

# CCWD officials introduce framework for new business plan

**By Nick Baptista/ The Valley Springs News/ Friday, March 28, 2014**

Calaveras County Water District General Manager Mitch Dion and Director of Administrative Services Jeff Meyer at Tuesday's board meeting introduced the framework for a new business plan to avoid the need to increase the district's Operations & Maintenance Budget by nearly \$2 million dollars by fiscal year 2017-18.

The plan outlined reduction efforts that included reducing personnel by consolidating positions as retirements occur and improving the automated processes for purchasing, maintenance management and information management. Dion stated the district has lacked the ability to use existing data to make better decisions. A key point of the presentation was that sometimes less is more.

"Reducing costs by nearly \$2 million is more than a great goal, it requires focus and discipline," Dion said. "This is an exciting time to improve the services while avoiding additional cost increases."

Board President Scott Ratterman indicated an appreciation for the efforts to become more efficient and reduce future cost increases. He also provided direction to ensure that the district's interests in the future planning and water allocations for the Stanislaus River are included as a priority.

The cost reduction efforts in the new business plan are driven by a projected overall increase of \$1.8 million in fixed cost obligations due to current contractual obligations, as well as increases to energy prices and other supplies and materials.

"The district can save by becoming more efficient and modernizing practices," Meyer said. He also noted that the efforts of the Capital Repair and Renovation program adopted last summer are unaffected by this plan.

Funding for the Capital R&R program is kept separate from the O&M budget and is only to be used for the capital program as stipulated by the Board of Directors. The presentation provided the opportunity for the board to convey the vision that would become the priorities of the budget process currently initiated by the staff.