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Seal Rock Water District

General Manager's Report:
 Board Meeting – September 19, 2024

This report serves as an executive summary for the Board meeting agenda. It provides recommendations for actions to be taken if necessary. Detailed information, staff reports, and supporting materials can be found in the full agenda packet.

PHASE-IV BEAVER CREEK SOURCE WATER:

Water Treatment Plant Operators have been working closely with engineers, WesTech technicians and suppliers to help evaluate ongoing heater element failure at the WTP. Newly installed heater elements placed into operation in March/April of this year are showing signs of failure. One of the elements was removed from service and sent to a metallurgist for further evaluation to determine what is causing the premature failure of the elements. Information provided in the metallurgist's report will help to inform operators and engineers regarding what is negatively affecting the heaters.

Cyber Security Evaluation by Oregon Health Authority and the EPA:

SRWD Staff, along with the district's information technology consultant hosted a meeting with State and Federal cybersecurity officials to evaluate the district's exposure to cybersecurity threats. State Cybersecurity Services in collaboration with our federal partner Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) are working towards preparing water systems to become cyber resilient.

Oregon's water and wastewater systems are part of the critical infrastructure that provides vital services to its citizens every day, however, these same critical lifelines are also a target of cyber threats on a regular basis.

Water systems are targeted by malicious cyber groups and nation states alike, including those associated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) such as CyberAv3ngers1 and Volt Typhoon2, respectively. These malicious groups have targeted both Information Technology (IT) and Operational Technology (OT) systems, looking for any vulnerability that can be exploited to either make an immediate impact, or develop a foothold in the network for a targeted opportunity. Where any water system incident can result in a severe and damaging impact to the organization and the entire community, a continued dedication to cybersecurity best practices and planning are required and can establish an immediate improvement.

Cybersecurity best practices can scale from simple to in-depth, and some of the easiest changes can immediately defend against vulnerabilities recently exploited in attacks on water systems. Some best practices, resources, and contact information from both Enterprise Information Services (EIS) and our federal partners have been included.

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Initial recommendations include the below and involve other actions to help protect vital services provided to Oregon:

- Communicate with your State & Federal cyber teams
- Reduce exposure to public-facing internet
- Conduct regular cybersecurity assessments
- Change default passwords immediately
- Conduct an inventory of OT/IT assets
- Develop and exercise cybersecurity incident response and recovery plans
- Backup OT/IT systems, immutable if possible
- Reduce exposure to vulnerabilities
- Conduct cybersecurity awareness training

SRWD staff will continue working with state officials regarding the implementation of best management practices for the prevention of cyber threats.

Other notable activities for the month include:

- Attended the Mid-Coast Water Conservation Consortium Meeting.
- Hosted monthly staff/safety meeting.
- Attended Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Meeting.
- Attended meetings with representatives from Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) committee regarding OWRD Fee-Based programs.
- Met with City of Newport and Consultants developing the Newport Source Water Protection Plan.
- Attended the monthly Oregon Water Utility Council (OWUC) meeting.
- Staff worked with Jacobs Engineering in preparation for arbitration.
- Staff and Board Members attended Arbitration in Portland.
- Attended additional meetings with OWRD and OWUC regarding water rights process improvements.
- Staff met on site with consultants preparing this year's Beaver Creek streamflow and temperature monitoring.