



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AVEK Directors Reappointed; Officers Elected

4 Directors Take Oath of Office; 2 Officers Installed



Palmdale, CA – January 15, 2025 – Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) welcomed back four incumbent directors who all ran unopposed in the November 5, 2024, election at the first Board meeting in 2025, on January 14th.

Board Secretary-Treasurer Holly Hughes administered the Oath of Office to the returning AVEK Directors George Lane, representing Division 4; Gary Van Dam representing Division 7; Audrey Miller, representing Division 6; and Drew Mercy, representing Division 1.

As customary, the Board also votes on offices of president and vice-president every two years.

The board voted to reelect President Lane as President for the new term.

The board also voted to elect Gary Van Dam as Vice-President.

Friends and family of the directors were present along with the public for the ceremony and celebration of their accomplishments.

George Lane, is a third generation Valley resident, dating back to his grandfather, who came as a young man from New Jersey in 1908 and raised on the family ranch where livestock were cared for, and crops cultivated since the early turn of the century. In addition to his over four decades of experience serving AVEK, Lane is President of Monte Vista Company, a local business founded in 1953. He also co-operates Lane Ranch & Co with his wife Charlene, which supplies livestock and equipment to the motion picture industry of which George is a member of the Screen Actors Guild. George was initially elected in 1977 and served 10 terms/39 years until January 2017. George returned in 2021 and was elected president in 2023. George Lane holds the longest tenure of any

other director to-date in the Agency's 66-year history, with 44 years of public service on the AVEK board and still counting!

Gary, also born and raised in the Antelope Valley, still works at his family dairy farm providing milk to the dairy industry. His is the last surviving dairy farm in the Antelope Valley. He provides a voice for area farmers and small landowners who express their concerns about water issues. He strives to keep the cost of water affordable for consumers, a goal shared by his board colleagues. He was initially elected to the board in November 2016, reappointed in 2020 and 2024.

Audrey, a Realtor with Keller Williams Realty Antelope Valley, came to this Valley at a young age and grew up here with her siblings, who all graduated from Palmdale High School. She brings to the Board 30 years of real estate background as well as her knowledge of the entire Valley, including a deep historical perspective. Her community ties date back to her grandfather and his involvement in various aspects of the area. Upon joining the board in November 2019 to fill an unexpired term for a previous director, Audrey ran unopposed in 2020 and 2024. Audrey became a quick study on all the water issues, including the significance of water banking as a means of reliable and sustainable supplies.

Drew Mercy graduated from Quartz Hill High School and earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Davis. Drew is the Executive Director of the Antelope Valley Economic Development and Growth Enterprise – the economic development corporation for norther Los Angeles County and southeastern Kern County. Upon joining the board in June 2023 to fill an unexpired term for a previous director, Drew ran unopposed in 2024. Prior to joining the AVEK Board, Drew served as an elected Director and Vice President of the Quartz Hill Water District from 2021-2023. He is a past president of the Antelope Valley Board of Trade, Antelope Valley Jaycees and a past Honorary Commander at Edwards Air Force Base. Currently he serves as Chairman of the City of Lancaster Criminal Justice Commission, Director and former President of the Antelope Valley Fair Association Board, Director of the Antelope Valley Sheriffs' Boosters, and on the board of the Special Districts' Association of North Los Angeles County.

ABOUT AVEK

3rd largest State Water Contractor in California - In 1959, AVEK received its charter as a regional water Agency from the State Legislature. In 1962 AVEK's Board of Directors signed a contract with the state to secure the delivery of water supplies intended to supplement the local groundwater. AVEK became the 3rd largest State Water Contractor with an entitlement of 144,844 acre-feet. Through the optimization of water resources and development of groundwater storage, the Agency maintains a reliable, sustainable and affordable water supply. Serving over 20 municipal users along with Edwards Air Force Base, Plant 42 and U.S. Borax within a 2300 mile territory that includes portions Los Angeles, Kern and Ventura Counties, the agency plays a vital role in supporting future regional economic development and national defense programs.

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