

WATER Works!

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The District Partners with the US Environmental Protection Agency's Water Sense Program

For years, the District has emphasized the importance of water conservation. Let's face it, the growing population combined with the continued decline of potable water supplies makes water conservation a very real priority. Hence, regulatory agencies have issued mandates that groundwater consumption must be reduced. Additionally, all entities that provide water service to a connection count of 3,300 or more must develop and implement a formal **Water Conservation Plan** as well as a **Drought Contingency Plan**. The District has a Drought Contingency Plan that will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure relevance to today's conditions. The Water Conservation Plan is in development and to ensure a quality plan, the District has partnered with the EPA's Water Sense program to be able to access current, most up-to-date industry "best practices" information on a regional, national, and international level.

WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by EPA, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, programs, and practices. Water is vital to the survival of everything on the planet and is limited in supply. The Earth might seem like it has abundant water, but in fact only 1 percent is available for human use. While the population and the demand on freshwater resources are increasing, supply remains constant.

Managing water is a growing concern in the United States. Communities across the country are starting to face challenges regarding dwindling water supply and aging water infrastructure. Many of the states that have projected population growth increases also have higher per capita water use. (Water Sense, 2008). The ability to achieve water conservation objectives will require the cooperation of water utilities, consumers, businesses and communities.

Districts such as ours are an important piece in the road map to water efficiency. We will implement water-efficiency strategies that incorporate water-saving technology along with innovative management practices to use less water while delivering an unchanged or improved level of service to consumers. Becoming more water-efficient will reduce overhead costs and help consumers and businesses save water and money.

Consumers are an integral part of the Water Sense program. Here are

Continued on page 2

EPA Water Sense Partners

Continued from page 1

some simple steps consumers can follow to become water-efficient:

1. Learn about water efficiency.
2. Use water-efficient products, services, and practices. Look for the WaterSense label! It stands for efficiency and performance.
3. Use water-efficient irrigation practices. Ask us about scheduling an audit of your irrigation system to make sure it is operating efficiently. **INSTALL A RAIN SENSOR OR SMART CONTROLLER IF YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE ONE.**

When purchasing products and services that use water, think WaterSense. When purchasing products that use electricity, think ENERGY STAR®. (Read the energy and water conservation article beginning on page 5)



The District already has many of the major components already in place to promote conservation -- Drought Contingency Plan, Effluent Reuse Program, Tiered/Block Rate Structure that charges more for high-end usage, a Water Conservation Rebate Program that rewards decreased usage -- and will be working diligently to ensure operational efficiency.

Look for additional information in future newsletters and on our website! 💧



Community Heartline

AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS!

The District, in 2008, initiated a three-part Community Heartlines program to help make life better for the residents in our community. The three-part program includes events that will make you feel just a little bit better by helping others who may not be able to help themselves, and enable you to make a difference where you live for your family and neighbors.

Community Heartlines programs include quarterly community blood drives (held in the District's conference center to make sure the process is close by and convenient); bi-annual food drives (Spring and Fall), and through partnership with the East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, District residents may add voluntary contributions to water bill payments to help neighbors in need (residents must designate how much they wish to contribute and add that amount to the total paid). The contributions collected are forwarded to the East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, where an account is maintained to help neighbors in need pay water bills.

The District is pleased to report that all three programs have been very well-received and supported by the community. For example, the bi-annual community food drives included significant participation from all residents with FBCM25! The District collected a box truck of food for our partner, the East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, to help those in need.

The events are a friendly contest of sorts between subdivisions, with signs awarded to the "winning" subdivisions based on highest percentage of participation based on total connection count. This is a competition where there are no losers because every single item contributed will help to increase the opportunity that someone's child, parent, sister, brother, aunt or uncle will not go to bed hungry tonight! 💧

The winners for the Spring event are as follows:

1st Place Winner - the Residents of Stratford Park, with over 20% of the residents contributing to the food drive.

2nd Place Winner - the Residents of Summerfield with over 15% of the residents contributing to the food drive

3rd Place Winner - It's a Tie!! The Residents of Pheasant Creek and the Residents of Orchard Lakes Estates each had over 14% of the residents in their subdivision contributing to the food drive.

The winners of the Fall Food Drive are:

1st Place Winner - the Residents of Summerfield, with 18% of their residents participating.

2nd Place Winner - the Residents of Pheasant Creek, with 17% of their residents participating.

3rd Place Winner - The residents of Stratford Park, with 15% of their residents participating.

Texas Sized Steps to Improve Water Efficiency in Landscape Irrigation

Information from the Alliance for Water Efficiency and the Houston Gulf Coast Irrigation Association

“The TCEQ has adopted new rules regulating landscape irrigation in Texas. The new rules address design, installation and operation of irrigation systems...”

Texas landscapes could become more efficient in the near future. At the direction of the 80th Texas Legislature, the states’ environmental agency, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), on June 4, 2008 adopted new rules regulating landscape irrigation in Texas. The legislature said the rules must specifically address: The connection of irrigation systems to any water supply; the design, installation and operation of irrigation systems; water conservation; and the duties and responsibilities of irrigators. The new rules become effective January 1, 2009.

Texas irrigators will be faced with some additional requirements designed to result in more efficient irrigation systems. Among the major changes - the irrigator must complete an irrigation plan for every new installation, and the plan must be on the site during construction of the system.

Once the system is complete, the irrigator must provide a copy of the plan reflecting any changes made during installation to the property owner. The owner must receive instructions for operating the system efficiently, including the precipitation rate and flow rate of each irrigation zone, and a recommended watering schedule based on evapotranspiration. The new system must include rain or moisture shut off technology. Some specific design standards include no overhead spray irrigation in areas with a width less than 48”, e.g., between a curb and walk. No water may be thrown onto impervious cover.

Beginning Jan 1, 2010, a licensed irrigator or licensed technician must be on the site during all new irrigation construction. The licensed technician is a new license developed to provide on-site supervision of the ongoing work.

Enforcement of the states’ irrigation laws and rules has been an ongoing problem since the inception of the irrigator licensing law some 35 years ago. In the past, the state has attempted to provide enforcement with a very limited staff.

With the passage of HB 1656, the legislature required all municipalities with a population of over 20,000 to enforce the new rules, and require permits for new irrigation systems. Now, there will be enforcement officers on the streets to catch unlicensed operators and ensure the systems are being installed efficiently. ♦



How to conserve both water and energy... and save money in the process!

There have been times in this land of plenty when it has been necessary to curb our voracious appetites for finite natural resources. Certainly during wartime ...when the nation's needs came first...and today, *as our growing demand for energy and water is increasingly outstripping supply.* In both cases, it is not that we're running out of energy or water -- there is a greater supply of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas and coal) available yet to be discovered and harnessed in this country than we have used up to this point in our history. And, we have the same amount of water on the planet that has been here since the dawn of time, but most if it is not drinkable... and we have drawn down the supply in our underground aquifers faster that it can be renewed.

There is an urgency to avoid wasting these valuable resources -- a growing need to steward these dwindling resources and to exercise caution about utilizing them more efficiently so that supplies can be stretched into the future. Cost is also a formidable driving force toward conservation practices. As energy costs rise, the research and development necessary to bring alternatives online increases correspondingly; witness the recent expansions in the use of wind turbines and solar power options as viable parts of the energy mix.

The more we understand about how we use energy and water in our homes, the more we realize that very often saving one resource

results in saving the other. For example, many of the things that use the most water around the house also have a high energy consumption... case in point, water heaters and the many ways hot water is used. It doesn't take a Sherlock Holmes to find the connections.

The typical U.S. family's energy bills average about \$1,600 a year and, sadly, a large amount of that energy is wasted. While the cost of water is nowhere near the same annual investment required to cool, heat, light and power our homes, water bills are rising dramatically and the days of cheap and plentiful water are history. The days of wasteful practices and habits, however, should be history, as well. Did you know, for example, *that more water is wasted in our homes each year through unrepaired leaks than the amount of water we drink?*

DOUBLE UP AND SAVE TWICE...

The best place to start is the top...the worst water and energy users in the household. According to the US Department of Energy, water heating (13%) and appliances and lighting (34%) use just about half of the energy we consume at home. If we match up these same categories with water consumption, we can determine our joint conservation targets pretty quickly. Basically they are the things/activities/appliances that use hot water. While there are long lists of ways that water and energy can be conserved, we'll concentrate on the 'two-fers' here.

In Hot Water...

There are four basic ways to take charge of your water heating bills: don't heat the water so hot; insulate the water heater; use less; or upgrade the equipment to a newer, more efficient model.

- Lower the temperature setting on the water heater to 120 degrees...that temperature will prevent bacteria from building up and will still be sufficient to generate enough comfortable hot water for most uses.

- Add an insulation 'jacket' to the tank and wrap any exposed pipes to knock off up to 15 percent of the hot water costs.

- About every three months, drain off a quart of water from the tank to remove any sediment that impedes heat transfer and lowers the efficiency of the hot water heater. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to accomplish this.

- Time for a new hot water heater? Don't wait until it fails before replacing it; and take time to research energy and water efficiency and performance. Look for the Energy Star and EnergyGuide labels* which list key information you'll want to consider when making a purchase decision.

Let's start with using less. At home, hot water is generally used in three rooms -- the bathroom, laundry room and the kitchen - and there are some great conservation options in each room. Here's how hot water use breaks out: 32 percent of the heated water is used in washing

* See page 6

clothes; 20 percent goes down the shower drain; another 20 percent is used for bathing (sink and bath tub use); and automatic dishwashing consumes 12 percent, which leaves 5 percent for preparing food and 4 percent for washing hands.



The Bathroom...

■ Start with the obvious...fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints. Wasting water is bad enough, but if it is HOT water, the cost goes up. Fixing a leaky faucet/fixture can save 20 gallons a day for every leak stopped.

■ In the shower: install a low-flow shower head. You don't have to sacrifice pressure and 'designer' spray cycles - even the efficient new heads have them. Restricting the flow can cut shower water use in half, and save 500 to 800 gallons a month. Here's an amazing factoid: a five-minute shower with a low-flow showerhead would save enough water in a year to fill a 15-ft. aboveground pool...or about 4550 gallons. If everyone in the US did this, we'd save enough water to fill about 2,100 Giants Stadiums!

■ Install aerators on the faucets. Surprisingly, faucets account for about 15 percent of the indoor water use, and they usually flow at twice the rate necessary to get the job done. If aerators are added to both bathroom and kitchen sinks, about 1000 gallons of water a year can be saved...and much of that is energy-intensive hot water. While you're at the sink, turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. It may seem like such a little amount of water (three gallons

on average for either activity), but it adds up to an annual savings of 2,880 gallons.

■ Take shorter showers -- even a one or two minute reduction can save up to 700 gallons a month. A lengthy shower will really 'fire up' a hot wa-ter heater. Consider adding a plastic container or bucket at the side of the shower to capture unused water. This can be used to flush the toilet or to water houseplants if it isn't soapy, or for household cleaning chores if it is.

The Laundry Room...

Appliances account for about 1/5th of your household energy consumption, and two of these (washer and dryer) are usually found in the laundry room. About 90 percent of the energy used by the washing machine is to heat the water, so this provides the best conservation options: use less - or cooler - water.

■ With the many choices of cold water detergents on the market today, 'warm' or 'hot' water settings can usually be reserved for really dirty clothes or for combating stubborn stains.

■ Use your washing machine only with full loads and with the minimum water setting to get the job done.

■ Wash bulky bedding and/or towels separately from lighter-weight clothing items. This will help the dryer work more efficiently. While the dryer doesn't use water directly, maximizing its performance is key to cutting energy costs.

■ When it is time to purchase a new washing machine, there are some great high efficiency choices out there today. Always check for the Energy Star and EnergyGuide labels in making your decision. The new front-loading, horizontal-axis models generally save energy and water. The older top-loading vertical-axis models immerse the items in a full tub of water, and then agitate it through the wash cycle and spin it through the rinse cycle. The new high efficiency (**He**) style doesn't have to fill the tub so full, and tumbles laundry repeatedly through fast cycles, similar to the

motion in a clothes dryer, using about half the water in the process. Thanks to the fast spin cycles, the He type is also able to get more water out of the clean laundry, which reduces the time and energy needed for drying.

The Kitchen...

There are basically two hot water consumers in the kitchen: the dishwasher and the sink. Thanks to the *National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987*, manufacturers made significant water-- and energy-efficiency improvements to dishwashers by reducing hot water use, which accounts for most of the energy used by the appliance.

■ Today, installing a 7.0 gallon per load (gpl) dishwasher to replace a model that used 9.5 to 12.0 gpl will save an estimated 2.6 kWh per household, per day. This adds up to a 940 kWh savings per household, per year.



■ A dishwasher uses energy for several functions: heating water for cleaning and sanitization; to run the motor; and to operate the heater or fan to dry the dishes. Making setting adjustments offers several good options for conserving water and energy, so be sure to check the manufacturer's instructions and owner's manual to discover ways to tailor energy and water cycles needed for a particular load.

■ Since a heating element is generally used to dry the dishes at the end of the washing cycle -- and requires about 7 percent of the energy used by the machine - choose the no-heat drying option if available, or simply

Continued on page 6



Time to Save Energy and Water...and Money

Continued from page 5

turn off the dishwasher, open the door, and allow the dishes to dry themselves.

■ Scrape, don't pre-wash the dishes. Studies show that most people continue to pre-wash before loading items into the dishwasher, even though models built in the last 5-10 years do a great job cleaning even heavily soiled dishes. If you feel like you simply must pre-rinse, use cold water.

■ Wash only full loads. The dishwasher uses the same amount of water whether it is full or not, and this practice really saves energy, too.

■ Select the 'light-wash' option if there is one. Experts say that it is rarely necessary to use the normal setting on a dishwasher. This light-wash option cleans just as well and can reduce the water use up to 55 percent. That could translate into an annual savings of 2,860 gallons of water.

■ At the kitchen sink - don't let the

water run until it gets hot if you're using it for cooking; that's heating it twice. Add a faucet aerator; less hot water saves both energy and water.

■ Since almost 50 percent of American households have a garbage disposal in the kitchen, here is yet another way to SAVE at the sink. Use the disposal less, and the garbage can more. Even better, COMPOST! This would save between 50 and 150 gallons a month. If you must use the disposal, run it with cold water.

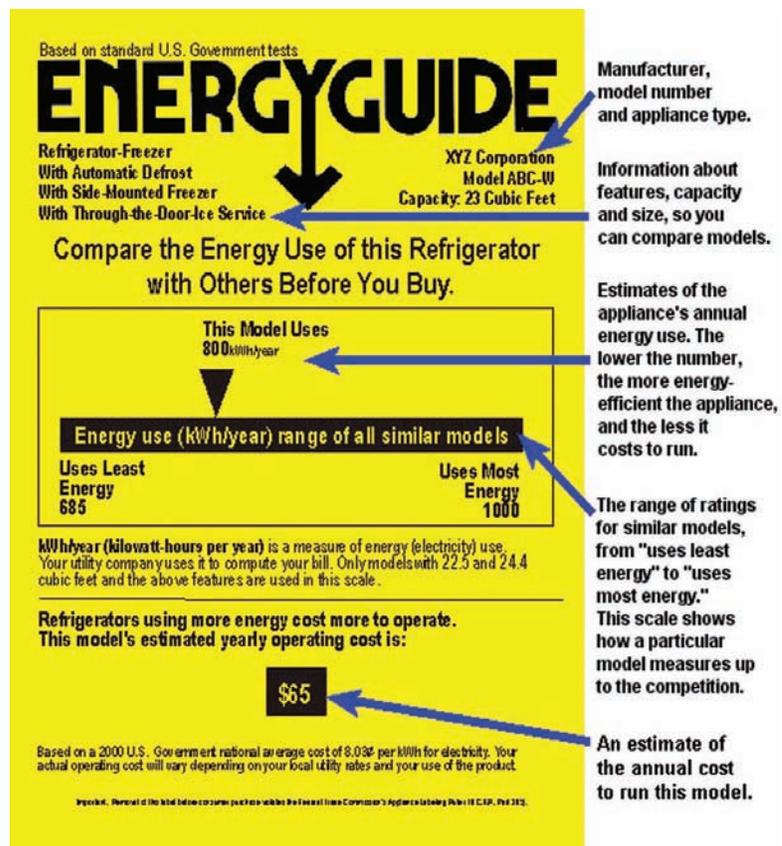
There are hundreds of ways to conserve energy and water at home, and these suggestions have focused on situations when both options occur together. The more conscious we become of the way we use water and energy in and around our homes, the more ways we will find to use them efficiently. The bottom line, of course, is that saving these precious natural resources saves us money, too. And that's not such a bad deal. ■

ENERGY STAR...



In 1992, the US Environmental Protection Agency introduced Energy Star as a voluntary labeling program intended to identify and promote energy-efficient products. Computers and monitors were among the first products to be labeled. The label is now on major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics, to name just a few. EPA has extended the label to cover new homes and commercial buildings. Today there are over 12,000 private and public sector 'partners' in the Energy Star program. ■

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Did you Know?

A kilowatt-hour (kWh) measures a unit of energy; the amount of energy that would be transferred at a constant rate of one kilowatt for one hour; the amount of electricity required to burn a 100 watt light bulb for 10 hours. This is the unit used by power companies for billing purposes.

According to the US Department of Energy, an average American household uses approximately 11,000 kWh per year.

Storm Water Management Plan Moves Forward



Protecting our water sources is important! We need clean water for drinking, economic development, and recreation. In August 2007, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) required operators of certain small municipal storm sewer systems to obtain a permit for their storm water discharges into rivers, lakes, and streams.

The new requirements affect most small, publicly-owned storm sewer systems located within urbanized areas (defined by the U.S. Census as an area of higher population density near a city) and are designed for the protection of our natural resources. Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 (the District), which is located in the Houston Urbanized Area and operates a storm sewer system, falls under this definition and is required to comply with the TCEQ's permitting regulations.

The state of Texas simplified compliance for small municipalities by issuing, via the TCEQ, a general permit for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (called MS4s). The Board of Directors, the District's operations team, and the District's engineer drafted a plan and submitted the required documents to seek coverage under the TCEQ's general permit. Conditions of the general permit require the District to develop a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that includes Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs), which include:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Involvement and Participation

- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Storm Water Management for New Development and Redevelopment, and
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

The SWMP adopted by the District, which will be gradually implemented over the next five years, meets regulatory requirements for the general permit and enables the District to implement the most effective, cost-efficient methods for the prevention of storm water pollution. However, the successful implementation of the District's stormwater protection plan will require the support and cooperation of all residents within the district.

Methods for resident participation and educational information will be distributed in the future through this newsletter as well as posted on the District's website at www.waterdistrict25.com. A toll free hotline is now in place and residents are encouraged to report illegal dumping and discharge in the District's storm sewers at 1-866-414-9950.

Plastic items, glass, metals, and hazardous waste such as motor oil, paint cans, and fuel pollute our waterways and adversely impact our quality of life.

A draft of the Storm Water plan is posted on the District's website and the Board of Directors welcomes resident input regarding the plan or other methods that will help prevent sourcewater pollution.

Let's work together to ensure pollution-free waterways for future generations. ♦

**Fort Bend County
MUD No. 25 is no
longer billing or
collecting Voluntary
Fire Department
donations.**

Effective with your current bill, please be aware that your bill no longer contains a line item for voluntary fire department fees. For those who subtracted the fee in the past, please be sure you no longer do this. Any unpaid balance on your bill will become past due and will incur a penalty.



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.

To the residents and Employees of FBCM25:

The District's Board of Directors offers our gratitude and sincere thanks for making our **Community Heartlines Program** such a positive experience for those who will benefit from your caring and your generosity; and to the employees of FBCM25, the Board of Directors salutes your efforts for walking every street in our District to distribute bags, flyers and pick up food the next day to make sure that those in need receive much-needed assistance.

The heart and soul of every community resides within the spirit of the residents who live there and the most successful communities are built on a foundation of **neighbors helping neighbors**. The efforts residents and employees of FBCM25 indicate that we are lucky enough to live in one of the most successful communities in Ft. Bend County!



**Our Very Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday
Season and a Safe and Prosperous New Year...**



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