MODESTO BEE

Ceres considers emergency efforts after community loses potable water source

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A small residential community just south of the Modesto Airport and Tuolumne River has lost its main water source, the city of Ceres said in a news release Wednesday announcing plans to help. Eight households are affected by the “complete failure” of the River Road Water System’s only active groundwater well, the news release says. The failure occurred Oct. 16, leaving the community near River and Mitchell roads without its primary source of potable water.

At its next meeting, Oct. 26, the Ceres City Council will consider a resolution proclaiming a local emergency. That would authorize the interim city manager to work on an emergency connection to Ceres’ municipal water system. The River Road Mutual Water Co. operates independently of Ceres and serves the eight households. The community has had water supply challenges, and efforts to identify a long-term solution go back several years. “Our priority is to work with the residents, Self-Help Enterprises, Stanislaus County and the state to identify the quickest responsible path toward restoring a reliable water supply,” Interim City Manager Steve Williams said in the news release. Bottled drinking water is being provided to households, and temporary water storage tanks and hauled-water deliveries are in place at each residence. But a permanent

solution is needed to restore a dependable water supply for drinking, cooking, bathing, sanitation and other essential needs, the release says.

In August 2024, the City Council approved an agreement with the River Road Mutual Water Company, creating a framework to connect the community to the Ceres' municipal water system. "City staff is working to obtain contractor quotations, evaluate the necessary improvements and coordinate with regulatory agencies to determine the most efficient approach to completing the connection," the release says.

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