

News Release

Pioneer Irrigation District

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Pioneer Irrigation District Asks IWUA To Hold Rural-Urban Encroachment Issues Summit

For Immediate Use
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Canyon County based Pioneer Irrigation District has asked Idaho's largest and most powerful water users group to convene a Rural-Urban Encroachment Issues summit to deal with serious financial and potential civil liability issues for Idaho irrigation entities that are a direct result of encroachment and illegal dumping of storm water runoff into their systems by local governments.

The request comes in a letter from the Pioneer Board of Directors to Norm Semanko, Executive Director of the Idaho Water Users Association. A copy of the letter is available on Pioneer's website: www.pioneerirrigation.com

"The problems faced by Pioneer are very similar to those being faced by other water delivery entities around the State. ... The legal costs, coupled with the potential liability issues are hitting all of us. Urban encroachment, coupled with the illegal dumping of storm water runoff into canals and ditches, is a problem that will not go away. We must address the issue on a state-wide scale and find solutions that collectively benefit all Idaho irrigation entities," the letter notes.

Pioneer said it believes all irrigation entities, whether or not they are presently faced with these municipal encroachment and urban storm water runoff problems, should be invited. Pioneer also feels it would be appropriate for members of the Idaho Legislature and the Idaho Congressional delegation, municipal associations and officials such as Mayors and City Council members, State and Federal policy makers and other appropriate officials to attend the summit because they represent many of the municipalities with which the problems originate.

The object of the Summit would be to establish the scope, degree and extent of the urban encroachment and storm water runoff problems; to establish a framework in which negotiations and dialogue between irrigation entities and municipalities could take place; and to identify specific solutions such as legislative action, according to Pioneer officials.

Pioneer has been wrestling for more than a year now with serious problems of urban waster water runoff and municipal encroachment involving the City of Caldwell. The District filed suit against the City of Caldwell to stop developers from building municipal storm water sewers that dump polluted urban runoff directly into the District's canals and drains without permission of the District. Idaho law expressly prohibits encroachment into private property of irrigation entities.

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.

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