

# EID budget claims don't hold water

By Letters to the Editor - Mountain Democrat

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EDITOR: The El Dorado Irrigation District's Nov. 15 press release\* misleadingly claims a "nearly flat" 2012 budget. Yet gross spending actually is board-approved to increase by \$1.7 million.

EID's headquarters overhead budget surges another \$1.2 million following \$10 million of overhead increases in the last eight years. Overhead now accounts for a whopping 30 percent of EID rates.

In stark contrast, field operations have been cut back \$0.5 million. Just 35 percent of EID rates are expended on the field operations and staff. Why do field operations need to "suck it up" so that Mosquito Road can expand its spending excesses?

Of further budgetary concern, EID is camouflaging \$1.2 million of spending increases through an accounting gimmick that increases the amount of capitalized operating spending. This accounting gimmick is so that future customers will have to pick up the tab for today's operating spending. While EID's General Manager Jim Abercrombie may think this clever, in reality this is designed to enable him to increase today's overhead... rather than make spending cuts today.

Can EID ratepayers really afford three PR people, 11 IT people, two lawyers, 20 engineering staff, etc.? Are annual per employee \$18,500 medical plans, \$12,500 pension contributions, up to 10 weeks paid time off reasonable expenses to foist on EID ratepayers while 28 percent water rate increases are in store for 2012?

The board's hands are not tied. Overhead layoffs can be made, more furlough days can be imposed. The world did not come to an end in 2011 when furlough days were imposed.

EID's board needs to start upholding its financial fiduciary responsibilities to its ratepayers... including future ratepayers. And while they are at it, the board needs to come down hard against EID management continuing to issue willfully deceptive press releases to mislead ratepayers. It's time for the "I" in EID to start meaning "Integrity."

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\*[Click Here](#) to read EID Nov. 15 Press Release