

FORT BEND COUNTY
MUNICIPAL UTILITY
DISTRICT NO. 25

WATER WORKS

USEFUL FACTS ABOUT YOUR WATER DISTRICT

A New Century...New Opportunities

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James Cupp,
President

Bob Tomlinson,
Vice President,
Investment Officer

Keli Schroeder,
Assistant Vice President

Richard Lewis,
Secretary,
Investment Officer

Donald F. Hill
Assistant Secretary

DISTRICT OPERATIONS:

George D. Farland
Executive General Manager

Mary Moore Hayes
Executive Administrative &
Billing Manager

Daniel R. Whitcher
Executive Operations Manager

Regardless of whether you believe that the Millennium began last year or last week, we are certainly standing at the threshold of a new century. Far from the anxiety of last year's missing-in-action Y2K disasters, this year we are anticipating many new opportunities -- for improved customer service, for careful planning and decision-making to ensure a long-term supply of quality drinking water, and for taking a curious look at the future and imagining what lies ahead.



The Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 has made some landmark decisions in the past year that we believe provide the foundation for us to provide even better service to our customers. One of the new services is the Direct Payment Plan, which is outlined on page 3.

The recent decision to take over the operations of the District with a team of paid professionals is probably the best example of our commitment to a strong, customer-driven service ethic. Having our own team at work for us -- just us, without demands on their time by other MUDs -- affords the best way we know to hold the line on costs without sacrificing the quality and service our customers deserve and expect.

Your Board of Directors understands the importance of anticipating water issues that may impact us in the future. We realize the obligation to do methodical long-range planning, and we undertake this process with input from qualified professionals and through ongoing liaisons with professional organizations dedicated to monitoring Texas and regional water concerns.

We want to extend our best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year, and invite you to contact us whenever you have a question about water services. We can carry out our responsibilities much more efficiently with regular input from our customers.

With sincere appreciation for your continued support,
The Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 Board of Directors

Some New Faces...



Fort Bend County MUD #25 Board of Directors...left to right, Richard Lewis, Secretary and Investment Officer; Jim Cupp, President; Keli Schroeder, Vice President; Bob Tomlinson, Assistant Vice President and Investment Officer; and new board member, Donald F. Hill, Assistant Secretary.



Karen Sims is the Billing and Collections Supervisor and comes to us with over 20 years experience in Water Operations Customer Billing.

Not pictured is **Christie Maeker**, Data Entry. Karen, Jolene and Christie are the ones to talk with for billing and problem resolution. Also, any requests for new service, service connection or disconnection, and for service transfers and reporting of leaks or meter problems go through this group as well.

David Gibson is the Accounting Coordinator and is responsible for managing the District's customer billing staff and department, as well as accounts payable activity and investment transactions.

Operations Staff:

Facility and plant maintenance, as well as any leaks or repairs, are handled by the operations crew: Larry Keller is the Chief Operator (licensed), and Allen Harrison is the plant operator (licensed). Larry and Allen handle plant maintenance, customer service inspections, backflow prevention inspections, etc. Shawn Hearon and Michael Bergeron are the field technicians responsible for repairs to District lines, meters and sewers.



Jolene Thigpen, Data Entry, also in Water Operations Customer Billing, has 15 years experience in billing and meter operations.

Meet Donald F. Hill...

Don and his wife of 29 years, Francine, have lived in the District for 15 years. They have four children and three grandchildren.

For the past 19 years, Don has been with Reliant Energy at the W. A. Parish power generating station. He also holds a Class D wastewater permit.

The District will benefit from his experience with wastewater training, operational equipment, pumps and generators.

Welcome aboard, Don. 💧

District Earns A Superior Water Rating From TNRCC

As a result of a recent sanitary survey and a review of operational records, it was determined by the Public Drinking Water section of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission that the public water system operated by and serving Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 meets the requirements for a **superior water rating**. The District was "thanked for its diligence and concern regarding the District's public water system" and has been authorized to erect signage which reflects this new rating.

Frequently Asked Questions About Your Water Bill

There have been many changes here at Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25, but the one thing that remains constant is the need for residents to pay their water bills on time, every time. We are fortunate to live in an area that is experiencing tremendous growth. With so many new residents, we thought that the first of a new year would be a good time to provide answers to some frequently asked questions about the very basics of our water service -- its cost and payment procedures.

Q. When is the bill due?

A. Payment for your water bill is due -- and must be in the District office -- by the 24th of each month.

Q. Where do I pay the bill?

A. For your convenience, we have four ways you can pay your water bill: 1. Bills can be paid in the District office, located at 18230 Old Richmond Road, between Voss and FM 1464 (on the sewage treatment plant site, between the subdivisions of Pheasant Creek and Summerfield); 2. You can save postage by dropping your payment in the drop box at the Pheasant Creek Food Mart (Texaco) at the corner of Old Richmond Road and Pheasant Creek Drive; 3. Mail your check or money order to Fort Bend County MUD No. 25, P.O. Box 2847, Sugar Land, TX 77487-2847 OR to 18230 Old Richmond Road, Sugar Land, TX 77487. **If you decide to use the drop box or mail your payment, you should do this in advance of the due date to ensure receipt in our offices by the 24th;** and 4. Take advantage of our new Direct Payment Plan.

Q. Where are you located?

A. Our temporary office -- two small trailers -- is located at 18230

Old Richmond Road, Sugar Land, Texas 77487. Ground was broken in December on the permanent office building.

Q. When does Fort Bend Country MUD No. 25 pick up payments from the drop box and post office box?

A. Pick ups are made daily from these locations, Monday through Friday, by 8:00 a.m.

Q. Who do I call if I have a problem with my bill?

A. Call 281-277-0129 during our regular office hours (8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday) and ask to speak with someone in the billing department who will handle your inquiry courteously and efficiently.

Q. What does the voluntary donation for "amb" mean?

A. The \$2.50 voluntary donation is a fee that is collected and for-

warded to the voluntary fire and ambulance service provider that responds to 9-1-1 calls within the District. If you do not wish to pay this fee, your account will be adjusted accordingly.

Q. What are the District's base water rates?

A. The District's base rates are listed in the Rate Order and can be reviewed in the District office or on www.waterdistrict25.com, our official web site. Please note that the Rate Order is subject to periodic revisions.

We appreciate your patience and understanding while we conduct our business in our temporary office trailers. Our new building should be finished by April 2001. Each call is very important to us and every customer will be given the best possible, personalized attention and service. ♣

Direct Payment Plan Now Available!

Bad weather and you don't want to leave the house? Run out of stamps? No more checks in your checkbook? No problem! We've made it easier than ever before to pay your water bill. All you have to do is sign up for the **"Direct Payment Plan."**

How does it work? Very well! With your authorization, payments for your water bill can now be drafted directly from your checking account and credited to your water service account.

Here's how to sign up...

1. Contact the District billing office at 281-277-0129.
2. Ask to speak to the billing supervisor.
3. Request that an authorization form be sent to you -- OR visit our website and print out the form that appears (location) www.waterdistrict25.com.
4. Complete the authorization form and SIGN IT.
5. Mail or fax the form to the address below:

Direct Payment Plan
Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25
18230 Old Richmond Road
Sugar Land, Texas 77478
Fax number: 281-277-0028.

That's all there is to it. No more worries about late payments or checks being lost in the mail! ♣

Groundwater Primer -- The ABCs of WATER

Around the world, water is becoming a hot news topic and, unfortunately, a major area of contention between countries and even among some of our United States. There has also been significant concern about drought throughout the Southwest and in other parts of the world.

Closer to home, in Harris and Galveston Counties, the Subsidence District has issued groundwater reduction mandates that impact some municipal water districts in the area. This mandate to reduce reliance on groundwater has prompted a search for alternate or surface resources that may offer a long-term supply of quality drinking water for the years ahead.

Sooner or later these issues will impact our District and it will take considerable planning to accommodate the adjustments that future rulings or groundwater reduction mandates may require.

In preparation for more widespread discussion of water issues by the local media and by your District officials, here is a glossary of water terms to keep for



handy reference. As interest in water issues intensifies, we invite your comments and questions -- as always. (See page 8 for various ways to contact us.)

Aquifer: An underground geological formation able to store and yield water.

Collection site: A stream, lake, reservoir, or other body of water fed by water drained from a watershed.

Condensation: The process in the hydrologic cycle by which a vapor becomes a liquid; the opposite of evaporation.

Confined Aquifer (also known as artesian or pressure aquifers): an underground geological formation where the groundwater is bound between layers of impermeable substances like clay or dense rock. When tapped by a well, water in confined aquifers is forced up, sometimes above the soil surface. This is how a flowing artesian well is formed.

Conservation: The use of water-saving methods to reduce the amount of water needed for homes, lawns, farming, and industry, and thus increasing water supplies for optimum long-term economic and social benefits.

Consumptive use: The use of a resource that reduces the supply without returning an equal amount. Examples include the intake of water by plants, humans, and animals and the incorporation of water into the products of industrial or food processing.

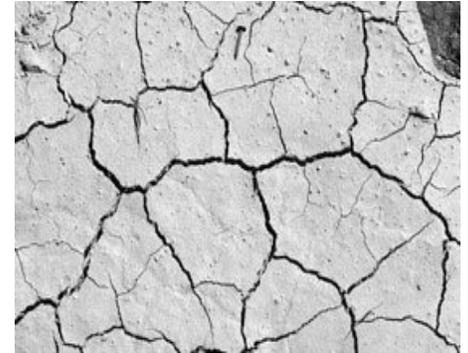
Contaminant: Any substance that, when added to water (or another substance), makes it impure and unfit for consumption or use.

Depletion: The loss of water from surface water reservoirs or groundwater aquifers at a rate greater than

that of recharge.

Discharge: An outflow of water from a stream, pipe, groundwater aquifer, or watershed; the opposite of recharge.

Drought: An extended period with little or no precipitation; often affects crop production and availability of water supplies.



Erosion: The wearing down or washing away of the soil and land surface by the action of water, wind, or ice.

Evaporation: The conversion of a liquid (water) into a vapor (a gaseous state), usually through the application of heat energy during the hydrologic cycle; the opposite of condensation.

Fresh water: Water with less than 0.5 parts per thousand dissolved salts.

Groundwater: Water found in the spaces between soil particles and cracks in rocks underground (located in the saturation zone). Groundwater is a natural resource that is used for drinking, recreation, industry, and growing crops.

Hydrologic cycle (also known as the water cycle): The paths water takes through its various states (vapor, liquid, solid) as it moves throughout the ocean, atmosphere, groundwater, streams, etc.

Impermeable layer: A layer of material (clay) in an aquifer through which water does not pass.

Continued next page

Municipal water system: A network of pipes, pumps, and storage and treatment facilities designed to deliver potable water to homes, schools, businesses, and other users in a city or town and to remove and treat waste materials.

Point source pollution: Pollutants discharged from any identifiable point, including pipes, ditches, channels, sewers, tunnels, and containers of various types.

Pollution: An alteration in the character or quality of the environment, or any of its components, that renders it less suited for certain uses. The alteration of the physical, chemical, or biological properties of water by the introduc-

tion of any substance that renders the water harmful to use.

Precipitation: The part of the hydrologic cycle when water falls, in a liquid or solid state, from the atmosphere to Earth (rain, snow, sleet).

Recharge: Groundwater supplies are replenished, or recharged, when water enters the saturation zone by actions like rain or snow melt.

Runoff: Precipitation that flows over land to surface streams, rivers, and lakes.

Soil: The top layer of the Earth's surface, containing unconsolidated rock and mineral particles mixed with organic material.

Storm drain: Constructed opening in a road system through which runoff from the road surface flows into an underground system.

Surface water: Water above the surface of the land, including lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, floodwater, and runoff.

Temporary wetland: A type of wetland in which water is present for only part of the year, usually during the wet or rainy seasons.

Wastewater: Water that contains unwanted materials from homes, businesses, and industries; a mixture of water and dissolved or suspended substances.

*Water Glossary
Continued on page 6*

Kids' Stuff...

Have you learned about the **Water Cycle**? Here's how it works...

Ever since the Earth was formed millions of years ago, water has been *recycling* itself. Water *evaporates*, forms clouds and comes back to earth as *precipitation* -- rain, snow or sleet.

The sun's energy causes water in lakes, rivers and streams to evaporate -- or to change from a liquid state to a vapor. This vapor creates clouds in the sky. Depending on the temperature and weather conditions, the water vapor comes back to earth as rain, sleet or snow. This precipitation "runs off" from the high places on Earth to the lower places, and some seeps into the ground where it is stored as *groundwater*.

Groundwater fills the spaces between the rocks and pieces of soil underground very much like water fills a sponge, and is stored underground in geological water systems called *aquifers*. Groundwater can also feed springs, lakes, streams and other *surface waters*. People drill for water and bring it to the surface for drinking, to water crops and other plants, and to enjoy for recreation. Once the water is returned to the surface, it begins the cycle of evaporation, forming clouds, and returning to earth all over again.

Since water is one of our basic requirements for life, it is important that we use this natural resource wisely and keep it free from pollution. 💧



City Announces Household Hazardous Waste Collection Date in Spring

Mark your calendars for an important springtime event. The City of Sugar Land will sponsor a Household Hazardous Waste Collection from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 31, 2001 at the Schlumberger parking lot, 121 Industrial Boulevard.

Residents may bring automobile fluids, garden chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, poisons, pool chemicals, tires, paint thinner, paint, spray cans, stain removers, solvents and cleaning products.

Items that will NOT be accepted include ammunition, explosives, industrial waste, medical waste, fireworks, flares, smoke detectors, radioactive materials, gas cylinders and trash.

If you plan to take advantage of this special "trash" event, here are some tips for preparing and transporting hazardous waste.

- Leave the product in the original container and identify it if the label is missing.
- Never mix products.

- Separate products by the type of waste and pack containers in boxes with dividers, if possible.

- Wrap bottles with newspaper to prevent breakage and spills.

- If the container is leaking, place it in a larger container.

- Place wastes away from children and pets when packing your vehicle.

Co-sponsors for this event include **Fort Bend Municipal Utility District 25**, along with Fort Bend County MUDs 41, 67, 68, 69, 106, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 117, and WCID No. 2 (Stafford). Corporate sponsors include the City of Sugar Land and Schlumberger. Residents will be asked for their zip codes to be eligible to drop off items at the event.

For questions about hazardous waste, call the City of Sugar Land's Solid Waste Division at 281-275-2450. To volunteer (must be 18 or older) for the event, call Keep Sugar Land Beautiful at 281-340-2064. 💧



Water Glossary

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Wastewater treatment: Any of the mechanical or chemical processes used to modify the quality of wastewater in order to make it more compatible or acceptable to humans and the environment.

Water (H₂O): An odorless, tasteless, colorless liquid made up of a combination of hydrogen and oxygen; a major constituent of all living matter.

Water quality: The chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water with respect to its suitability for a particular use.

Water quality standard: Recommended or enforceable maximum contaminant levels of chemicals or materials (such as chlorobenzene, nitrate, iron, arsenic) in water.

Watershed: The land area from which surface runoff drains into a stream, channel, lake, reservoir, or other body of water; also called a drainage basin.

Water table: The top of an unconfined aquifer; indicates the level below which soil and rock are saturated with water.

Water treatment plants: Facilities that treat water to remove contaminants so that it can be safely used.

Wetlands: Lands where water saturation is the dominant factor in determining the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal communities. Other common names for wetlands are sloughs, ponds, and marshes.

Xeriscaping: An environmentally friendly form of landscaping that uses a variety of indigenous and drought-tolerant plants, shrubs, and ground cover.

(Source: *The Groundwater Foundation.*)

HEY! It's COLD Out There!

The new year is already sending some chilly weather our way, with more forecast in the weeks ahead. Since this doesn't happen every year, it is easy to forget that more than our plants and pets need some special care when the thermometer dips into the freezing zone.

During prolonged cold snaps, with more than 36 hours of temperatures below 32 degrees, water pipes that pass through outside walls without adequate insulation may begin to freeze. This causes one of the nastiest of household calamities -- broken pipes that allow water to escape to cause amazing damage. Drips can spring up where you didn't even know there were pipes -- like over the hot water heater or along the bathroom wall.

Here are some common sense things you can do to minimize the risk of pipe damage...

1. Insulate your house. Reduce air leaks to keep heat in and cold out. Caulk or weatherstrip doors and windows. Pay special attention to outside walls where pipe are likely to be located -- near kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms -- and add insulation if possible.



2. When temperatures drop below freezing, leave cupboard doors under kitchen and bathroom sinks open to keep the pipes warm.

3. If you plan to be away during the winter months, ask a neighbor or family member to make a special house check if the temperatures take a nose dive. If you have taken care of winterizing basics, these spot checks will make sure nothing has gone wrong to cause a water leak to occur.



4. Keep pipes from freezing. Wrap the pipes in insulation made especially for water pipes, or in layers of old newspaper, lapping the ends and tying them around the pipes. Cover the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture. Do this for any pipes you can access that are near outside walls, mostly under sinks. Wrap the outside faucets and all exposed pipes, as well.

5. If you have an above-ground hot tub or spa, check the manufacturer's instructions for winterizing advice. Fortunately, cold spells don't usually stay around long enough to threaten in-ground pools, although it is a good idea to check your owner's manual for winterizing tips just in case.

6. If you have an irrigation system, turn off the water to the sprinklers at the main valve. Set the automatic irrigation controller to the "rain" setting, and turn on each of the valves to release pressure in the pipes. It is usually not neces-



sary to drain all of the water out of any irrigation components because in temperate climates like Houston, the ground doesn't usually freeze that deep. The above-ground equipment does need to be protected, however. Self-sticking foam insulating tape or tubes work well. Sprinkler system suppliers may offer additional advice or supplies to help your weatherizing process. Do make sure that the main shut-off valve for the system is "freeze proof."

7. When extremely cold temperatures linger and there is imminent danger of pipes freezing, let the faucets drip a little. This may waste water, but it may help prevent freezing damage. Know where the valve for shutting off the water coming into your home is located. As a last resort, you may have to shut off this main valve and drain all the pipes to keep them from freezing and bursting. If the pipes freeze despite all your efforts to prevent it, open faucets wide to allow for expansion of the frozen water.

When the pipes thaw, listen carefully for the sound of water running when the faucet is turned off. This could indicate a broken water line, and this should be reported to the District at once *if the break is outside the house*. A break inside is your responsibility to repair -- and the sooner the better!

A little planning and preparation can significantly reduce the risk of winter pipe damage. 💧

We Want to Hear From You...

Have you ever had a comment, question, or concern about your water or sewer service? Have you been curious about the construction taking place at the sewage treatment plant? Did you ever want more information about the growth within our District? Questions about your water bill? Do we have an adequate supply of water during "dry spells"? Will water and sewer service be available in case of a natural disaster?

There's a quick and easy way to find answers to all your water-related questions. Contact your Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25. We place a high priority on communicating with residents served by our District, so we have a number of methods in place for reaching your Board members any time:

1. World Wide Web

Visit us on the Internet! www.waterdistrict25.com. Learn about our Board meetings, what's on the agenda, and send us your comments right from our website. Residents may contact us at another direct-mail address:

fortbend.mud25@usa.net.

2. Snail Mail:

Mail your comments or questions to our Post Office Box -- Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25, P.O. Box 2847, Sugar Land, Texas 77487-2847.



3. Monthly Meetings:

Attend a District Board meeting -- your Board of Directors holds a public meeting the second Friday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

The meetings are currently be-

ing held at the offices of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P., First City Tower, 1001 Fannin, Conference Room No. 2710, Houston, TX 77002-6760. Please verify the meeting time and location by calling George Farland or the District office to ensure that no changes in date or location have occurred due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Board of Directors and our new management team work for YOU...each and every resident of our District. Please let us know how we're doing and what we can do to improve. We look forward to hearing from you -- each of you -- soon! 💧

Drop off your payments at: (1) The Pheasant Creek Food Mart (Texaco) at Pheasant Creek Drive and Old Richmond Road (drop box only; no cash payments accepted)

OR,

(2) The District offices at 18230 Old Richmond Road, Sugar Land, Texas 77478 (no cash payments accepted).



For service requests, billing questions or after hours emergency response, call 281-277-0129.



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