



# WATERWORKS

USEFUL FACTS ABOUT YOUR WATER DISTRICT

## District Operations Enters Phase II of Business Cycle; New Team to Lead the Way to Success

### DIRECTORS

**James Cupp,**  
President

**Richard Lewis,**  
Vice President,  
Investment Officer

**Donald F. Hill**  
Assistant Vice President  
& Investment Officer

**Beth Murany,**  
Secretary

**Sylvia Lindley,**  
Assistant Secretary

### DISTRICT OPERATIONS:

**Mary Moore Hayes**  
Executive General  
Manager

**Karyn Hennessy**  
Executive Administrative  
& Billing Manager

**John Pate**  
Executive Operations  
Manager

The goal for the District for the first three years of operation was to design, develop, and implement Phase I start-up in-house operations capability. Phase I included development and implementation of the operational infrastructure to include staffing, construction of a building, training, the development and implementation of standard operational procedures, job descriptions, the employee manual, a benefits program, operational processes, and purchasing the equipment and inventory necessary to run the District.

The goal of the fourth year of in-house operations will be to successfully implement Phase II in the District's business life cycle. Phase II will include the development and implementation of short and long term strategic plans that will guide the District's decisions for the next three to six years. The strategic plan, or business plan, will include the ability to project revenues, predict the volatility of the bond market in relation to revenues and expenses, to develop and implement sustaining operational revenue that promotes self-sufficiency and is equal to, or exceeds, 120% to ensure that Operations is self-sufficient, with no dependency on funds from other sources/funds, and to manage future growth and development in a way that promotes maximum benefit for the District and continues to minimize the financial responsibility of existing residents.

To accomplish this, the Executive Management team will focus on three primary areas in operations: Projects and Capital Improvements, Operations, and Accounting.

A high performance executive team has been assembled by the District and the team includes experienced personnel with proven track records of success. Introducing your new **Executive Management Team:**

**Karyn Hennessy**, the newly hired Executive Administrative Manager, will assume the number two position in the District's operations structure. Karyn holds an MBA in Finance, and will develop and implement the financial programs needed to ensure the long-term viability and financial stability of the District. Karyn is an accomplished business professional with extensive experience in Fortune 50 energy, information technology, banking, and manufacturing industries. Applications include accounting (P&L statements, G/L (a/p, a/p, arbitrage, bonds), administration, best organizational practices, organizational teambuilding, publications, and internal communications, change management, project management, organizational strategy & design, mergers and acquisitions.

**John Pate**, the new Executive Operations Manager, will assume responsibility for the Field Operations team as well as all facility operations. Main-

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## New Leadership Team...

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tenance, infrastructure repair and maintenance, supervision of the plant operators and repair crews as well as long-term strategic planning for operations. Mr. Pate has over 12 years' experience in the operations and maintenance of surface water, wastewater and biological treatment. Mr. Pate has been responsible for various treatment processes, budgeting, and training and supervising staff. He is licensed as a Water and Wastewater operator ("AB") and has completed over 100 hours (needs only 20 hours more) toward a degree in Business Administration, and will finish his BSBA within the next 12 months.

**Dan Whitcher** will direct special projects for the District. Dan has over 17 years experience in water and wastewater operations and will administer the District special programs such as MS4-Sormwater Management, Vulnerability Assessments, Surface Water Conversion, development of a formal conservation program, and all construction projects within the District.

**Viju Jacobs** will join the District's billing/collections, customer service team, with crossover responsibilities in accounting. Viju holds bachelor's degrees in Education and Science and will complete his degree in accounting in December 2003.

The District plans to accomplish a great deal in the next 12 months and the addition of highly qualified personnel will enable the organization to provide improved levels of service to all customers in a cost effective manner. ♦



## Now You Can Pay Your Bill Online!

The District is pleased to announce that you can now pay your water and sewer bills online! All it takes to pay your bill from the comfort of your home or office is a computer with Internet access, a checking account, and your District account number.

Go to [www.waterdistrict25.com](http://www.waterdistrict25.com), click on "WEBPAY," and follow the instructions. Eliminate the expense of postage and envelopes as well as the inconvenience of writing checks. Reduce the worry associated with lost mail. Rely on WEBPAY, the fast and easy way to pay your bill!

### Online Bill Payment Services

Those who utilize an online bill payment service should **allow seven-ten days for postal mail delivery**, since **online payments are not an electronic transfer of funds**. The check is actually mailed to the District office.

**ACH Bill Payments** Residents can sign up for ACH bill Payment Service by contacting the District. The payment is an electronic transfer of funds, and your water bill account is credited the same day funds are debited from your account. (**NOTE: Due to the length of time involved in processing and establishing ACH transactions for payment of monthly water bills, the District will implement a \$1.00 processing fee for all ACH payment transactions effective February 1, 2004. The processing fee won't cover the complete cost but will help offset some associated expenses. Thank you for your continued understanding in this matter.**)

## UPDATE: Surface Water Conversion

The mission of the Fort Bend County Subsidence District is to “control land subsidence and manage groundwater resources through regulation, conservation, and coordination with suppliers of alternative water sources to assure an adequate quantity and quality of water for the future,” (Fort Bend County Subsidence District web site, 2002).

A number of methods have been implemented to support the attainment of the mission. However, one of the most important methods in the program is the development and implementation of regulatory and management plans intended to reduce the current level of dependence upon groundwater supplies to meet government mandates by established deadlines.

Currently, total water use in

the Fort Bend County Subsidence District is comprised of 60% groundwater and 40% surface water. The proposed Subsidence District Groundwater Reduction Program will mandate that entities that pump 10 million gallons or more per year reduce their reliance on groundwater supplies by 30% by 2013, with further reductions to 60% by 2025. Entities pumping less than 10 million gallons per year, such as small water well and agricultural users, are exempt from the regulatory mandate noted above.

The staff at Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 is working with a number of professionals to ensure compliance with the mandate within the parameters defined. One of the methods under review, which is the most viable option, includes a program of effluent reuse. Reuse of effluent resources, when and

where appropriate, strongly supports the goals of the Subsidence District with regard to the reduction of groundwater usage.

Most importantly, reuse of effluent supplies, in place of groundwater, preserves precious supplies of water for future generations, increasing the probability that when our children and grandchildren need drinking water, it is there. However, effluent reuse will not be enough to meet state mandates.

The staff in District operations continues to explore other options to include the possibility of the creation of a partnership with neighboring cities to ensure compliance with regulatory mandates. Rest assured that the District’s Operations team will keep everyone informed as changes and programs are implemented to facilitate the transition from ground to surface water use. ♦

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## How Do You Feel About an ETJ Swap?

Most residents of the District assume that, with a Sugar Land address, the District is part of the City of Sugar Land. Would you be surprised to know that that is not the case?

In fact, the District boundaries lie within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the *City of Houston*.

What this means to you, the resident, is that if the District is ever annexed by the city, the District and all residents within its boundaries would become a part of the City of Houston.

The Board of Directors is soliciting input from the residents regarding this situation. The specific question to be answered is:

***Do the residents want the Board of Directors to request/seek an ETJ swap with Sugar Land and Houston, to see us become a part of Sugar Land’s ETJ instead of Houston?***

Please forward your comments to the Board of Directors...



### E-mail:

[boardofdirectors@waterdistrict25.com](mailto:boardofdirectors@waterdistrict25.com)

### Regular mail:

18230 Old Richmond Road  
Sugar Land, TX 77478.

We look forward to hearing from you soon! Thanks for communicating with us on this important topic. ♦



# PLANTS & WATER – Getting the Most Out of Both!

by Michael Murr



Summer has come and gone, and the months of watering frantically to keep from ending up with brown lawns and dead plants are behind us for another year. This gives us a little time to consider this important question: How much watering do we need to do? We are beginning to understand that water won't be as plentiful as it has been in the past, so using it efficiently to sustain this most precious resource is the practical approach we need to take.

If you're interested in more than lip service to water conservation, there are some practical things you can do that will help maximize the use of both your water and your money...and it will still allow the watering you need to do to keep plants alive and thriving.



You may have heard some of these “tips” before – many involve plain old practical horse sense. (I am often surprised at the “senseless horses” around when I see water being wasted.) More

people are learning about **Xeriscaping**, which means, “quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment.” The process and theory of Xeriscaping, however, may not really be understood.

As far as I know, all living things need some water and/or nutrients, so there is no such thing as “waterless or no-maintenance” plants. It is true that Xeriscape plants require a minimum amount of water over and above the natural rainfall of any region. So, by simply using water efficiently for your outside requirements, you are already Xeriscaping. But there is more to it than that.



## Planning...

If you have the opportunity to plan a new landscape -- or renovate an old one -- take the time to plan for water usage and conservation. Sketch a plan of your home and existing features, visit with a nursery, and read the labels on plants to learn about their water requirements.

Divide your landscape into **three water use zones**: low, moderate and high. Place plants in areas that receive the same watering patterns and have the same water requirements, or put them in appropriate “low” or “high” spots

in the yard.



Study the **shade patterns**. A shaded landscape can be as much as 20% cooler than full sun areas and require much less water than those in full or partial sun. Before you cut those pesky pine trees down, remember they are providing shade to cool the house and the landscape. What you may not realize is that the pines also provide the acid for the soil on which many plants – and especially those azaleas we love – thrive.

Pay close attention to **moisture in the soil** to determine when to water. It also pays to do your homework on the water needs of the plants that you have selected for your yard. And don't forget about the soil itself. Our area has a lot of clay, which doesn't absorb water well. Incorporate some organic material into the soil before you plant and mulch. And don't forget to build up your beds. This means raising them higher than the level of your yard. This helps insure much-needed drainage for the plants, and retains the water you do use.

Also remember rocks don't use water but the more rocks you use, the more heat is retained in the area causing it to radiate around your plants and increase evaporation. If you are planting trees, take a look at the orienta-

tion, and think about where their shade will hit during the summer -- not only for cooling the house, but shading a window, or an area of the yard that will get a lot of sun.

### Lawn Irrigation...

Irrigation is probably the biggest waste of outside water use, because most people just mismanage its use. It doesn't matter if you have the most high-tech irrigation system in the neighborhood, or if you still just drag water hoses around; **watering the landscape is the number one water-waster.**



Think about that the next time you see the driveway getting watered, or a sprinkler's over-spray filling the street gutters and trickling down the sewer drain. Also, don't water in the heat of the day or when it is windy. At those times, the water's potential efficiency is reduced to just about half, because the other half is evaporating. Watering frequency should be based on soil moisture, evaporation, and precipitation...not what you *think* you should set the timer for.

### With an irrigation system...

**1. Best time** - Water early in the morning, before people start getting up to take showers, and getting ready for work. Fungus usually takes several hours of wetness

on leaves to take hold, so you don't need to worry about that.



**2. Change your watering habits as the seasons change.** You don't need as much in the winter and fall as you do the spring and summer. Make the adjustments to your system and habits accordingly.

3. Make sure you have **water sensors** and make sure they are clean, and working properly. This can be such an easy first step in saving a lot of water. It's irritating to see an irrigation system operating when it's raining outside...and talk about waste!

4. Have **an annual check up** for your system. Call in a professional or do it yourself, but do it! Get those leaks and bad heads fixed up and operating efficiently.

5. Try to use sprinkler heads that produce **drops rather than mists**. This helps to reduce evaporation.

6. Another key factor in efficient irrigation is one that is most often forgotten: your **landscape may have changed since your system was installed**. Increased size of plant material may now block or distort the spray pattern. You may have to modify either the plants or the irrigation system.

### Hand watering with hoses...

**1. Get a timer.** These \$10 items are so handy and help you remember that sprinkler running outside when you get busy with something else.

**2. Use soaker hoses where you can, and drip systems in pots.**

**3. Make sure valves are not leaking outside.** Sometimes, just a slight tightening or adjustment can stop the drip.

**4. Adjust your sprinkler** before you turn it on. The street, driveway and sidewalks don't need water -- no one ever grew a garden in concrete!

### Lawns...

Now focus on what's in your landscape. You may need to have your soil tested for nutrient content and add organic matter if needed. Good soil absorbs and retains water better.

Minimize turf areas -- how about installing a brick walkway or patio you have been wanting to help reduce your outside water use. Remove thatch and aerate the turf if it is hard, so water won't run off so quickly, and this will absorb it to the root zone, too. There are many schools of thought, but *the most sensible key to watering lawns is to apply the water infrequently, yet thoroughly*. This creates a deep, well-rooted lawn that efficiently uses water stored in the soil.



### Flower Beds...

Use plants native to Texas in your landscape -- they require less care and water than ornamental varieties. (Check out the Plant List on the Native Plant Society of Texas website, [www.npsot.org](http://www.npsot.org),

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## Plants And Water...

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for a complete listing of our native plants, and consider using them as much as possible in your landscaping projects.)

Use mulch and place plants to ensure easy maintenance and efficient use of water. It is important to space plants far enough apart so that they can achieve their mature size without being crowded. Crowding not only increases your costs, but also results in long-term maintenance problems, and can also increase unnecessary water use for the same desired affect.



### Maintenance...

Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface

and cut down on weed growth. Remember, mulch holds water. Raise your lawn mower cutting height -- longer grass blades help shade each other, cut down on evaporation, and inhibit weed growth.

### Conservation for the long term...

Houston's climate is what makes our plant materials -- including trees -- in this area so lush, and that is what makes living in this area so desirable. Water is a limited resource in many places, but with good stewardship, we have enough quality water in the Gulf Coast region to last a long time if we use it smartly. A time is coming, however, where we will have to curb our water use and pay more for this finite resource.

Landscape plants have an environmental impact and ecological value, including the production of the oxygen we breathe, the removal of many air-borne pollutants, as well as psychological and aesthetic benefits.

Just remember... **Plants do not save water; people do.** ■



**Michael Murr** is the President of a landscape management consulting firm -- Murr Incorporated -- which specializes in Land Use Planning, Preservation, Master Planning and Feasibility Studies for development of property and Parks with the environment in mind. He holds a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from Texas Tech University and has over 20 years experience in managing land use harmoniously with the progressing future.

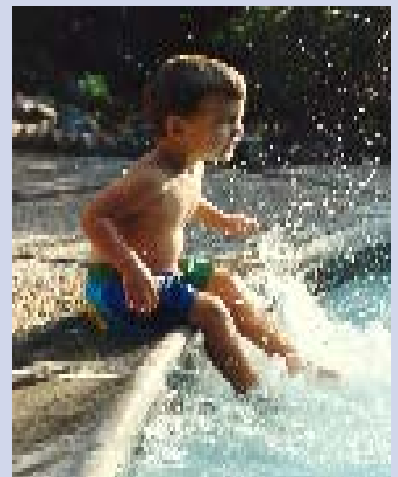
Michael has held operations management positions at two world-wide companies, before starting his business two years ago where he was influential in the implementation of the natural landscape design

and maintenance of those corporation's facilities.

Murr Incorporated provides consulting services for the planning and design of natural green space, implementation and preservation of indigenous materials that save water and promote conservation management. ♦

## Additional water-saving tips:

- ♦ Sweep or blow driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing them off.
- ♦ Wash the car with water from a bucket, and hose off with a cut off sprayer rather than letting the water run.
- ♦ Avoid purchasing recreational water toys that require a constant stream of water.
- ♦ If you have a swimming pool, consider installing a new water-saving pool filter.
- ♦ Lower pool water level to reduce amount of water splashed out.



- ♦ Use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when pool is not being used
- ♦ Eliminate the weeds when and where you can. Why would you want to water those?
- ♦ Supplement your automatic watering by spot and hand watering those smaller areas that aren't "thirsty."
- ♦ Don't install or use ornamental water features unless they recycle the water and do not operate during dry periods.
- ♦ Follow your subdivision's watering ordinances, and respect the days when you are asked to refrain from watering.



# Kid's Club

SPLASH!

What do you know about the water we drink? Do you know where it comes from? Do you know how much water you USE everyday?

**Can you answer these questions?**

1. You can live a month without food. How long can you survive without water? \_\_\_\_\_
2. A five minute shower uses an average of \_\_\_\_\_ gallons of water.
3. A leaky faucet can waste up to \_\_\_\_\_ gallons a day.
4. The human body is made up of \_\_\_\_\_ percent water.
5. Only about \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the water on earth is drinkable.
6. It takes about \_\_\_\_\_ gallons of water to flush a toilet?
7. Name one thing you can do to use less water at home.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Waterman says:  
"Yes, Kids Can Conserve Water!  
Learn how to help save our precious  
water resources."

Answers on back panel.



## DISTRICT NEWS!

### DISTRICT TAX RATE REDUCED AGAIN!

Fort Bend Co. Municipal Utility District No. 25 has set its 2003 tax rate at \$0.89 per \$100 of assessed value. The **\$0.89 tax rate represents a decrease in taxes for the seventh straight year!**

The District continues to realize the economic benefit of recent growth within our area as well as sound fiscal management by the District's Board of Directors and employees.



### Attention Seniors!

The Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 voted to give our resident senior citizens a break! Senior citizens are entitled to a discount on annual MUD taxes. For more complete information or to find out if you qualify, please contact Tommy Lee at Assessments of the Southwest, at 281-482-0216.

## May we help you?

Our District Operations staff is here to serve you, the residents and customers of the District. Do you have a problem with your water bill? Do you have a bill that seems too high and need help to track the problem? Missing a payment? Do you have a leak, or think you have a leak, and need assistance? Do you have a problem with a backflow device? Do you need an inspection of a backflow device? Do you have a concern about a repair that may have affected your landscaping?

We are here to help! Call us at:

### Billing Problems:

Talk to Liz, Karen, or Viju at 281-277-0129 ext. 105, 109, or 112.

### Leaks, Inspections, Problems associated with Excavations:

Talk with John Pate, Brian Sebesta, or Don Ehler at 281-277-0129, ext. 101, 113, or 116

We also have a number of methods in place to allow you quick and easy access anytime...



**1. E-MAIL** -- Our staff can be reached through the Internet! Residents may contact us at our E-Mail addresses listed on our website -- [www.waterdistrict25.com](http://www.waterdistrict25.com) -- in the "Contact Us" area.

**2. REGULAR MAIL** -- You can mail your comments to our Post Office Box:

Fort Bend County Municipal  
Utility District No. 25  
P.O. Box 2847  
Sugar Land, Texas 77487-2847

**3. BY PHONE** --

Phone: 281-277-0129

Fax: 281-277-0028

**4. MONTHLY MEETINGS** -- Come to our District meeting! Your Board of Directors holds a public meeting the second Friday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at our office, located at:

18230 Old Richmond Road  
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

**It's up to us...Let's use our  
water resources wisely!**

*Quiz Answers: 1. One week 2. 25-50 gallons 3. 100 gallons a day 4. 75 percent 5. Two percent 6. Two to seven gallons 7. Take shorter showers -- see conservation article for more ideas, or visit the Kid's Club online, at [www.waterdistrict25.com](http://www.waterdistrict25.com)*



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