

## Dry well owners persevere with help from County water delivery program

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Stanislaus County's Temporary Water Assistance program has already delivered water to over 50 dry well owners since its inception in August, and to the relief of other County residents with a depleted water supply, Fire Warden Dale Skiles said that the program is not going anywhere anytime soon.

"There continues to be a demand for the TWA program," said Skiles, who said that the program is currently processing two new applications this week. "There has not been any conversation regarding the discontinuation of the program."

With an underlying goal to provide water to home owners during a period of time when they are working to develop a long-term solution to their rural water needs, TWA is offered through the Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services. So far, the program has installed 46 tanks throughout the county, as well as made water-only deliveries to nine other sites, for a total of 55 properties served.

"Drought funding has been made available to support the program through the California Office of Emergency Services," said Skiles. "As a county identified as an operational area within California, the local Office of Emergency Services has access to these services and funding, which is then extended to local citizens in need."

"The TWA program offered in Stanislaus County has been a great example of a partnership that has been developed and offers minimal delays for service," continued Skiles.

The development of TWA began in June of last year when Stanislaus County Board Supervisor William O'Brien pushed his fellow supervisors to provide some form of assistance to homeowners without water.

"This really came about around 45 days ago when we were sitting around a table saying, 'Okay, what happens if you go home tonight and you turn on the tap and there's no water?'" said O'Brien in July. "Because that's what Supervisor [Vito] Chiesa and my residents are facing. We have most of the dry wells in the county."

TWA was designed and approved by the Board within 30 days. To carry out this endeavor and assist in program development, the County partnered with Self-Help Enterprises, a private nonprofit which has performed similar roles in five other California counties. Soon thereafter, tanks were installed and citizens had water.

"Our relationship with SHE has been strong since the beginning," said Skiles. "In fact, they have added individuals to their team to assist in meeting the short timelines to get water flowing."

While a high demand for well drilling services has created daunting wait lists up to one year, Skiles said that there is no wait list for TWA.

"From the time someone contacts us and submits an application, we are averaging water delivered within five days," said Skiles. "During the processing period, we validate ownership, complete a site assessment, and install a tank and pump— if needed— and make the first delivery of water."