

# WATER Works!

Provided as a public service for our neighbors and customers...

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## Asset Management, Aging Infrastructures, and Preventive Maintenance Programs

Asset management is a hot topic in the United States for public agencies and focus will increase as the average age cost to maintain the public infrastructure increases. However, there is an even bigger cost when governments fail to maintain public infrastructures, as was demonstrated by the recent collapse of a bridge spanning the Mississippi river. The tragedy served to heighten awareness of the problems associated with America's aging infrastructure (roads, bridges, water and sewer lines, etc.) by underscoring the true and sometimes tragic cost for maintenance and asset management failure.

Experts warn that billions must be spent nationwide to bring the aging infrastructure up to standard to avoid disasters such as bridge collapses, deteriorating water supply lines that may cause public water supply contamination and/or the loss of millions of gallons of water, and deteriorating sewer lines that may pose a public health risk.

The aging infrastructure problem became a priority for FBCM25 years before the topic became a media buzzword because taking care of problems before a crisis occurs is just plain smart. Proactive maintenance programs for your District's facilities, equipment, and infrastructure are key components of our capital planning strategy. Taking a proactive approach allows the District to identify potential problems and develop long-term cost effective solutions before minor problems become a crisis.

One example of our proactive upgrade and maintenance process includes the recently completed meter replacement program which was part of an aggressive maintenance approach to improve accuracy, increase accountability, and to ensure our residents pay only for the water used. Another, perhaps more highly visible event is the evaluation and rehabilitation of the older sewer lines currently in progress. Cleaning and televising aging sewer lines helps to identify potential problems in advance, research the best methods for resolution, and develop a long-term capital plan for repairs and rehabilitation.

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# Line of Sight Tree Wall Accompanies Completion of Phase I Expansion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant

Growth has been good for the residents of FBCM25. For example, growth in the District led to 10 consecutive years of reduced tax rates as a result of an expanded tax base. Growth also contributed to increased and expanded facilities that enabled the District to rehabilitate older facilities and add newer technology to increase efficiency and reduce operations costs.

One example of expansion that led to major cost savings is the completion of Phase I of the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant. The addition of the centrifuge has resulted in savings over \$86,000.00 annually by reducing sludge hauls and reduced labor costs because operators do not need to “babysit” the equipment while processing (frees operators to take care of other tasks).

On occasion, however,

progress may be accompanied by a few hiccups along the way. The expanded plant and centrifuge buildings are taller than the old facilities, which increases visibility and adversely impacts the line of sight between the plant site and the District’s residents.

In response to customer concerns, the District planted a wall of trees to improve the vision between the plant and our residents. Why would the District go to so much trouble in response to resident concerns? Because the District cares about our neighbors and planting the trees to hide the plant site is a neighborly step to take and demonstrates the District’s commitment and dedication to customer satisfaction.

The added benefit to the tree wall is two-fold: eucalyptus trees produce a pleasant aroma and provide a natural environ-



mental barrier as the roots grow larger. Finally, the trees add value to the property where planted and increase the overall value of taxpayer funded assets.

Customer service and satisfaction, properly managed assets, cost effective solutions, people who care...perhaps just a dream for other government entities...but at FBCM25, we work hard every day to make the dream a reality for our customers. ■

## In Case You Were Wondering....

The District is committed to efficient, cost-effective operations. However, you might wonder why the level of lighting is so high at each of the District’s facilities at night if saving money is the goal.

Many of you are probably aware of the creation of a federal Homeland Security agency after the events of 9/11. However, you may not be aware that public water supply providers suppliers were advised by Homeland Security to take steps to safeguard the public’s drinking water supply from terrorist activity. One of the steps included the completion of a vulnerability assessment to determine where improvements could be made to mitigate risk to drinking water supplies. The increased lighting you see at all the District’s facilities is but one of the steps the District implemented as a result of the recommendation from the assessment. However, to ensure the cost of compliance is contained wherever possible, the District’s accounting team, in partnership with our engineering firm, shops energy provider contracts annually to ensure we obtain electricity at the lowest possible rates. ■



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Sewer line rehabilitation is in process for the oldest part of the District’s infrastructure and will continue for many years into the future as we prioritize and move forward and expand rehabilitation through the remainder of the infrastructure.

Proactive maintenance programs reduce the opportunity for emergency repairs that disrupt service, eliminate failing lines that pose a potential health risk to the public, increase plant performance, and improve the efficiency of operations, and are a critical component of our commitment to regulatory compliance, cost effective operations, and customer service excellence. ■



# District Tax Rate REDUCED for the Eleventh Consecutive Year!

Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 has set its 2007 tax rate at \$0.82 per \$100 of assessed value. The action represents the eleventh consecutive year of tax rate reductions. The new reduced tax rate ensures that District residents continue to reap the economic benefit of planned growth through annexation.

## What does this mean to the homeowner?

First, most homeowners will not see a decrease in overall tax bills, because the Fort Bend Central Appraisal District assesses the value of each home for property tax purposes. The assessed value, or AV, is used by the County, school district, and the District as the basis for setting taxes on individual property. The increase or decrease in AV for each individual property plus the reduction in tax rate affects the total tax bill.

Recent increases in development in the District results in overall increases in home values and means that while the tax rate is reduced, the increased valuation generates sufficient additional revenues to maintain and operate the District in a productive and cost-efficient manner. Home ownership is the most significant investment most people make during their lifetime, and increases in the value can be a significant benefit upon selling a home. A large portion of the current new home demand in the Houston area results from homeowners using their increase in home value to “step up” to a better home.

## What does the future hold for Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25?

Home construction and associated growth in the District continues. Developers have completed construction in Sections II of Chelsea Harbor, Orchard Lakes Estates, and Oak Lake Court, annexation is complete for Safari Ranch, the Old Orchard development is underway and home sales are exceeding expectation. Additionally, the recent sale of prison property on the far end of FM1464 (near the Grand Parkway) will bring an additional 136 acres of residential development into the District. Further, the District provides out-of-district water and/or sewer to Nick’s Italian Restaurant, the Sugar Land Regional Airport, and the TXDOT Facility on Hwy 6. The sus-

tained economic development and annexation -- as one small part of the District’s long-term strategic plan to ensure long-term fiscal stability and viability -- will result in future increases in the AV in the District, which allows for continuing decreases in the tax rate in the future. While growth can bring challenges, planned growth has enabled the District’s residents to enjoy major benefits associated with economic development to include eleven consecutive years of reductions in the tax rate for assessed value.

Year	Value	Year	Value
1984	\$1.45	1996	\$1.30
1985	\$1.60	1997	\$1.24
1986	\$1.60	1998	\$1.18
1987	\$1.82	1999	\$1.08
1988	\$1.82	2000	\$0.97
1989	\$1.82	2001	\$0.92
1990	\$1.64	2002	\$0.90
1991	\$1.42	2003	\$0.89
1992	\$1.33	2004	\$0.87
1993	\$1.29	2005	\$0.86
1994	\$1.24	2006	\$0.85
1995	\$1.30	2007	\$0.82





### 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 can receive 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.

### We're Here to Help!

Our District Operations staff is here to serve you! 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? We are here to help!

**Billing Problems:** Call Tracey, Leonela, Sophia, or Esmeralda at 281-277-0129 ext. 105, 109, or 112.

**Leaks, Inspections, Problems associated with Excavations:** Talk to one of our operators at 281-277-0129, ext. 113, 111, or 106.

## New Partnerships Ensure Success of the Effluent Reuse Program to Meet Groundwater Reduction Mandates

The scarcity of conventional sources of water in arid and semiarid regions of the world -- as well as continued subsidence and declining underground aquifers because of increased pumpage from groundwater supplies -- has fueled the movement to find alternative or additional resources to keep pace with the growing demand for an adequate water supply.

Additionally, a mandate is now in place that requires groundwater use in Fort Bend County be reduced by 30 percent by 2013 with further reductions by 2025. Possible sources to reduce groundwater consumption include the conversion to surface water, the construction of desalinization plants to convert salt water, and the use of effluent water for approved application. Desalinization is very expensive but still under review for some areas.

Surface water conversion is the option selected by most cities and MUD's but treatment plants are expensive and the burden for construction and infrastructure costs is normally passed on to residents through an additional fee on the water bill.

Effluent reuse, however,

is a less costly alternative that aids reducing dependence on groundwater supplies. In fact, wastewater, when treated, is a relatively stable water source that has uses in agriculture, industry, recreation, gardening, industrial plant cooling, and recharge of underground aquifers.

### What does all this mean for the residents of Fort Bend County MUD No. 25?

The District is pleased to announce a partnership with the Orchard Lakes Estate HOA and the Houstonian Golf Course to implement an effluent reuse program that enables all three organizations to meet the regulatory mandates by using effluent reuse instead of ground water for irrigation and the amenity lake.

The partnership will facilitate the creation of a water reuse program that conserves water for future generations with no additional fees to the residents! A reuse program also helps save money on permitted pumpage so no extra fees have to be paid for non-compliance. Partnerships that ensure conservation for future generations and savings to our residents -- now there's a combination that's hard to beat! ■



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