

# Rise: Implement a freeze on water, sewer rates

*Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News is profiling the six candidates who will be on the Nov. 8 ballot for the South Tahoe Public Utility District board. They are being published in the order they were submitted. Dale Rise is the incumbent.*

**Name:** Dale Rise

**Age:** 59

**How long have you lived on the South Shore?:** 37 years

**What water company supplies your home? Your work?:** STPUD



Dale Rise

**Job/profession?:** General engineering contractor, general contractor, and own a retail ice cream store – Aloha Ice Cream.

**What stands out to you in the 2011-12 budget?:** The 2011-12 budget was a balanced budget, with operations and maintenance taking a cut of 16 percent.

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** Four years on STPUD board, two years president, two years vice president, one year finance committee, three years operations committee; two terms city of South Lake Tahoe Building Board of Appeal; California Special

Districts Association training.

**Is there any individual, group or organization you would not take campaign money from? Why?:** I have never taken – nor will ever accept funds from any group. I believe that a candidate that receives funds from union or management lobbyists should be questioned regarding their agenda.

**What is the No. 1 reason someone should vote for you over another candidate?:** I am not afraid to make difficult decisions. I have and will continue to put the public back in South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District. I will remain open, transparent, accountable to the public.

**California law mandates water meters be installed. What is your solution to make the fee equitable for those on meters and those without one?:** I feel that the rate we have in place today is fair to metered and unmetered customers. The off balance is past board members could have started installing water meters years ago, and we would have more meters in the ground today – evening the balance between metered and unmetered customers.

**To get the remaining 60 percent of South Tahoe PUD customers on meters it will cost \$15 million. As a board member, where will you get the money to pay for the meters?:** District crews will be installing 200-300 meters out of regular budget. I would like to see a rebate, or incentive program that would enable the homeowner to hire a contractor to install the meter. Hope for more grant funding.

**Do you believe the district should spend money on lobbying efforts in Sacramento and/or Washington, D.C.? Why or why not?:** In the past four years STPUD has spent approximately \$280,000 on federal lobbyists, and approximately \$90,000 on California lobbyists. During the last year the district did not renew the contract (at approximately \$30,000 per year) with our California lobbyist. I feel there is no value to the

district. I do not feel currently there is value to the district in continuing the contract with federal lobbyist company ENS. To me they are more like tour guides or activity directors for board members and staff visiting Washington, D.C. At one time, there was a need for a full time lobbyist – however in today’s economic climate, with no money coming from the federal government. In the event that a single item comes up, the district can hire a lobbyist to address the item on a one-item basis.

**What do you know about STPUD getting money from the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act?:** The district has received funds in the past to improve water infrastructure for water line replacement, improving the ability to fight forest fires. I believe these funds will be limited in the future.

**How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?:** STPUD must live and work within its own budget. The EPA guideline recommendation is that the district budget approximately \$7 million per year on infrastructure. In the last two years the district has spent approximately \$13 million per year. I think that we can slow down capital improvement projects and still stay ahead of our aging infrastructure needs without raising rates.

**With 38 percent of a customer’s sewer bill going to meet the needs of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act and \$100 million already invested in Alpine County to take STPUD’s wastewater, would you leave things as they are? If yes, why? If no, what would you change and how do expect to accomplish those changes?:** The Porter Cologne Act was the most important act for water clarity in Lake Tahoe’s history. It is what we do with the water in Alpine County is very important today. Four million gallons per day is received by nine ranches in Alpine County at no charge. The water is transported through a 24-inch gravity fed pipeline. STPUD is in the final planning to install turbines in the system to generate green power to sell

to Liberty Energy.

**What should be done with the land STPUD owns where the old post office was on Black Bart?:** The old post office site has no water, sewer, or gas service. It would cost over \$100,000 to bring the building up to current code for any use. TRPA zoning limits what type of use. I feel that the building should be demolished, and the property restored to natural.

**There has been a three-year wage freeze for employees. What are your thoughts on employee raises and benefits?:** The union and management contract is up for negotiation this [fiscal] year. I look forward to sitting down with both parties in order to negotiate a contract that is fair to rate payers

**When would you vote for a hike on water and sewer rates and why?:** I am in favor of a rate freeze.

**Lukins Brothers Water District – any comments?:** The acquisition of Lukins will not come at the expense of existing ratepayers.

**What should be the main priority of South Tahoe PUD?:** Furnish our customers with reliable water and wastewater services, safely, efficiently, and cost effective.

**What should be the main priority of a South Tahoe PUD board member?:** It is the duty of the board of directors to establish procedure and formulate policy. It is also responsible for adopting all policies, set budget and number of employees.

**Tell readers something about yourself that most people don't know:** I believe that if you want to do something well, you must be dedicated and willing to sacrifice. People might doubt what you say, but they always believe what you do.