

Drill a well, really?

The Apple Valley Town Council recently received a report from the soon-to-be-retired Assistant Town Manager Dennis Cron about the prospects of the town drilling its own well to service James Woody Park. This endeavor started after their access to a discounted rate from Apple Valley Ranchos Water Company went away, after the town violated the Tariff Deviation Agreement at the Golf Course.

The town has been impugning Rancho's reputation aggressively for the past two years and threatening to take over the water system. If the town is going to take over the water system, why are they proposing to spend nearly a million dollars of taxpayer money to drill a well? Town staff justified their recommendation, as they have been with their desire to take over Ranchos, with fuzzy math. By overstating savings associated with leaving Ranchos Water, by ignoring maintenance and ongoing operating expenses such as electricity, and by assuming the money for the well comes free, the staff reached a faulty conclusion. It's only with fuzzy math that the town can claim to pay back the cost of a well in as little as seven and a half years.

In any case, if the town actually plans to drill a well, the staff should provide an accurate analysis before they burn through even more taxpayer dollars for something they probably hope they don't need to pursue anyway.

— *Eric E. Larsen, CPA and Manager of Financial Services, Ranchos Water*

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