

NTPUD without main water source for 1 month

By Kathryn Reed

This is the first full day North Tahoe Public Utility District has been using its main water source – Lake Tahoe – after a leak was discovered in the intake pipe in mid-January.

Damage to the 18-inch pipe was the result of the age of the pipe – 25 years – and not the weather.

NTPUD, which is the main water supplier for Tahoe Vista and Kings Beach, relied on the well it has while the lake was inaccessible. NTPUD has more than 4,000 customers. This time of year the well has plenty of capacity for the number of users. It can produce enough water to meet half of the district's daily peak demand, with that date occurring July 4.

A multi-day effort to fix the pipe was completed Feb. 15.

“We cut out about a 10-foot long section that had leaks. We replaced it with an identical piece and have repair bands that go around the two joints,” NTPUD project engineer Mike Twomey explained to *Lake Tahoe News*.

The difficult part was the location of the leak, which was right at the water's edge. At least that is where it was when it was first detected. The lake has been rising about a half a foot a week, so the challenge grew each week the weather prevented repairs being made.

Permits had to be secured from Lahontan Water Quality Control Board, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, and state Department of Fish and Wildlife before work began. The threat to the lake wasn't the leak, but the necessity of having to dig right at the shoreline.

“There are probably 2- to 3-foot breakers coming right over the whole worksite where we were. I feel extremely fortunate we got that weather window,” Twomey said on Feb. 16.