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GEORGE SKELTON
CAPITOL JOURNAL

State's water supply is important to risk lappdash solutions

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State Senate Leader Don Perata (D-Oakland) and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger are determined to place a multi-billion-dollar water bond issue on the Feb. 5 presidential primary ballot. But they're up against an Oct. 16 secretary of state's deadline for working out a legislative deal.

It's not clear what their rush is. There also will be two other statewide elections next year, in June and November.

"We don't do our best work when we're rushed," says Assemblywoman Lois Wolk (D-Davis), who heads the Assembly water committee. "If we're going to ask the people of California to invest money, we ought to make certain it's a good investment."

"I'm very skeptical we can do this in the next week. Perhaps we could do it in a couple of months."

However, water is such a contentious issue — fought over by fiercely competing, righteous interests and regulated by turf-protecting government entities — that maybe Capitol politicians should be encouraged to agree on whatever they can, even if it means taking only an incremental step toward fixing the fragile state water system.

[See Skelton, Page B6]



ON THE TRAIL: Agricultural engineer Robert Beggs made an odor dictionary and uses an olfactometer, resembling a radar gun, for smells, to find the source of Woodland's trouble.

Town gets its noses out of joint

Woodland, Calif., is plagued by foul smells. The periodic stench has officials turning to an odor hotline and the Nasal Ranger.

By JOHN M. GLIONNA
Times Staff Writer

WOODLAND, Calif. — This town stinks. The mayor has been sniffing around for a solution. The local newspaper editor has also nosed about. An expert briefly brought in a scent-detecting device straight out of an old "Star Trek" episode.

But nobody has solved the mysterious odor problem.

Some nights, when the wind blows just so, various stenches waft across residential areas.

causing folks to hold their noses and run for the phone.

So many complained that Woodland created a 24-hour odor hotline. One caller said the aroma smelled like rotting feet. Another said it was more like sweaty socks or "horrible tennis shoes." Still another likened it to "a wet dog rolling in manure."

"It's horrible," said resident Tim Bair. "It's like driving by a cattle feed lot, sniffing the ocean at low tide and standing on an open sewage hole, all rolled into one."

This Sacramento bedroom community of 52,000 residents, where farmers' fields meet newly built subdivisions, is like many places nationwide where urban growth has brought complications to areas once strictly devoted to agriculture.

Woodland is trying to collect enough clues

[See Stench, Page B6]

State of Oregon in a 1970 incident still kept pungently alive on the Internet and in columns by humorist Dave Barry.

An undisputed environmental tragedy, the recent deaths of three blue whales off Southern California also posed a problem for communities faced with disposing of 60 or 70 tons of decomposing cetacean that had rolled into their beaches and harbors.

The difficulties, all too well known to whale researchers, are wryly summed up by the authors of the 2005 edition of "Marine Mammals Ashore: A Field Guide for Strandings."

"The simplest way for a carcass to disappear is to turn your back on it and walk away," advise scientists Joseph R. Geraci and [See Whales, Page B8]

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Planner Jaime Lerner says a city can boost its quality of life quickly with a "shared dream." **B2**

Sheriff weighs merger

Lee Baca assigns a team to explore taking over the Office of Public Safety. **B3**

Al Martinez

Leaving the house at the magical moment between dark and light is nearly a mystical event. **B3**

Honoring an icon

Virginia Watson, "Ms. Chatsworth," is recognized at the city's Pioneer Day Festival. **B3**

Dreams into nightmares

Alleged predatory lending often leads to higher payments and foreclosure. **B4**

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