

News Release

Pioneer Irrigation District

3804 Lake Avenue, Caldwell, ID 83605
TEL: (208) 459-3617 -- www.pioneerirrigation.com

PIONEER ASKS FOR LEGISLATIVE MEETING, BRIEFING REGARDING RURAL-URBAN ENCROACHMENT ISSUES

For Immediate Use
Caldwell, Idaho – Dec. 4, 2008

For Media Information Contact:
Scott Campbell – 385-5432

Canyon County-based Pioneer Irrigation District wants Idaho Legislators to get an in-depth, detailed understanding of the kinds of problems confronting it and other irrigation entities across the state that are wrestling with issues of urban encroachment and urban storm water runoff.

To make that happen, Pioneer has turned to the state's largest and most influential water user group to help.

In a letter to the Idaho Water Users Association, the Pioneer Board of Directors asked IWUA to "organize a special legislative information and advisory briefing to be held immediately after the Legislature convenes in January." (A copy of the letter is available on Pioneer's website: www.pioneerirrigation.com)

The goal of the briefing would be to provide key legislators with an understanding of the issues involved and their potential risks to the irrigation community, according to the letter signed by Alan Newbill, president of the Pioneer Board of Directors.

The request follows a statewide summit on Water Delivery Challenges that IWUA held in October at Pioneer's request. The summit proved to be an enormously successful and critical first step in addressing a growing state-wide problem, according to those who attended. The summit clearly revealed that the problems associated with rural-urban interface now exist statewide and continue to grow in number and complexity.

Pioneer says it is not asking that legislation be initiated. Instead, the District believes a legislative briefing is warranted and necessary to help provide Idaho legislators a clearer, focused legislative awareness and understanding of the complex issues identified during the Summit, which may lead to finding and implementing long term solutions.

"Certainly, they will continue to pose an increasing variety of future challenges to both the water user community and local governments. That also means the potential for further costly legal challenges **exists**. Therefore, Pioneer strongly feels the statewide nature of the situation makes it entirely appropriate for members of the Idaho Legislature to be provided an overview of the situation," Newbill noted in the letter.

-more-

Pioneer Irrigation – Page 2 of 2

Pioneer filed suit almost a year ago against the City of Caldwell, which is forcing developers to build municipal storm water sewers that dump polluted urban runoff directly into the District's canals and drains without permission of the District. The City of Caldwell itself is also dumping runoff water into Pioneer's facilities when and where they are modifying the city's system. Idaho law expressly prohibits encroachment into private property of irrigation entities.

The District recently invited the City of Caldwell to join it with a mediator to seek ways to find a mediated resolution to the lawsuit. However, Caldwell turned down the invitation, saying it preferred to continue the costly legal process. Defending itself against the City was a large part of why Pioneer was forced to raise its 2008 assessments on its patrons to historically high levels.

Pioneer Irrigation District has provided irrigation and agricultural drainage services to Ada and Canyon County land owners for more than a century. The District currently maintains about 7,000 accounts providing irrigation water to approximately 34,000 acres of residential and farmland in Canyon and Ada Counties

-end-