

HOLIDAY WEEKEND LINE BREAK ON AWA'S IONE TRANSMISSION PIPELINE

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PHOTOS ATTACHED: Left: AWA crews work through the night Labor Day weekend to repair a breach in the major pipeline supplying untreated water to Ione. Right: The exposed section of the 16-inch iron pipeline showed significant corrosion and the miles-long Ione Transmission Line is now scheduled for priority inspections and testing to determine the overall condition of the 35-year old pipeline.

(Sutter Creek) On Saturday of Labor Day weekend, the Amador Water Agency was alerted to a potential water line break at Meek's Lumber and Hardware in Martell. Water was pushing up through the asphalt in the lumber yard.

Responding AWA staff confirmed that the leak was coming from the 16-inch-diameter Ione Transmission Line buried seven feet underground. That pipe supplies untreated water from AWA's Sutter Hill headquarters to its Ione reservoir, which normally holds about two days' supply for the Ione Water Treatment Plant.

“Our construction and distribution crews and office support staff did a great job getting that critical underground pipeline repaired over the holiday weekend – by 2 am Sunday morning it was back in service,” said AWA Operations and Engineering Manager Rick Ferreira.

“We also want to thank the folks at Meek's for their patience with the disruption to their parking lot and their assistance to our crews,” Ferreira added.

Ferreira said crews found a pipe breach due to corrosion. They also found three other sites with corrosion damage, all in a 15-inch length of the pipe. The line was corroded by surrounding soils – much more corrosion than expected for the approximately 35-year old pipeline. The pipeline was

constructed by the State in 1986-7 to provide water to Mule Creek State Prison. It was designed also to serve lone, and was turned over to AWA when completed.

AWA General Manager Larry McKenney noted that the lone Transmission Line is already on the Agency's Water Master Plan Study priority list for cathodic protection (methods used to prevent corrosion in metallic pipelines and tanks.) In the meantime, AWA crews will raise the priority of additional inspections and testing of the lone pipeline on their already long list of needed maintenance and repairs throughout the county.

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