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Keller Canyon fund issues 2010-11 grants

By Rick Radin
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 08/09/2010 02:14:12 PM PDT

Updated: 08/09/2010 05:43:40 PM PDT

One hundred East Contra Costa County organizations will receive a total of $1.37 million in grants from a fund to offset negative effects from the Keller Canyon Landfill in Bay Point.

The two largest awards, of $175,000 each, are continuing grants to the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office to pay for a deputy sheriff and a school resources officer in Bay Point.

Bay Point also received a $71,265 grant for training, equipment and salaries for crossing guards at 10 intersections.

A panel consisting of county Supervisor Federal Glover, of Pittsburg, his chief of staff and a county administrator selected the winners from 125 applicants.

"Some worthwhile programs didn't get as much as they wanted, and some didn't get anything," Glover said. "That is not meant to be a reflection on any agency or program. "... It was very competitive this time around."

The money comes from a levy on garbage dumped at the landfill.

The 2010-11 grants are down from a high of $1.6 million in 2007-08 because developers are dumping less construction debris at Keller Canyon, according to Glover's office.

The fund is part of an agreement in the early 1990s between the county and Pittsburg and Bay Point to allow the landfill to be located on Bailey Road, on the southern fringe of the two communities.

At first, county supervisors spread money from the fund around the county. Some of it went for land acquisition and construction costs for the

Iron Horse Trail that runs through central Contra Costa, said Ed Diokno, an aide to Glover.

After Glover was elected in 2001, county supervisors ordered that the money be spent in East County, with the vast majority going to Pittsburg and Bay Point, Diokno said.

Antioch schools and youth programs will receive about $20,000 from the fund this year, and the Oakley Police Department will get $20,000 to help pay for a school resource officer at Freedom High School.

Pittsburg City Manager Marc Grisham said he thinks all the Keller Canyon money should go to Pittsburg and Bay Point because other East County communities are not affected by the landfill.

Garbage trucks scatter trash on the highway, create air pollution and snarl traffic in Pittsburg and Bay Point, Grisham said.

"There's a lot of impacts that hosting a landfill can have, and that landfill is hosted by Pittsburg and Bay Point and not anything else," he said.

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Pittsburg will receive $980,000 from the fund this year in an allocation separate from the community grants, according to Tina Olson, the city's finance director.

The money goes into the city's general fund, about 80 percent of which goes to the police department, Grisham said.

The Bay Point Municipal Advisory Council would not have enough money to operate if it weren't for Keller Canyon, said Gloria Magleby, a council member.

"The county has no money to give to the council," Magleby said.

Contact Rick Radin at 925-779-7166.

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