

JUST IN: Cabazon Water District cuts service to Arrowhead plant

By PE News on June 16, 2010 12:05 PM

The Cabazon Water District cut service today to the Arrowhead bottling plant on the Morongo reservation after talks ended toward a service agreement.

A crew turned off the water at 10 a.m. at a vault at Bonita Avenue and Olive Street.

The district has been providing service to the Arrowhead plant for nine years but had been doing so without a formal agreement, said Calvin Louie, the water district's general manager.

A spokeswoman for Nestle Waters North America, parent company of Arrowhead, did not immediately return a call seeking a comment.

The water supplied by the district is used to operate the plant and not for bottling, Louie said. He had no idea how water would be brought into the plant now that the district ended its service there.

Louie added that the bottling plant is not in the district's jurisdiction.

Since February, the district and representatives of Nestle Waters North America have been trying to reach an agreement that Louie said would benefit the water district system, with deadline for the agreement being set at 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

Louie said deadline passed without an agreement and that he received a call after from the chief negotiator expressing "regret that they were not able to come to terms."

— GENE GHIOTTO

gghiotto@PE.com

UPDATE: Arrowhead says change of water service 'not unusual'

By GENE GHIOTTO

PE News on June 16, 2010 2:36 PM

A spokesman for the parent company of Arrowhead Mountain Spring Water said today the decision to end its nine-year relationship with the Cabazon Water District is not unusual for the company because other options were available.

"I just looked at it as the end of water service," said Larry Lawrence, natural resources manager for Nestle Water North America.

The statement came after officials at the Cabazon Water District announced the agency was shutting off service to the Morongo-based water bottling plant.

That decision came after several months of talks aimed at securing an agreement ended Tuesday evening without a pact. At 10 a.m. today, the water district shut off service.

Lawrence said the bottling plant was ready for the change because it already had switched to a tribal-based water company to provide water for plant operations.

"We were prepared for this," Lawrence said. "It's not like this was last-minute."

Additionally, Lawrence said, the service change is not a big deal.

"It's not unusual to change water service if we have options," Lawrence said.

— GENE GHIOTTO

10:00 PM PDT on Wednesday, June 16, 2010

By GENE GHIOTTO The Press-Enterprise

The Cabazon Water District and the Arrowhead Mountain Spring Water bottling plant ended their nine-year relationship Wednesday when the district turned off service to the Morongo Reservation-based facility.

The decision came after talks aimed at reaching a formal service agreement ended without a pact, said Calvin Louie, the water district's general manager.

The water that had been supplied by the Cabazon district was used for plant operations and not for bottling.

The bottling plant did not experience a disruption in service because it had changed over two days earlier to a tribal-based water provider, said Larry Lawrence, natural resources manager for Nestlé Waters North America, the parent company of Arrowhead.

"We were prepared for this," Lawrence said. "It's not like this was last-minute."

Lawrence also said the service change is not a big deal.

"It's not unusual to change water service if we have options," Lawrence said.

Negotiations aimed at reaching a pact began in February and ended Tuesday, Louie said, adding that the agreement would have been "proper business so there is no misunderstanding."

Louie said the Cabazon Water District board had hoped, among other things, to limit the amount of water it would provide to the plant while reserving the right to terminate service if it began to impact service to other customers. The district provided 2.9 million gallons of water a month to the plant.

Lawrence declined to discuss the negotiations.

Technically, Louie said, the water district did not have to provide service to the plant because it is not in its service area.

"It is considered extra-territorial service," Louie said. "We are not obligated to serve the bottling plant."

Reach Gene Ghiotto at 951-375-3729 or gghiotto@PE.com