

News

STOCKTON OFFICIALS CELEBRATE FORTHCOMING WATER PLANT

By **David Siders**

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STOCKTON - At a ceremony to celebrate the start of construction of the \$217 million Delta Water Supply Project - the largest public works project ever in Stockton - City Hall on Thursday 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.

Before the ceremony, a podium was set up and 16 shovels stood behind it, where the treatment plant is to be built in an old alfalfa field north of Eight Mile Road. Municipal Utilities Director Mark Madison was being interviewed by a television news reporter and Michael Willis, an architect, was taking pictures of the cakes.

"We don't usually get this kind of drama around a water plant opening," Willis said. "I'm just surprised, and pleased."

The Delta Water Supply Project is to pump some 33,000 acre-feet of water annually from the San Joaquin River to the north side plant, then to faucets in town, serving new development and relaxing Stockton's reliance on groundwater and water from the east.

"This is a happy day," Madison said when he took the podium. "Now it's time to build something."

There were about 100 people in attendance. Following Madison were other speakers, including Mayor Ann Johnston - "This is going to ensure a water supply for the city of Stockton," she said - and a contractor, Paul Meyerhofer, who said he would see the crowd again in 2012 for the project's commissioning.

At the end of the ceremony, dignitaries shoveled dirt and had their pictures taken.

Johnston said, "Let the project begin."

Then she cut into the tank-shaped cake, the inside of which was blue, and she put pieces on plates for Madison to pass out.

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