

Vets Park faces closure

By Nick Baptista/ The Valley Springs News/ September 3, 2014

Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial Park was on the brink of closure Tuesday.

Labor Day weekend vandalism and the cut off of water to the park were listed as reasons for the possible action.

Lou Domondon, Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District vice president and assistant general manager, said the women's restroom was destroyed by vandals over the weekend and the Valley Springs Public Utility District notified the park Tuesday morning that the water was being turned off.

Without water and an inoperable restroom, the park would have to close, Domondon said Tuesday morning.

However, a park maintenance employee was working on diverting well water for use in the restrooms and getting at least one toilet operable in the women's restroom to avoid the shutdown.

If unsuccessful in those efforts, Domondon said, a barricade would be installed in the park, just past the children's play area, which would remain open.

In addition, the softball leagues cannot use the fields until they pay for use of the lights, Domondon added. The leagues made a partial payment, but failed to pay the remainder within a 15-day extension.

He understands the leagues are near the end of their seasons and have tournaments coming up, but the district can no longer subsidize the lights, which cost \$800 to \$900 a month to operate.

VSPUD sent letters Tuesday not only to the memorial park, but also to Little League and Valley Springs Elementary School to stop watering turf.

"With the continued drought we at the district are concerned with the aquifer that provides water to our two wells," said the letter from VSPUD Manager Michael Fischer.

The district has been able to decrease water use by 18 percent the past month with a first round of restrictions, which asked major water users such as the park and school, to curtail water use.

VSPUD Administrative Secretary Dee Myshrall said the cutback to high-volume customers was a precautionary move and there was no immediate concern of a lack of water for ordinary consumption.

Vandalism has been a constant problem at the park and the restrooms were recently repaired, Domondon said.

"We've asked for increased patrols, but (deputies) are not just catching them," he said.