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DESERT DISPATCH

Housing slump stalls Waterman Junction project

City stops work on plan development; SunCal owes Barstow \$63,000

Aaron Aupperlee, city editor

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BARSTOW — The current downturn in the market has resulted in SunCal Companies stalling a planned housing development that would bring thousands of homes to the Barstow area.

Peter Johnson, SunCal's division president for San Bernardino County, said the company has put the Waterman Junction project on hold until the housing market rebounds. He said the current market would not support the large amount of new homes planned for Barstow, but that the project is not dead.

"Three years ago we thought it might be feasible to sell homes in the Barstow market by 2010," Johnson said. "We're not in as much of a hurry as we were."

He said SunCal may have to wait a few years after the market turns around before continuing with Waterman Junction, a 25,000 home development south of Barstow. Johnson said the halting of work in Barstow is not related to the company's restructuring which began in March when the housing market rocked the company and halted many projects.

SunCal's restructuring did cause the city to stop contractor work on the South Barstow Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan, both related to the SunCal project, stated John Rader, a spokesman for the city. SunCal had deposited \$100,000 in an

account with the city to pay for the planning services. That money was exhausted, and SunCal now owes the city \$63,167.92 for services.

Johnson said SunCal had no real plan of how to repay the city and does not have a spare \$63,000 to pay the amount. Despite the outstanding dues, Rader stated that the city stands behind SunCal and hopes they can continue with Waterman Junction.

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