

News Release

South Tahoe Public Utility District
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Farewell STPUD General Manager John Thiel

South Lake Tahoe (June 2, 2023) – After 31 years serving the community at South Tahoe Public Utility District (District), General Manager John Thiel is pulling anchor and heading to southern California as the new General Manager of the West Valley Water District. A national recruitment is underway to find his successor.

On June 1, 2023, the District’s Board of Directors unanimously approved Resolution No. 3247-23 honoring John for his 31 years of service. Thiel began his career at the District in 1992 and worked his way up from Staff Engineer, Senior Engineer, Principal Engineer, Engineering Department Manager, and finally to General Manager in 2018. The resolution highlighted Thiel’s role in strengthening relationships within the community and expanding the District’s data drive approach to prioritizing the repair and replacement of aging assets. During the presentation of the Resolution, Board President Dave Peterson recognized Thiel’s leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, Caldor and Tamarack Fire, and the winter storm events.

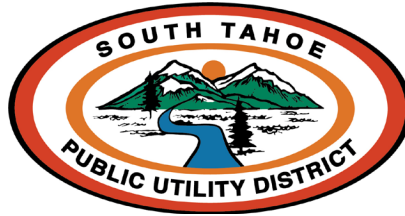
When asked about his biggest accomplishments, Thiel responded, “I have been successful by working well with others. Together, we have achieved a tremendous amount over the last three decades, for the community and the environment, by working together to build and improve our systems, our staff, and our partnerships.”

As an engineer, Thiel was instrumental in developing a powerful in-house engineering department, designing and building over 100 projects, and facilitating grant funding for critical projects. As General Manger, he accelerated the capital improvement program and advanced a high performance, customer-service-focused, and cost-effective public utility.

“Our staff is our greatest resource, and we are their partner in their own career advancement,” recounts Thiel. “In recent years, we have had both record numbers of retirements and record numbers of internal advancements, and we continue to attract top quality staff externally.”

Thiel worked with the Board to evolve the District as a visible and proactive community partner. “One of my main goals upon becoming General Manger was to build effective relationships and productive partnerships,” said Thiel. “When I started at the District, many agencies were viewed as obstacles. Now, perceived adversaries are allies and we are working together on projects and programs including sustainable power, workforce housing, fire and storm resiliency, and obtaining record amounts of state and federal funding.”

At the end of Thiel’s run as General Manager, the District remains one of a few public utilities that recycles 100 percent of its wastewater and 100 percent of its biosolids, administers a Groundwater Sustainability Agency, irrigates for alfalfa production and cattle ranching, produces hydropower, and - by the end of the year - solar power to offset plant energy needs.



In closing, Thiel reminisced, “I have been incredibly fortunate to call Tahoe my home for so long, to have had such a successful and fulfilling career at the District, to have raised my son Andrew in such a magical place with such wonderful people, and to have experienced the many gifts of Lake Tahoe. Thank you, farewell, and best wishes on an even better and brighter future ahead!”

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