

Shovels, cake and a strike force

By DAVID SIDERS | Published: OCTOBER 29, 2009

At a ceremony to celebrate the start of construction of the \$217 million Delta Water Supply Project - the largest public works project ever here - City Hall this morning put out two cakes, one with the design of a water treatment plant on it and the other in the shape of a water tank.

Municipal Utilities Director Mark Madison is an engineer, and for him it could have been Christmas. His children, Corinne and Taylor, 16 and 18, respectively, were in the audience. The podium was his.

"I don't think I need to tell you this is a very, very special day," he said. "Today is a momentous occasion."

Retired City Manager Gordon Palmer had come out. Madison introduced him.

Madison also introduced what he called his "Delta Strike Force," including MUD's Bob Granberg ("He's the guy," Madison said) and Melissa Price (the "brains," Madison said).

Granberg was in the audience with a video camera, taping the ceremony for his family.

Near the end of the event, Madison went back to the podium to recognize people he failed previously to introduce. He introduced the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce's Douglass Wilhoit, "a Stockton icon," Madison said, and someone Madison referred to as Wilhoit's "sidekick," Ron Addington, president and chief executive officer of the Business Council of San Joaquin County.

Dignitaries shoveled dirt and had their pictures taken. Mayor Ann Johnston cut into the tank-shaped cake, and Madison passed pieces out.

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