'What happens when the well goes dry?' Mayor Riley asks

"What happens when the well goes dry?"

That was the rhetorical question posed by California City Mayor James Riley during a press conference held Friday afternoon by the Water Importation for a Stable Environment (WISE) committee in Lancaster.

The conference, held in the American Savings and Loan Association community room, was called by the WISE committee to spotlight the expressed need for supplemental water among retail water purveyors which have contracted with the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK).

Participants in the conference emphasized their support of Proposition W, the $69 million AVEK bond issue on the Nov. 7 ballot.

Several participating officials said they felt greater emphasis should be given to the fact that only about $35 million worth of the total bond authorization would be sold during the early years of the project.

Additional bond increments will be sold as needed and as permitted by a policy which holds the AVEK's bonded indebtedness to 7½ per cent of the total assessed valuation of the agency, AVEK officials have pointed out.

WISE President

Presiding at the press conference was Jerry Bigalk, president of the WISE committee.

Kenneth Putnam, division engineer, Waterworks and Utilities Division, for the Los Angeles County Engineer, said that the county has drilled an Antelope Valley well as far down as 1200 feet and finally abandoned the project because there was insufficient water yield.

Putnam said that he was not allowed to take a position on the Proposition W, but he stressed the problems which are being created by the receding water table, which he said has been dropping at an average rate of 7.1 feet per year in the eight county waterworks districts in Antelope Valley.

Putnam said that a thick layer of blue clay in the Valley's underground will not yield water.

"Bottomed Out"

He said several years ago a well "bottomed out" at 600 feet and had to be abandoned.

Water officials present substantiated the fact that the Valley's water table is dropping substantially each year.

Gifford Cole, an Eastside rancher, said that his wells have shown an average drop of 7.4 feet per year in recent years. He said that a well drilled in 1928, when the pumping level was 90 feet down, has now dropped to the 400-foot level.

Turbulent History

Mayor Riley conceded that California City had a "turbulent" history in its relationship with AVEK.

At one time, California City withdrew from the agency, but later asked to be let back in.

Riley expressed surprise that no one has ever asked him: "Why did you come back in?"

Riley said that the answer is that water is essential to survival.

Broadway, Penney's OK center plans, Dorn says

Supervisor Warren Dorn said late Friday that he has been authorized to announce that the Broadway-Hale Department stores have effected an agreement with Penney's for the joint development of a shopping plaza involving the major facilities of the Broadway, Penney's and others.

The shopping center will be developed on the property acquired by the Broadway-Hale firm several years ago on the southwest corner of 10th St. W. and Ave. K.

Dorn, who is chairman of the Board of Supervisors and represents Antelope Valley as part of his Fifth district, said that the shopping plaza will be well situated in the heart of Antelope Valley, just a few blocks south of the Los Angeles County's administrative center.

Dorn applauded the officials of the Broadway-Hale firm and Penneys for their efforts to bring new merchandising facilities to the Antelope Valley to meet the needs of the area's growing population.

Timetable for the new shopping center development was not announced.

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Lancaster C of C committee begins flood control study

The Flood Control Committee of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce has begun a study of the water situation.

Sales brought before the public recently by the Antelope Valley Board of Trade are several...
Wells Abandoned

Herb Spitzer, manager of the Quartz Hill County Water District, reported that 3 wells have been abandoned by the district. He said one well had sand in it and another was abandoned when it would not yield more than 60 gallons per minute.

"It is very necessary to have imported water," Paterson said.

School...

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eight, and it is lower than the other grade levels.

He said that the imported AVEK water will be "very, very good" in quality as compared to some of the well water now being pumped in some of the county's Westside wells.

John Hilgendorf, of the Palm Ranch Irrigation District, said that his district's wells had dropped from a 50-foot to a 400-foot pumping level.