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Sean White Accepts New Job at City of Ukiah

By [Justine Frederiksen](#)

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Sean White, the general manager of the Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District, plans to resign his position to accept a new job with the city of Ukiah.

In an e-mail sent to all the members of the RRF&WCID board of trustees, White attached what he described as “my letter of resignation.” In the very short letter, White merely states that he is resigning with the 90-day notice required by his employment agreement, and that his last day will be Sept. 30, 2015.

White said Wednesday that the following Monday, Oct. 5, he will begin his new position with the city of Ukiah as its “director of water and sewer.”

“I am very excited, and a big fan of recycled water,” White said, explaining that one of his main tasks will be leading the city’s effort to create a “purple pipe,” or recycled water system, designed to deliver treated water from the Wastewater Treatment Plant to users like the golf course, cemetery and high school. “It’s a big, ambitious plan, but it’s one of the investments that the city will never regret making.”

It is estimated that the system will cost at least \$15 million, but the State of California is making even more funding available this year to such projects. At the last Ukiah City Council meeting July 1, Council member Kevin Doyle said state water officials had toured the city’s facilities and learned about its purple pipe plans, and they were “very excited about what we’re doing.”

Public Works Director Tim Eriksen, who as city engineer will be supervising White, said “he’s going to be a fantastic fit,” especially because of his knowledge of water issues throughout not only the Ukiah Valley, but Mendocino County and beyond.

“When he talks about water, people listen,” Eriksen said, explaining that not only will White help the city think and act more strategically in terms of its water rights and its relationship with the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District, but he may help unify the valley’s voice when it comes to water use and access. “This is exactly what this valley needs to really move forward, and toward having the whole water industry speaking more as one voice, like they do in Sonoma County.”

The new position will pay \$127,140, and Eriksen said he needed to have a director who could focus on the “big-picture” issues and think long-term.

“Day-to-day, the water and sewer operation is flawless, but we haven’t been looking long-term on a consistent basis,” Eriksen said.

About the Author

Justine Frederiksen is the UDJ's senior writer. An experienced reporter, she covers the City of Ukiah including the police and fire beat, as well as education, environment, water and much more. Reach the author at udjff@ukiahdj.com or follow Justine on Twitter: [@JustFrederiksen](https://twitter.com/JustFrederiksen).

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