

**Municipal Utility District No. 18**  
**Newsletter**  
**October 2008**

Your Directors of MUD 18 would like to report to you on several topics important to the district.

**Board Membership:**

MUD Board members are public officials elected by property owners who reside in the district and are registered voters. The current members are:

Lou Tichacek	President	597-7010
Bill Newsom	Vice-President	597-6839
Linda Pierce	Treasurer	597-5463
Roy Champagne	Secretary	597-8786
Joe Constantino	Assistant Secretary	597-8029

Our regularly scheduled monthly meetings are the 3rd Tuesdays. Meetings are open to the public. The agenda is posted on the message board in the breezeway entrance to the CC Grill near the Pro-shop.

**2008 Tax Rate:**

In 1995, the MUD 18 tax rate was \$0.8317. The District's tax rate has been reduced consistently since then. The Board is pleased to continue this trend with another decrease. At the recent September meeting, the Board adopted a reduction in the current tax rate of \$0.490 to the **new rate of \$0.450** per \$100 of assessed valuation. Included in this rate is a maintenance tax component of \$0.10. Our tax bills are set partly by this rate and also by what the Montgomery County Appraisal District (MCAD) declares as the official taxation value for our homes. MCAD mailed proposed valuations to homeowners in May giving property owners the option to protest their values. The tax payment will be due in January 2009.

**Hurricane IKE Report:**

We were able to maintain water and sewer services throughout the period of power outage following the storm. When power is lost in the area, diesel generators at the water plant and the waste treatment plant provide adequate, but diminished service capacity. These generators performed well in the longest power outage ever experienced in Bentwater. Behind the scenes, Hays Utility delivered extraordinary effort to keep our systems working, in spite of inconsistent phone service from area land and cell phones. We appreciate the patience and cooperation of our customers in conserving water use and minimizing flushing to help relieve the demand on these services.

Our biggest challenge was keeping the 27 lift stations in the sewage treatment network from being overwhelmed. When power is out, these lift stations are operated by a portable generator. During this lengthy power outage, bottlenecks developed and extra equipment was brought in to relieve the problems. We apologize to any customers who were inconvenienced and frustrated by these issues. We encourage all residents to ensure that they have a functioning "pop off" device in their sewer line. This is especially important for those with shower/tub/toilets below the level of their street curb. If you have any questions, please consult your plumber or local plumbing suppliers.

Based on the experience with IKE, we are reviewing our emergency policies and procedures. Most importantly, we are reviewing cost effective investments that will improve our ability to perform in future extended outages.

**Curbside Recycling Comes to Bentwater:**

In response to growing interest in the community, the Board has arranged with Waste Management Systems (WMS) for recycling services starting in December. The benefits of recycling to all of us include preserving natural resources, saving energy, contributing to cleaner air and water, and requiring less land fill space. There will be no extra charge to customers for this service at this time, as it will be a part of the current water and sewage fees.

Recycling has become a profitable business that enables WMS to offer services at a modest cost and increased convenience to customers. All recyclable materials are collected in a single household bin

(eliminating the hassle to separate) that will be picked up weekly by WMS. WMS compacts the materials into "bundles" that are sold to downstream recycling companies that use single stream processing technology to separate the materials into market ready raw products. These process and market improvements for recyclables and the growing interest in Bentwater combine to make the time right to bring curbside recycling to Bentwater. *Enclosed with this newsletter is important information from WMS about the service.*

#### **Future Water Supply – Conservation is Critical:**

Conversations and planning are in progress for long term water supply across the state, including Montgomery County. The issues are complex and difficult. MUD 18 and other area Districts have joined with the San Jacinto River Authority in the development of a Water Resources Assessment Plan (WRAP). Ultimately, the WRAP will result in a plan to reduce the dependency on ground water. Much work needs to be done before all the options are defined and decisions are made.

What is known is that water conservation is critically important. We encourage everyone to be mindful of reducing your water usage as we meet the challenge of long term supply. We expect the cost of water will increase due to fees that share the costs of alternative water supplies to the extended area. We will keep you informed as this work continues.

At this point in time, it appears that MUD 18 will continue to use underground water to service the district. In a few more years, we will need a new water well and additional treatment facilities to produce additional domestic-quality water. The District's engineer has completed the design for the District's second water plant. This plant will be located south of FM 1097 adjacent to the fire station. The plant will be built when the growth of Bentwater supports the need. Bonds will be sold for these future facilities.

#### **Facilities Maintenance and Improvements:**

MUD 18 annually updates a 5 Year Capital Improvements and Replacement Program which sets priorities for replacement and renovation of our older facilities. Some current examples include:

1. The District's storm drainage system is being improved in instances where increased development has created drainage problems in heavy rains.
2. As lift station pumps become maintenance issues, they are being replaced with improved technology. Improved odor control is also being added as needed.
3. Stationary natural gas generators have been designed for two lift stations that are most vulnerable during an extended power outage. These generators will be installed in 2009.
4. We have begun a 3 year plan to upgrade residential water meters to improved electronic meters. Upgrades will be phased in giving priority to older meters. New connections will be made with the new meters.

#### **Housing Report for Bentwater:**

There are currently 50 homes under construction, 12 of which are by contractors who intend to find buyers. Seven other homes have been approved for construction, but not yet started. Adding all these to the currently built homes brings the total to 1643 homes. In September 2007, the number of total homes was 1581.

#### **Need to report a Problem?**

If you have any problems, such as a water leak, sewer odor, discolored water, open manholes, etc., call:  
Hays Utility Service  
936-588-1166

They have someone in Bentwater everyday, seven days a week. They can and will respond 24 hours a day. Their general office hours are from 8:00AM to 4:30PM Monday through Friday.

Sincerely,

Your MUD Board