



# News Release

## Pioneer Irrigation District

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### **Crews Complete Repair Work on Section Of Phyllis Canal Where Breach Occurred In April**

For Immediate Use  
Caldwell, Idaho – November 16, 2011

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*Editor's Note: The accompanying photograph shows the repaired section of the Phyllis Canal where the canal bank was widened by almost 3 feet. (Photo by Pioneer Irrigation District)*

Maintenance crews with Pioneer Irrigation District have finished repair work on the section of the Phyllis Canal that ruptured back in April and flooded a Caldwell neighborhood, Pioneer managers announced today.

Pioneer's insurance company also reported that all submitted damage claims arising from the canal breach have been paid. Damages totaled approximately \$99,600.00, much lower than initially estimated.

Once water was out of the canal for the winter, Pioneer crews began excavating a portion of the south side of the bank in an area approximately 300 ft. long at the location of the breach. The excavated dirt was then packed onto the north side bank - the side that ruptured. That increased the width of the canal bank by almost 3 feet, reinforcing the structure.

The excavation and replacing of the dirt also reduced a severe curve in the canal at this location. Lessening the severity of the curve reduces water impact on the north bank, thus helping prevent erosion that could lead to future problems.

An investigation in April revealed the canal breach was the result of gopher holes in the bank. The rodents tunneled through the bank, which then provided a channel for water to trickle out of the full canal, eventually washing away enough dirt that a section of the canal bank collapsed.

“We are confident that reinforcing the canal bank with the extra dirt will help prevent a reoccurrence of what happened in April. Plus, we conducted a pretty intensive rodent control effort all along that portion of the canal,” said Mark Zirschky, Pioneer Water Superintendent. Pioneer crews inspected its entire 350 miles of canals back in April and will closely check the canals again as part of its winter maintenance efforts.

To help prevent future issues, Pioneer is studying the possibility of lining the canal in concrete, but that will not happen right away. Lining canals with concrete is very expensive and while the District doesn't have available funds right now, Zirschky said Pioneer plans to investigate grant funding that could help pay for canal lining.



Pioneer Irrigation District is a non-profit irrigation district based in Caldwell that has provided irrigation water to more than 34,000 acres of farm and residential lands in Canyon County and extreme western Ada County since 1900. For more information about Pioneer Irrigation District, visit its internet website at [www.pioneerirrigation.com](http://www.pioneerirrigation.com) or contact Pioneer at 459-3617.

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