

Letters to the Editor

Voters urged to be cautious and understand issues as election approaches

During the past year or so, there has been much said about conveyance and water rights. Recently there has been a concentrated effort by an "association of concerned water users" to rally support for an appeal of the decision rendered by the District Court. These users are quick to point out the law as they see it whenever anyone does something they don't approve of, then justify their position by claiming to be upholding the law. We find it quite ironic now that the Court has issued a decision based on the laws of the land, that these same individuals cry foul and demand an appeal.

Perhaps now is the time to identify what this association of water users has accomplished.

1. After many years of arguing Big Lost River Irrigation District (BLRID) and Timberdome Canal Company (TCC), two local "carrying companies", had come to terms with the fact that they had their differences. Both boards concluded it was time to put these differences aside and try to reach a good faith compromise. These efforts were dashed when the association rejected every proposed settlement and ultimately notified BLRID's attorney they wanted nothing to do with a compromise. This action forced litigation that cost in excess of \$40,000. This money would have been better spent on improving our local distribution systems. This was money taken out of family budgets throughout the valley in the form of assessments. This \$40,000 could have been spent in local stores or used to improve standards of living.

Now to accomplish their interests, they want to take a second \$40,000 and appeal the decision. Some accomplishment! Part of the association's strategy is to get several of their members elected to BLRID's board, then use the resources of the Irrigation District to accomplish their means and ends. Hence we caution District voters to understand the issues as well as the candidates' motives.

2. With increasing frequency, complaints and allegations of wrongdoing have been reported to Idaho Dept. of Water Resources (IDWR). The association was hoping the Dept. would champion their cause and in a dis-

criminating manner, execute and administer the law. Fortunately these laws and regulations are applicable to everyone equally. The outcome of IDWR involvement is yet to be seen.

Change is often accompanied with some discomfort, and change is coming. Director Higginson has threatened to shut off all pumps in the basin in an effort to provide more surface (senior) water. IDWR has proposed the establishment of a "transition zone" located just south of Moore and extending south to Arco. No new development of the resource would be allowed north of this zone in the basin. Severe restrictions would be placed on any new development of the resource within this zone. Such an administrative approach could have serious consequences to our valley. Many things are uncertain at this time. No one denies our methods are less than perfect, but the solutions to our problems will come from good faith efforts rather than witch hunts. Hopefully with IDWR's assistance our valley can be made whole again.

3. The third accomplishment of the association is probably the most severe. In an effort to gain public support for their arguments they have rekindled old prejudices and animosity. Such practices cut to the very core of friendships and the social fabric of the community. Although the laws of the land generally do not address such behavior, moral laws do.

Many water users of the basin have said the problems are not their concerns. Others have just chosen to be silent. We respectfully ask each member to step forward with the commitment to do your best. Support those actions that will peacefully and fairly solve our problems. We believe every person, family, and business can have an opportunity to live and prosper. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Willard O. Bell, Box 91, Arco, Idaho

Herman Aikele, Box 61, Moore, Idaho 83255

Steve W. Tibbitts, Box 65A, Moore, Idaho 83255

Mitchell Sorenson, Box 63C-1, Moore, Idaho 83255

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Department of Water Resources

December 9, 1989
Moore, Idaho 83255

State of Idaho
Department of Water Resources
1301 North Orchard Street
Statehouse Mail
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Mr. Higginson;

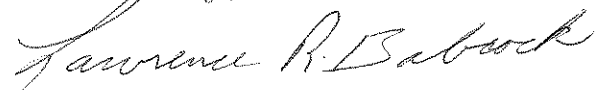
Enclosed please find a copy of a letter that may be of interest to you, published on page 3A of the Arco Advertiser Thursday, November 7, 1989.

You may note that this letter consists of contortions of the truth and total inaccuracies that partially indicate the type of community and political pressure that we are facing in this election.

One of the signers, Steve W. Tibbitts, is our current Stake President.

The men who signed this letter are exhibiting their ability to distort truth that is only exceeded by their willingness to do so.

Sincerely,



Lawrence R. Babcock, Chairman
Big Lost River Water-Users Assoc.

cc: Governor Andrus