

# **Opinion: Lead not an issue at STPUD**

**By Richard Solbrig**

Due to the recent crisis of lead contamination in the drinking water in Flint, Mich., South Tahoe Public Utility District would like to provide information regarding water sampling procedures and the possibility of lead contamination in our local distribution system. The district's priority is to provide reliable and safe water distribution to our customers efficiently and cost effectively. The district has been focused on safeguarding our resources for more than 65 years.

Following is an informational summary on how lead contamination occurs and what district procedures are in place to detect contamination.

## **How lead contamination occurs**

Most lead contamination in drinking water occurs when lead leaches from pipes, fittings and solder joints as corrosive water (or water with a low pH level) moves through them. Homes built prior to 1987 may have used a 50-50 lead/zinc solder for indoor plumbing.

## **South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District's water distribution system**

The district's main distribution system contains no lead pipes.

The district's service lines are primarily made of copper, poly ethylene, or iron pipe.

All plumbing fixtures manufactured after 2008 are required to be lead free (faucets, valves, fittings).

## **South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District's sampling procedures**

The district samples all potable water source wells annually for several types of contaminants. All wells have tested at the non-detect level for lead.

The district samples 90-95 private homes built before 1987 for lead-copper every three years. These tests have resulted in non-detect samples, less than 2.5 parts per billion (ppb). All sampling is done in accordance with the EPA Lead and Copper Rule.

The district is currently in a reduced monitoring schedule for lead due to the fact we are well below the EPA's action limits (15 ppb).

For more information regarding sampling, refer to the district's annual Consumer Confidence Report **online** or through the Customer Service Department. This report lists all contaminants tested for in all source waters for the district.

*Richard Solbrig is general manager of South Tahoe Public Utility District.*