

STPUD water meter project grows by more than 80%

By Kathryn Reed



A lackluster economy is boding well for South Tahoe Public Utility District.

It means instead of 1,525 water meters being installed in 2010, a total of 2,775 will be.

This is the result of the initial bid coming in much less than anticipated. The district expected to use the bulk of its \$4.38 million grant from the federal stimulus package on 1,525 meters.

However, all eight bids came in at less than \$3 million. The project was awarded Oct. 29 to Tiechert of Sacramento for \$1.98 million.

“That did free up some money,” said John Thiel, principal engineer at STPUD. “We were burning the midnight oil this weekend to get the specifications done (for the next round).”

This is because a contract needs to be in place by Dec. 22 or the district loses the cash it hasn't spent. It was just on Friday that the board gave the go ahead to start advertising for the additional meter project. The board is expected to award the second bid on Dec. 17.

Technically, the additional 1,250 meters will be the third bid on meters. This is because 163 were installed this fall off of

Ski Run Boulevard and near Los Angeles Avenue.

The Tiechert contract is for meters in the Al Tahoe, Glenwood and Gardner Mountain areas.

The next bid will be for work in the Angora burn area, Twin Peaks, North Upper Truckee and Christmas Valley areas.

“There is additional money so we can do quite a bit more than we thought,” Thiel said.

Water meters are going to be mandatory by 2025 per California law. The total cost to install the 10,000 meters for STPUD customers is estimated at \$20 million. The more grants the district can obtain, the less impact to ratepayers.