

# **Actions taken to replace Holtville's earthquake damaged water tank**

**Elizabeth Varin, Imperial Valley Press, 9-14-10**

HOLTVILLE — Public health and safety may be at risk because of a water tank that needs to be taken down, city officials said Monday.

The City Council took three actions at its Monday meeting to work toward demolishing a 1.5 million gallon water tank damaged by the 7.2-magnitude April 4 earthquake.

A loan reallocation will go toward taking down the tank, located on Fourth Street.

The plans for the remaining portion of a U.S. Department of Agriculture loan originally used to construct a 2.5 million gallon tank had been to restore the older 1.5 million gallon tank, said Frank Cornejo, water works supervisor.

“Obviously that’s not going to happen because of the damage caused by the quake,” he said.

Water sloshing inside the tank broke holes through the top of it during the quake, said City Engineer Jack Holt. Similar situations happened in Imperial, El Centro and portions of Imperial County.

The change in the loan request would take the remaining \$750,000 and put it toward taking down the tank.

The loan amount could not be increased or used to cover rebuilding the tank, said Finance Manager Rosa Ramirez. It was a reason to submit documents for another loan to cover the remaining costs, she said.

The council approved that motion with a 4-0 vote, as it did with all of the water-tank related items.

The new loan would be for about \$1.5 million, Ramirez said. The loan is necessary as the federal and state emergency management agencies will not likely get the reimbursement of costs to the city for three to five years, she said.

The council also declared that there was an urgent need to take down the tank. It is necessary to preserve the life, health and property of the city, according to the resolution.

The city’s potable water supply does not meet the required chlorine storage contact time without the 1.5 million gallon tank, according to the resolution. City staff cannot go within 30 feet of the red-tagged tank to operate the distribution pump station and filtration panels.

The tank may also fail, leading to an immediate risk of injury and property damage, according to the resolution.

The resolution authorized the city manager to contract for the demolition of the tank, according to the resolution.