

Waterline Express

www.wcid17.org

The Newsletter for Travis County Water Control and Improvement District No. 17

January 2014

NEW RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2014 FEBRUARY BILLS WILL SHOW NEW RATES

The rate increases that were approved by the Board of Directors in September, due primarily to this year's sharp increases in electric rates by Austin Energy and increased chemical and sludge hauling costs, will be applied to the February billing for both the base and volumetric wastewater rates. Commercial wastewater rates will be similarly increased in both base and volumetric rates. Water rates will also be increasing slightly. Please visit the News section of the WCID17 website, www.wcid17.org, to see all rate changes.

DROUGHT UPDATE

District 17 supports the Lower Colorado River Authority's (LCRA) request for a third emergency order that is before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, but has requested that the order prohibit interruptible releases unless the combined storage in lakes Travis and Buchanan reaches 1.4 million acre-feet (MAF) or higher by March 1, 2014. (The LCRA's order, as submitted, requests a trigger of 1.1 MAF.) Any order specifying storage less than 1.4 MAF places an unacceptable risk to the drinking water supply, fire protection, health and safety of over 1 million people. The reasons for this position are well supported by data provided by the LCRA and are as follows:

- Low required storage levels and excessive interruptible releases to agricultural parties caused this emergency;
- The law requires two (2) years of municipal water storage before interruptible supplies are made available, even under normal conditions;
- Municipal utilities have actual physical limitations on pumping levels;
- Protection of the municipal water supply requires sufficient storage;
- Conservation alone will not protect the water supply; and
- The only acceptable risk to the firm water supply is No Risk

As we now lag behind the drought of the nineteen-fifties by 1.5 MAF in inflows, we must realize the significant and far reaching negative consequences from continuing to remain in a state of water emergency.

PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM FREEZING WEATHER

Wrap all exposed pipes located outside or in unheated areas of the home.

Remove garden hoses from outside faucets and cover the faucets with insulation.

Cover vents around the foundation of your home.

Know where your property owner's water cut-off valve is located and how to use it. The valve is located adjacent to the water meter box, usually under a 6" round plastic cover.

In sub-freezing weather

Drip outside faucets 24 hours a day (5 drops per minute). This is not necessary unless temperatures are expected to be 28 degrees or below for at least 4 hours. (Be sure to turn off the faucets after the threat of freezing weather.)

Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.

In unheated garages, shut off water to washing machines.

Water softeners should be drained and protected from freezing temperatures. In sustained sub-freezing weather, let water drip slowly from inside faucets. Take extra precautions to protect pipes that have frozen in the past.

If You Are Not Going To Be At Home

Shut water off at your property owner's cut-off valve.

Drain all outside water faucets if your house will be unoccupied for several days.

Or, leave home heating system on at a low setting.

Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.

Renters and tenants may be responsible for personal property damage caused by broken water pipes during severe weather conditions. Residents should contact property management/ landlord or maintenance personnel to locate property owner's cut-off valve and find ways to avoid pipe breakage during a freeze.

WCID 17 encourages all residents to turn off and drain outside irrigation systems during the winter months to help conserve water. Businesses that continue to operate landscape irrigation systems are asked to shut their systems off in freezing weather in order to prevent possible freezing of pedestrian areas and damage caused by freezing conditions.

PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM EXCESSIVE WATER PRESSURE; CHECK YOUR PRESSURE REGULATING VALVE (PRV)

Water systems in the Hill Country have widely varying pressure because of the uneven terrain. Water pressure in the large mains can range anywhere from 55 to over 150 psi (pounds per square inch) depending on the elevation of the area. In the highest pressure areas, District 17 has installed in-line pressure reducing valves to keep the pressure down, however, these valves can sometimes fail, and individual pressure regulating valves (PRV) should be installed at each home.

Your home's water pressure should be set no higher than 80 psi in order to protect your pipes, and if you do not have a pressure regulating valve (PRV) installed, you should install one to reduce the main pressure to a proper level for your home. If you do have a PRV installed, you should check it regularly to make sure it is working. If your water pressure fluctuates drastically, drops off suddenly, or goes extremely high, you should immediately check your PRV.

A PRV is located on the customer side of the meter box after the shut off valve. The required type of regulator will have a built-in thermal expansion bypass, (for example, the WATTS seriesLFX65B).

The District requires use of a valve with an all brass body and top, because other materials such as aluminum or plastic deteriorate rapidly in the soil. The valves may be purchased at any home improvement store or for your convenience at the District Office. These valves should be installed by a licensed plumber, but no permit is required.

If you need any further information, please contact the District Field Supervisor, Henry Marley, at (512) 748-2868.



TRAVIS COUNTY WATER CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 17

The mission of District No. 17, a public utility, is to provide the District with an adequate supply of safe, potable water, and to ensure the fiscally sound, environmentally responsible development and management of water resources and wastewater facilities.

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Billing Questions
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512.266.1111, ext. 22

Conserving Water for Today and Tomorrow

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NEW DISTRICT-WIDE WATER IMPACT FEE WILL BE IN EFFECT BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1, 2014 - \$6,700.00

The District's Impact Fee Advisory Committee (IFAC), comprised of residents, builders, developers and Realtors, met November 12th to review the 2013 Update Water Capital Recovery Fee Study and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. The committee made a recommendation to the Directors to significantly increase the fee, effective immediately, because of the 6.4% average annual growth over the last five years and changes to land use. Growth and changes include significant multi-family development and extremely dense commercial development especially in the Lake Travis Regional Medical Center area. To serve this growth, new infrastructure will be required including additional pumping capacity, storage capacity and transmission capability.

At the November Board of Directors meeting, the Water Capital Recovery Fee Study and the IFAC's meeting notes were presented for review and a Public Hearing was called for the December 19th Board of Directors meeting. On December 19, 2013 the Public Hearing was held, and based on the proposals, cost calculations and the Impact Fee Advisory Committee's recommendation the Board voted to raise the fee to \$6,700.00, effective February 1, 2014 to all new taps to the water system. Impact fees are reviewed semiannually.

PERMIT AND INSPECTION REMINDER

With spring home improvement time just ahead, please remember that plumbing permits and inspections are not only required for new construction, they are also required for alterations to plumbing, and for the installation of pools, water heaters, and irrigation systems. These inspections are performed by WCID 17 for all properties in the district (even those in the City of Austin, Bee Cave and Lakeway limited purpose ETJ.) Call the WCID 17 plumbing inspection coordinator, MaryAnn, at 512.266.1111, extension 10 for more information.