gives greater weight to the interests of Special Districts. Adopted Sacramento LAFCo policy encourages cities and the county to work in good faith with special districts when the city and county commence negotiations for an annexation/detachment process, including the property tax exchange negotiations.

Next up for the SDAC is to look at how and when MSRs might serve as an appropriate tool for considering consolidations of special districts. Members of the SDAC agree the forum provides for a dynamic exchange of ideas, while enhancing overall communication, and furthering the contributions of Special Districts to the mission of Sacramento LAFCo.

Editor’s Note: The Boards of CALAFCO and the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) have set goals to work together to increase the number of LAFCos with Special District representation. To learn more about how to get Special Districts onto your LAFCo, please contact CALAFCO Executive Director Bill Chiat, or CSDA Public Affairs Specialist Geoffrey Neill (gneill@csda.net).
Nearly 290 Commissioners, staff, guests and others related to LACo attended the 2005 CALAFCO Annual Conference. The meeting featured four general sessions along with 18 concurrent sessions.

Topics highlighted agricultural preservation, regional growth and housing sustainability of special districts, and water management. The conference also featured a mobile workshop to a number of sites demonstrating LACo work.

Thank you to the staff and Commissioners of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara LACos for their outstanding job hosting the conference.

Copies of many of the handout and presentation materials are available at the CALAFCO website: www.calauc.org.