Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District
FLASHES Project Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2026 – 2:30 PM
19400 Hartmann Road, Hidden Valley Lake, CA

The agenda and all supporting documents are available for public review at 19400 Hartmann Road, Hidden Valley Lake, CA 95467, 72 hours in advance of each regularly scheduled meeting. Materials related to any items on this agenda submitted to the Board after distribution of the agenda, and not otherwise exempt from disclosure, will be made available for public review during normal business hours.

Assistance for Disabled: If you are disabled in any way and need accommodation to participate in the meeting, please call the Clerk of the Board at 707-987-9201 so the necessary arrangements can be made.

1. **Opening Greeting**
    a. Call to Order
    b. Roll Call:
    c. Pledge of Allegiance
    d. Approval or Amendment of the Agenda

2. **Public Discussion**
    The public is welcomed and encouraged to address the Board at this time on matters not on the agenda. Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, the Board is not permitted to act on any matter not on the agenda unless it determines an emergency exists or the need to take action arose after the posting of the agenda. This period will be limited to thirty minutes and individual speakers will be limited to five minutes.

3. **Discussion and Possible Recommendation:**
    a. Microgrid Incentive Grant Program Update
    b. Update from Trane and TerraVerde on FLASHES Feasibility Study
    c. North Bay Business Article

4. **Public Comment**

5. **Committee Member Comment**

6. **Adjourn**

Firemain Linked Auxiliary Supply/Hydraulic Energy Storage (FLASHES) Project

- **10/15/26:** Held a project ribbon cutting ceremony.
- **11/5/26:** Held a meeting with the Middletown Rancheria to discuss the execution of a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Agreement.
- **In progress:** Engineering site visits, equipment and materials selection, acquiring turbine and pump quotations, hydrology investigations, interconnection activities, and kickoff of the forecast pricing study efforts.

REIMBURSABLE MIP FUNDS				
Grant Amount		**Expenditures**		**Balance**
$3,243,348.00	-	$1,019,750.88	=	**$2,223,597.12**

MIP Funds Reimbursed to Date
$415,839.36



Eligible MIP Expenditures		Non-Eligible MIP Expenditures		Overall MIP Project Expenditures
$1,019,750.88	+	$23,886.25	=	**$1,043,637.13**

DETAIL SHEET

Invoice: 316082308

APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATE FOR PAYMENT,
Containing Certification is attached

APPLICATION NO:	06	CUST PO NO:	Signed Agreement
APPLICATION DATE:	22-SEP-2026	CONTRACT DATE:	16-MAR-2026
PERIOD TO:	30-SEP-2026	CONTRACT NO:	CID00138444

A	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I
No.	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	SCHEDULED VALUE	WORK COMPLETED		MATERIALS PRESENTLY STORED (NOT IN D OR E)	TOTAL COMPLETED AND STORED TO DATE (D+E+F)	% (G/C)	BALANCE TO FINISH (C-G)	RETAINAGE
			FROM PREVIOUS APPLICATION (D +E)	THIS PERIOD					
1	Real Estate - Land Options	285,600.00	245,600.00	20,000.00		265,600.00	93.00%	20,000.00	0.00
2	ENG - Survey	43,200.00	26,000.00	2,500.00		28,500.00	65.97%	14,700.00	0.00
3	ENG - Geotech	108,273.00	15,273.00	40,000.00		55,273.00	51.05%	53,000.00	0.00
4	ENG - Site Plan	5,300.00	1,300.00	2,000.00		3,300.00	62.26%	2,000.00	0.00
5	ENG - Road/Sitework Prelim	2,100.00	600.00	500.00		1,100.00	52.38%	1,000.00	0.00
6	ENG - Foundation Spec	3,100.00	900.00	1,000.00		1,900.00	61.29%	1,200.00	0.00
7	ENG - Civil Cost Estimate	3,400.00	600.00	1,400.00		2,000.00	58.82%	1,400.00	0.00
8	ENG - Pipeline Materials Selec	1,800.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	1,800.00	0.00
9	ENG - Prelim Tank Criteria	2,000.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	2,000.00	0.00
10	ENG - Prelim Pump Selection	2,600.00	0.00	1,000.00		1,000.00	38.46%	1,600.00	0.00
11	ENG - Prelim Hydraulic Single	2,500.00	0.00	1,000.00		1,000.00	40.00%	1,500.00	0.00
12	ENG - Mechanical Cost Est.	5,300.00	500.00	1,800.00		2,300.00	43.40%	3,000.00	0.00
13	ENG - Local Power Gen Permit	4,100.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	4,100.00	0.00
14	ELEC - Prelim Turbine/Gen Sel	2,250.00	1,310.00	500.00		1,810.00	80.44%	440.00	0.00
15	ELEC - Prelim Motor/Drive Sel	2,250.00	1,310.00	500.00		1,810.00	80.44%	440.00	0.00
16	ELEC - Switchyard Cost Est	5,560.00	1,560.00	0.00		1,560.00	28.06%	4,000.00	0.00
17	ELEC - Tie Line Cost Est	4,300.00	1,300.00	0.00		1,300.00	30.23%	3,000.00	0.00
18	ELEC - Substation Cost Est	4,890.00	1,890.00	0.00		1,890.00	38.65%	3,000.00	0.00
19	ELEC - Prelim PV Layout	3,750.00	1,750.00	750.00		2,500.00	66.67%	1,250.00	0.00
20	HYDRO - Work Plan Development	159,800.00	69,800.00	20,000.00		89,800.00	56.20%	70,000.00	0.00
21	HYDRO - Test Well	545,950.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	545,950.00	0.00
22	HYDRO - Pump Test/Report	40,050.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	40,050.00	0.00
23	FERC - NOI Application Prep	14,356.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	14,356.00	0.00
24	ENV - Expanded BRSs	68,700.00	8,700.00	1,400.00		10,100.00	14.70%	58,600.00	0.00
25	ENV - Draft EIR/Neg Dec	125,060.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	125,060.00	0.00
26	ENV - Community Outeach	9,922.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	9,922.00	0.00
27	INT CONN - Work Plan Dev	96,500.00	26,500.00	17,000.00		43,500.00	45.08%	53,000.00	0.00
28	INT CONN - Elec Engineering	87,500.00	23,500.00	14,000.00		37,500.00	42.86%	50,000.00	0.00
29	INT CONN - WDT App Dev	85,750.00	22,750.00	13,000.00		35,750.00	41.69%	50,000.00	0.00

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TRANE TECHNOLOGIES

DETAIL SHEET

Invoice: 316082308

APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATE FOR PAYMENT,
Containing Certification is attached

APPLICATION NO:	06	CUST PO NO:	Signed Agreement
APPLICATION DATE:	22-SEP-2026	CONTRACT DATE:	16-MAR-2026
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A	B	C	D	E	F	G		H	I
No.	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	SCHEDULED VALUE	WORK COMPLETED		MATERIALS PRESENTLY STORED (NOT IN D OR E)	TOTAL COMPLETED AND STORED TO DATE (D+E+F)	% (G/C)	BALANCE TO FINISH (C-G)	RETAINAGE
			FROM PREVIOUS APPLICATION (D +E)	THIS PERIOD					
30	INT CONN - CAISO App Dev	55,750.00	15,050.00	11,000.00		26,050.00	46.73%	29,700.00	0.00
31	INT CONN - WDT App Review	163,680.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	163,680.00	0.00
32	INT CONN - FCDS App Review	145,800.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00%	145,800.00	0.00
33	Trane Project Administration	956,076.00	277,712.00	122,364.00		400,076.00	41.85%	556,000.00	0.00
	TOTAL	**3,047,167.00**	**743,905.00**	**271,714.00**		**1,015,619.00**	**33.33%**	**2,031,548.00**	**0.00**

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NORTH BAY BUSINESS

Can pumped-hydro energy storage protect Lake County from wildfires?

Plans for dozens of acres of solar and giant tanks are aimed at providing power and firefighting water amid extreme weather



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15, 2026. (Jeff Quackenbush / North Bay Business Journal)



By **JEFF QUACKENBUSH** | jeff@nbbj.news | North Bay Business Journal

PUBLISHED: October 21, 2026 at 10:12 AM PDT | UPDATED: October 21, 2026 at 11:34 AM PDT

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The wind was starting to kick up near Hidden Valley Lake, as officials gathered to launch studies for an unusual renewable energy project intended to help Lake County communities withstand exactly the kind of wildfire threat developing around them.

With red flag fire-weather conditions affecting Lake County and neighboring areas — and Pacific Gas and Electric Co. cutting electricity to thousands of local customers because of the fire danger — the Oct. 15 event marked the start of geotechnical investigations for pumped-hydroelectric storage systems designed to generate electricity, keep communities powered during outages and maintain millions of gallons of water for firefighting.

The projects, being developed by Trane Technologies with PG&E support, are among a widening range of energy proposals prompting Lake County officials to develop a strategy for managing potential investments in geothermal, naturally occurring hydrogen, wind, solar and energy storage.

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But the proposals face questions about engineering, environmental impacts, financial viability and how much benefit local communities would receive.

For Trane, this month's ribbon-cutting marked an early milestone after more than seven years of development efforts.

"This is not the start of construction. This is the start of a feasibility study, but there's a lot that goes into it," Michael Day, a comprehensive solutions account executive for Trane, told attendees.

What you'll learn in this story

• Pumped hydro and wildfire protection: Trane Technologies is studying three proposed Lake County microgrids that could store solar energy and millions of gallons of firefighting water.

• A $300 million proposal: Developers expect to determine by May or June 2027 whether the pumped-hydro projects are financially viable.

• New energy opportunities: Other companies are exploring traditional and advanced geothermal resources, naturally occurring hydrogen and other renewable energy projects in Lake County.

• County energy strategy: Lake County officials are developing policies to manage energy development, address environmental concerns and secure economic benefits for residents.

• Regional lessons and partnerships: Sonoma County's earlier pumped-hydro proposals and Sonoma Clean Power's evolving geothermal GeoZone initiative offer insights into the opportunities and challenges facing Lake County.

Water becomes a battery

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The system, called Firemain Linked Auxiliary Supply/Hydraulic Energy Storage, or FLASHES, would use solar electricity to operate pumps moving water uphill. When electricity demand rises, the water would descend through pipelines, spinning turbines and generating electricity before returning to lower storage tanks.

Traditional hydroelectric stations at dams generate electricity as naturally replenished river or reservoir water flows downhill through turbines. Pumped-storage systems instead use electricity to move water uphill for later release, consuming more energy in pumping than they recover in generation. Their value comes from storing electricity for periods when it is more useful or expensive.

Trane's version would provide an additional benefit: emergency firefighting water storage.

Day said the proposed Hidden Valley Lake project would use more than 100 acres of solar panels and store about 80 megawatt-hours of energy.

"The upper tank always keeps 5 million gallons in it as an emergency, never-touch-it emergency fire reserve," he said.

The reserve could supply firefighting operations without requiring the water to pass through the electricity-generating turbines.

Day said that the proposed 20-megawatt Hidden Valley Lake system's 80 megawatt-hours of stored energy would provide about four hours of generation at full capacity during normal daily operation. Alternatively, it could generate 10 megawatts for eight hours.

The four-hour discharge period resembles that of many large battery storage installations, a duration Day said is favored in electricity markets to ease grid demand on warm evenings.

But he argued that pumped hydro has an advantage in longevity. Battery installations require periodic replacement as their components degrade, while hydroelectric turbines and other mechanical equipment can remain

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But during an outage, the planned Lake County pumped-hydro operation would differ substantially from typical power generation. Electricity demand changes throughout the day, and solar-powered pumps could replenish the upper reservoir while turbines continue supplying the community.

Trane's modeling indicates the microgrid could operate for more than 24 hours under the seasonal demand conditions studied, with the duration depending on electricity consumption and available sunlight.

"You start with a high tank, then it would start to go down, and then it'd start to fill back up" as it fills, Day said.

Another departure from conventional pumped storage is that Trane's design would use separate pumps and turbines rather than reversible machinery. That would allow the facility to pump water uphill while simultaneously generating electricity, adjusting to fluctuations in solar production and community demand.

"It's more expensive to have separate pumps and turbines, but it's what you need if you really want it to be a microgrid that helps a whole community," Day said.

A microgrid can disconnect from the larger electricity network and continue serving designated customers using local energy resources. Day said the Hidden Valley Lake installation could potentially power thousands of homes through the Middletown substation during outages, provided the affected electrical infrastructure could safely remain energized.

The covered-tank design could also reduce evaporation and avoid some environmental and permitting issues associated with open reservoirs such as use by migratory birds, according to Day.

Developers envision a dedicated well potentially reaching more than 1,000 feet underground to supply and replenish the water. Geological conditions, groundwater availability and environmental effects remain

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Although PG&E describes three proposed Lake County microgrids, Trane executives said their work involves two principal developments: one at Hidden Valley Lake and another near North Lakeport combining the Hartley and Lucerne electricity service areas.

The northern development would consist of a 10-megawatt Hartley component and a 20-megawatt Lucerne component, according to agreements approved by Lake County supervisors June 23.

Day described a design involving two upper tanks holding approximately 45 million gallons each, a lower tank holding about 90 million gallons and three pipelines feeding 10-megawatt generators.

The installations would be developed primarily on county property near the Northwest Regional Wastewater System.

The Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District is pursuing the separate 20-megawatt development.

The proposed facilities are intended to provide backup electricity during extended outages while selling power or related services when connected to the larger grid.

At the Oct. 15 ceremony, Dave Canny, PG&E's North Coast regional vice president, said portions of Lake County that day were experiencing the utility's largest public safety power shutoff since 2020.

PG&E's Microgrid Incentive Program is funding feasibility investigations, including geotechnical core boring, groundwater assessments and environmental studies.

The county's Hartley and Lucerne agreements identify approximately $3.75 million in predevelopment expenses. The Hidden Valley Lake district separately has been advancing its feasibility work through PG&E grant arrangements.

Canny said PG&E also could support up to $1 million in interconnection

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Michael Day and Johnny Brown of Trane Technologies stand in front of a rig run by Pearson Drilling of Forestville being used for investigating the feasibility of building large solar power pumped hydroelectric energy storage systems such as this site in Hidden Valley Lake in Lake County during a groundbreaking event Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026. (Jeff Quackenbush / North Bay Business Journal)

Day said earlier preliminary budgets placed the Hidden Valley Lake facility at approximately $120 million and the combined Hartley and Lucerne development at $180 million.

Trane expects to determine whether the proposed Lake County projects are financially viable by May or June 2027, Day said later.

The company is preparing conceptual designs, refining construction estimates and gathering information for financial projections covering all three proposed microgrids.

However, that initial assessment would not represent final project approval. Environmental reviews and electrical interconnection studies could uncover additional costs affecting whether construction proceeds.

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Officials from Lake County, PG&E, Trane Technologies, Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District and State Building and Construction Trades Council celebrate the start of Trane's feasibility study on large solar power pumped hydroelectric energy storage systems in Lake County. The event was held in Hidden Valley Lake on Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026. (Jeff Quackenbush / North Bay Business Journal)

"The FLASHES projects carry the potential to deliver energy and wildfire resiliency for Lake County communities, while also creating construction jobs and apprenticeships that could prove to be life-changing," Board of Supervisors Chair Brad Rasmussen said in the announcement.

Day said developers hope revenues from electricity sales, generating capacity and grid-support services, together with potential federal tax credits, could support the investments without increasing customer rates.

The feasibility studies will test those assumptions.

Another question is which communities would receive backup power. According to an Aug. 4 county staff report, supervisors considered a larger northern microgrid service boundary reaching Lucerne and a smaller one

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An energy strategy takes shape

For Lake County, the pumped-hydro proposals are part of a much broader effort to decide how to accommodate a growing range of energy technologies while protecting residents and securing economic benefits.

County Administrator Susan Parker and Deputy County Administrative Officer Benjamin Rickelman presented a draft energy strategy to supervisors Sept. 15, followed by an updated presentation Oct. 6.

The strategy was developed through an ad hoc committee over the summer as companies expressed interest in major energy projects.

Rickelman said during an Oct. 15 interview that the FLASHES developments fit the county's goals for wildfire resilience and dependable electricity.

But the county also needs policies covering geothermal exploration, naturally occurring hydrogen, wind development and smaller solar installations.

Lake County already has decades of experience with conventional geothermal energy production at The Geysers, where underground steam is used to generate electricity.

Calpine, a business unit of Constellation Energy, in June completed a 25-megawatt expansion at The Geysers complex in Sonoma County. The development involved additional production and injection wells serving existing generating facilities.

More recently, developers have been examining advanced geothermal technologies that could expand production beyond traditional steam fields.

These include enhanced geothermal systems, which seek to circulate water through engineered pathways in hot rock, and closed-loop technologies that circulate fluid through sealed underground systems to

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Rickelman said several companies have expressed interest in Lake County, including proposals involving closed-loop technologies, but no formal applications for those emerging geothermal projects had been received as of Oct. 15.

He also noted an upcoming federal geothermal leasing opportunity involving Bureau of Land Management acreage primarily in Sonoma County, with some land in Lake County.

The county's strategy would help establish expectations for drilling, land use, groundwater protection and community benefits before more proposals arrive.

Hunting underground hydrogen

Another emerging prospect is geologic hydrogen, a naturally occurring gas sometimes called white hydrogen.

Unlike green hydrogen produced using electricity or blue hydrogen manufactured from fossil fuels with carbon capture, geologic hydrogen can form naturally when groundwater reacts with iron-rich underground rock.

Companies are using geological mapping and geophysical surveys to identify underground structures that might contain commercially recoverable hydrogen.

Koloma, a Denver-based exploration company backed by investors including Breakthrough Energy Ventures, has been active in Lake County.

In May, Lake County News reported that Koloma was preparing public meetings in Lakeport to explain its survey activities and discuss the work with landowners.

Koloma Land Manager Kyle Handy told Lake County News the company planned to place sensors on the ground to collect naturally occurring

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Coryell noted that whether commercially useful quantities of hydrogen exist there remained unknown.

Another company associated with geologic hydrogen exploration is Fremantle Lake.

Rickelman said companies operating in the county had been conducting magnetotelluric surveys, which use natural electromagnetic fields to image underground geological formations.

Neither of the two exploratory efforts had submitted formal applications so far, he said.

Fremantle Lake describes its California prospect as an early-stage exploration effort that could eventually require drilling. The technology remains speculative commercially. Locating geological structures favorable to hydrogen accumulation does not establish that recoverable quantities exist.

Exploration also raises questions about drilling permits, groundwater, landowner agreements and how communities might benefit from an eventual commercial operation.

Beyond geothermal and hydrogen, Rickelman identified the Morgan Valley wind project in Lower Lake as another significant proposal. He said it had submitted a formal application undergoing environmental review, while smaller distributed solar projects had also drawn interest.

The county is considering additional community microgrids to serve commercial districts, helping businesses withstand outages and potentially manage electricity costs.

"That's a huge issue here. It's a major and rising part of their expenses in a rural community," Rickelman said.

Drawing the ground rules

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According to the county's Oct. 6 legal and financial analysis, purchasing PG&E's local distribution network would not be financially feasible under the scenarios evaluated and would expose the county to substantial wildfire liability.

County officials also concluded that Lake County cannot simply take an ownership stake in private merchant electricity generation projects or buy power at cost for resale.

Additionally, some qualifying energy developments could seek state certification rather than county permits under legislation approved in 2025.

Instead, the county proposes emphasizing development and community benefits agreements, reimbursement of government processing costs, tribal consultation and early participation in environmental and state approval proceedings.

The draft also recommends zoning amendments, road-use agreements before exploration drilling, geothermal setbacks and additional standards for wind and hydrogen development.

Preparing a comprehensive energy siting map and associated environmental review could cost $2 million to $4 million, according to county staff.

The strategy would provide guidance rather than create new enforceable regulations, although elements could eventually be incorporated into the county's General Plan.

Rickelman said Oct. 15 that a second round of revisions was undergoing county counsel review and he expected the strategy to return to supervisors by the end of the year, possibly sooner. No date had been set.

Sonoma County connection

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Community choice aggregation allows cities and counties to procure electricity on behalf of residents and businesses, while PG&E continues operating the distribution network and delivering power.

Lake County adopted an ordinance authorizing community choice aggregation in 2015, but joining Sonoma Clean Power has proved complicated.

According to an April 15, 2025, county staff report, a feasibility study conducted in 2019 and 2020 projected that serving Lake County could require electricity rates 5% to 8% higher than PG&E's or substantial subsidies from existing Sonoma Clean Power customers.

Sonoma Clean Power consequently declined to extend a service offer in 2020.

The organization also invited Lake County to join its GeoZone initiative in 2021 and early 2022.

The county declined at that time, although supervisors subsequently considered supporting a federal grant application for a GeoZone geothermal demonstration project.

Sonoma Clean Power renewed discussions about electricity service last year, citing changed market conditions and the possibility of lower customer bills.

Its governing board approved an offer of service that August, and Lake County governments considered joining the program and GeoZone together in October.

However, the proposal stalled.

Clearlake and Lakeport city councils voted against joining Sonoma Clean Power, and Lake County supervisors declined to take a formal vote amid concerns about local representation, geothermal development and the financial implications of membership.

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Rickelman said Oct. 15 that the county now intends to await more clarity on the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment, a state-regulated charge intended to protect customers remaining with investor-owned utilities from costs associated with departing customers.

The county expects to review developments at the California Public Utilities Commission in 2027 before reconsidering whether community choice aggregation would benefit ratepayers.

That decision is separate from the county's ability to consider geothermal projects proposed within its borders.

Geothermal pushes ahead

Meanwhile, Sonoma Clean Power is advancing its GeoZone initiative in Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

On Sept. 21, the organization announced that a coalition it leads had secured $20 million in state funding for next-generation geothermal development.

The funding includes $10 million in additional state support building on an earlier $10 million allocation. According to Sonoma Clean Power, the initiative is intended to attract matching private investment and reduce the financial risks of exploring geothermal resources.

"This funding reduces early-stage risk and clears the path for next-generation geothermal right here in California," Sonoma Clean Power CEO Geof Syphers said in the announcement.

GeoZone's goal is to encourage development of as much as 600 megawatts of new geothermal generating capacity.

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