



WATERWORKS

USEFUL FACTS ABOUT YOUR WATER DISTRICT

Surface Water Conversion

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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,” (Source: Fort Bend County Subsidence District web site, 2002.) While a number of approaches have been implemented to accomplish this mission, one of the most important of these 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 (GRP) will mandate that well owners pumping 10 million gallons or more *per year* **reduce their reliance on groundwater 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 Fort Bend County Subsidence District

The Fort Bend County Subsidence District was created by the Texas Legislature in 1989 as a conservation and reclamation district (Act of May 26, 1989, 71st Leg., R.S., ch. 1045, 1989 Tex. Gen. Laws 4251). The Subsidence District’s purpose is to provide for the regulation of the withdrawal of groundwater to prevent subsidence that contributes to flooding, inundation or overflow of areas within the Subsidence District, including rising waters resulting from storms or hurricanes, and boundaries are defined as all the territory within Fort Bend county.

Although Fort Bend County had experienced only small amounts of subsidence prior to the 1980’s, several characteristics of the area raise concern about the potential for increasing subsidence in the future:

- ◆ Rapid growth
- ◆ Water supply dependent almost entirely on groundwater
- ◆ Proximity to significant water-level declines in Harris County.

As noted earlier, total water use within the Fort Bend County Subsidence District consists of 60% groundwater and 40% surface water. The surface water, however, is primarily used for manufacturing and agricultural uses. In addition to the moderate, but noticeable, amounts of subsidence, the heavy dependence of groundwater has resulted in declining water levels in wells in the aquifers.

Groundwater levels in wells drawing from the Chicot and Evangeline Aquifers in the eastern part of the Fort Bend County Subsidence District have

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Subsidence District... *Continued from page 1*

declined more than 150 feet from 1943 to 1977. These declines have resulted in increased operational costs to well users.

The Subsidence District's **Groundwater Management Plan** provides background planning information, descriptions of current groundwater regulatory practices and programs, and an overview of District administrative operations. That Document should assist regulated communities and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) in understanding the historical direction and proposed future objectives.



Residence impacted by subsidence. HGCSO photo

◆ **What is land subsidence?** Land subsidence is the loss of elevation of the land surface caused by the withdrawal of fluid.

◆ **What harm is there in subsidence?** As the ground sinks, large bowl shaped depressions form in the terrain. These depressions may begin with a subsidence of only a few inches but may be several miles across in size leaving changes that are not noticeable to the eye. However, the depression changes the existing water runoff pattern to a degree that excess water pools rather than running off. The greater the subsidence, the more likely the area will see increased flooding.

◆ **How can subsidence be stopped?** Moving towards the use of surface water from rivers, lakes, streams, and reservoirs and depending less on groundwater has proved an effective way to limit or stop land subsidence.

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 is the potential for 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. ■

Every 79 seconds an identity is stolen!

This year more than 500,000 Americans will be robbed of their identities, with more than \$4 billion stolen in their names. The FBI reports that identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America.

Most victims don't realize the theft occurred for several months or even years, and can spend anywhere from 6 months to 2 years recovering from the experience. Identity thieves feed off of your everyday transactions: writing a check at the grocery store, charging gas for your car...or by stealing your purse or wallet, your mail, by picking up a credit card receipt, and by going through your trash, just to name a few methods. Most

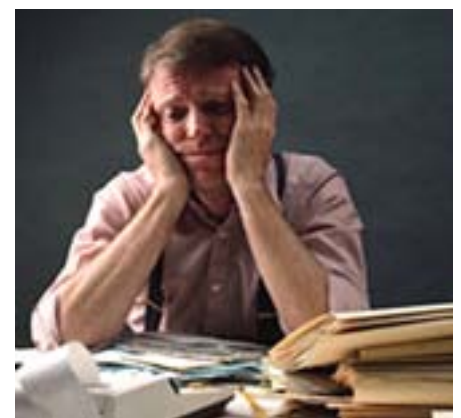
victims of identity theft suffer very little monetarily but resolving credit problems resulting from the identity theft can be time-consuming and frustrating.

■ **Protect yourself.** Make sure a security alert or victim statement is on file with credit bureaus.

■ **Inform creditors.** Contact each creditor with the fraud account and inform them that the account is fraudulent.

■ **Call the police.** File a police report and keep a copy of the report and/or the case number for creditors.

■ **Document all contacts.** Make notes of everyone you speak with and when; record names, department names, phone numbers.



■ **Understand the process.** Creditors have different methods for handling fraud claims. Confirm what exactly is expected from you, and find out what to expect from them. Ask for a document that states you are not responsible for the debt.

■ **Follow up.** Make sure every-
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FAQ ABOUT YOUR WATER BILL

Residents have frequent questions about their water and sewer bills. Here are the most frequently asked questions:

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.** The bill is considered past due if **received in the District office after the 24th** of the month and is subject to late fee. If the water is disconnected, a reconnect fee of \$ 50.00, PLUS \$ 75.00 DEPOSIT IF NONE IS ON FILE. Receipt of a new bill does not extend the due date of a previous, past due balance. Service is subject to termination due to unpaid past due balances.

Q. What if I don't receive my bill?

A Bills are mailed to all customers monthly. The District is not responsible for errors that may occur due to problems with delivery of mail. You are responsible for ensuring your bill is paid in a timely manner.

Q. What if my payment becomes lost and never received by your office?

A Again, the District is not responsible for payments lost in transit (to include payments lost in the mail and/or losses associated with online transactions).

Q. What if the bill is paid after the 24th?

A You will incur a \$10.00 late fee for any balance that is not paid by the 24th.

Q. Where do I pay the bill?

A For your convenience, there are five ways and/or methods available to pay your bill:

1. Bills can be paid in the **District office**. The District office is located at 18230 Old Richmond Road, between Voss and FM 1464 (on the STP site, between the sub-divisions 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 to Fort Bend County MUD #25**, P.O. Box 2847, Sugar Land, TX. 77487-2847.

4. Use the District's **free ACH service!** It's quick, and easy and ensures your payment is made even if you're out of town.

5. If you have a checking account, you can **write/issue a check online**/make your payment online by going to www.waterdistrict25.com, click on web pay online and follow the instructions (checks only for now; credit card payments will be accepted in the



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, 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!

near future).

If you decide to use the drop box or mail your payment, you should mail or drop off in advance of the date due to insure receipt in our offices by the 24th.

Q. Where is the District located?

A The address is 18230 Old Richmond Road, Sugar Land, TX. 77478.

Q. When does the District pick up payments from the drop box and post office box?

A Payments at the post office and the drop box are picked up daily, Monday – Friday, by 7:15 a.m.

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

A Call 281-277-0129, ext. 109, 105, 112 and speak with someone in the billing department.

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 office. It's free to District customers, the payment is an electronic transfer of funds, and your water bill account is credited the same day funds are debited from your account.

Water Conservation is Everyone's Business!

In Texas, our conventional fresh-water supplies are already 75 to 80 percent developed. That's why the more efficient use of our precious water resources through water conservation and reuse makes economic sense, both to preserve and extend limited water supplies and to save Texans real money.

The biggest potential saver is you, the water customer. Consider that even a 10 to 15 percent reduction in personal water use can save Texas' water and sewer ratepayers billions of dollars over the next 50 years. The effort to conserve water must begin now, however, with everyone's participation and support.

Here are some ways to save both water and money at home:



1. For an investment of \$10 to \$20, homeowners can install two **low-flow shower heads**, place dams or bottles in the toilet tank, install low-flow aerators on the faucets, and repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets. This could save the average household 10,000 to 25,000 gallons each year for a family of four, and would pay for itself in less than a year! Even more savings can be realized if good outdoor water conservation is practiced for the lawn and garden.

2. When building a new home or remodeling a bathroom, install a

new **low-volume flush toilet** that uses only 1.6 gallons per flush.



3. Test toilets for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring to the water in the toilet tank, but do not flush the toilet. Watch to see if the coloring appears in the bowl within a few minutes. If it does, the toilet has a silent leak that needs to be repaired.

4. Use some type of **toilet tank displacement device** to reduce the volume of water in the tank, but still provide enough for flushing. (Bricks are NOT recommended because they eventually crumble and could damage the working mechanisms.) Displacement devices are not recommended with new low-volume flush toilets.

5. Do not use hot water when cold water will do. Period.

6. In the kitchen...

■ Scrape the dishes clean instead of rinsing them before placing them in the dishwasher.



stopper in the sink — for washing and rinsing pots, pans, dishes, and cooking implements rather than turning on the water faucet each time a rinse is needed.

■ Only run the dishwasher with a full load. This will save water, energy, detergent and money.

■ Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator. Running water from the tap until it is cool enough to drink is wasteful.

■ Use a small pan of cold water when cleaning vegetables rather than letting the water run over them.

■ Use less water for cooking. Not only does it save water, but also food is more nutritious when the vitamins and minerals are not “boiled” out of them and poured down the sink with the extra water.

■ Always keep water conservation in mind. Avoid doing wasteful things like making a huge pot of coffee if you're only going to drink one or two cups, or even throwing away a glass full of ice after it cooled a few swallows of water. These things may not seem like much, but they add up over time.



7. In the Laundry...

■ Did you know that 32 to 59

gallons of water are required for each washing machine load? Wash only full loads of clothes when using your washing machine.

- Use the lowest possible water level setting on the washing machine.

- Use cold water whenever possible. This saves energy, too, and conserves the hot water for other uses. This is also better for most of today's fabrics.

8. Appliances and Plumbing...

- When purchasing new appliances, check the water requirements of various models and brands. Some use less water than others.

- Check water line connections and faucets for leaks. A slow drip

can waste as much as 170 gallons of water EACH DAY, or 5,000 gallons a month. This will increase your water bill.

- Repair leaky faucets promptly. It is easy to do, it costs very little



and can make a substantial savings in your water bills.

- Make sure that the line from the water meter to your house is free of leaks. To check, turn off all indoor and outdoor faucets and water-using appliances. The water meter should be read at 10 to 20 minute intervals. If it continues to run or turn, a leak probably exists and needs to be located.

- Insulate all hot water pipes to reduce the delays (and wasted water) experienced while waiting for the water to heat up.

- Set the thermostat on the hot water heater at a reasonable level. Extremely hot settings waste water (because it takes some extra cold water to make it usable) and energy and can even cause minor burns. ●

Stolen Identity!

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thing a creditor/credit bureau has requested is received. Follow up call or send a letter for confirmation.

- **Review reports regularly.** Obtain a copy of your personal credit report several months after "the case is closed".

- **Don't throw away files.** Keep all notes and correspondence in an accessible file in case they are needed in the future.

Here are some resources that you may find useful if this situation ever happens to you...

RESOURCES:

Credit Bureau Fraud Departments:

- **TransUnion**

Fraud Victim Assistance Dept.
Phone: 800-680-7289
Fax: 714-447-6034
P.O. Box 6790
Fullerton, CA 92834

- **Equifax Credit Information Services**

Consumer Fraud Division
Phone: 800-525-6285 or:
404-885-8000
Fax: 770-375-2821
P.O. Box 740256
Atlanta, GA 30374

- **Experian**

National Consumer Assistance
P.O. Box 9530
Allen, TX 75013
Phone: 888-397-3742

- **Government agencies:**

- Federal Trade Commission
Phone: 877-438-4338

- U.S. Postal Inspection Service
www.usps.com/postalinspectors

- Social Security Administration
Phone: 800-772-1213

- **To report the fraudulent use of your checks:**

- **CheckRite**

Phone: 800-766-2748

- **ChexSystems**

Phone: 800-428-9623 or
800-328-5121

- **CrossCheck**

Phone: 800-552-1900

- **Equifax** Phone: 800-437-5120

- **National Processing Co.**

Phone: 800-526-5380

- **SCAN** - Phone: 800-262-7771

- **TeleCheck**

Phone: 800-710-9898 or
800-366-2425. ●



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 Galveston, and Fort Bend Counties, the Subsidence Districts have issued groundwater reduction mandates that impact some municipal water districts in the area. This mandate to reduce reliance on groundwater will require us to contract for surface water resources that will offer a long-term supply of quality drinking water for the years ahead.

In preparation for more widespread discussion of water issues by the local media and by our area residents, here is a glossary of water terms to keep for handy reference.

Water Glossary...

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.

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 introduction 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.

Subsidence: the lowering in elevation of the surface of land by the withdrawal of groundwater.

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



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, taste-

less, 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; courtesy of the North Harris County Regional Water Authority, WATERLINES.*)

DISTRICT NEWS!

DISTRICT TAX RATE REDUCED!

Fort Bend Co. Municipal Utility District No. 25 has set its 2002 tax rate at \$0.90 per \$100 of assessed value. The \$0.90 tax rate represents a decrease in taxes for the sixth 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 have 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 Assessments of the Southwest, at 281-482-0216 or by e-mail: aswtommy@swbell.net.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU...

The Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 wants to hear from you! Your concerns, kudos or complaints regarding the service provided by the District -- or any other comments you wish to share -- are important to us. This input is taken very seriously as it alerts us to emerging issues and problems and helps the Board make informed decisions.

We have a number of methods in place to allow you quick and easy access to your Board of Directors anytime during the year...

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 -- 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

Remember, the Board of Directors works for YOU...each resident of our District. Please let us know how we're doing and what we can do to improve. We need your input and opinions to make sure that our residents continue to get the highest level of service.

Let's all work together to make our District even better!

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



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