

Municipal Utility District No. 18
Newsletter
February 2009

Wastewater Treatment Plant Completion:

The expansion of our WTP is essentially operational with final completion scheduled for March 2009. The project not only added to our capacity, but has provided a replacement of the UV treatment system with a safe and cost effective chlorine treatment process. The expanded plant is operationally more efficient with lower energy requirements. Among the final steps in completion will be the installation of a new fence around the property and the planting of mature trees along the western boundary of the facility. We were able to get good pricing for these trees from Environmental Design, the same company handling the Country Club's reforestation of the golf courses.

Backup Generators and Increased Fuel Storage – Post IKE Planning:

Based on the experience with hurricane IKE, the District's engineers have developed recommendations that would significantly improve our ability to maintain water and sewer services during events of extended power outages. Our biggest challenge during the longest power outage Bentwater has ever experienced was keeping the 27 lift stations in the sewage treatment network from being overwhelmed. During previous outages, these lift stations have been operated sufficiently by a portable diesel generator. During this lengthy outage, bottlenecks developed and extra equipment was needed to relieve the problems. The Board has approved the installation of stationary natural gas generators at several lift stations that are the most problematic in keeping the network operational. These natural gas generators will be installed prior to the 2009 hurricane season. Installing gas generators at all our lift stations is neither necessary nor cost effective. As development continues and lift station congestion is identified, our strategy is to install additional generators as warranted.

While we did not run out of diesel fuel shortage, we came very close. Our water and waste treatment plants are backed up with diesel generators. The Board has approved the installation of an additional diesel storage tank to double our storage capacity. We will continue to review cost effective investments that could improve our ability to perform in future extended outages. Additionally, the Board is reviewing our emergency policies and procedures.

Update on Groundwater Conservation Planning:

The Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (LSGCD) has the responsibility to plan for long term water supply for Montgomery County. To meet this objective LSGCD set a requirement that all large-water users – those that use at least 10 million gallons of water annually – to participate in a Water Resources Assessment Plan (WRAP). MUD 18 is one of the 201 large water users in the county. In mid 2008, your Board decided, along with 198 of the other large users, to join with the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) in the development of a joint Water Resources Assessment Plan (WRAP).

The SJRA has recently completed the next phase of its joint WRAP. It proposes to construct a regional surface water treatment plant and distribution system to provide drinkable surface water in Montgomery County. The proposed water plan has been prepared to comply with LSGCD rules requiring Montgomery County's large groundwater users, including Bentwater to collectively reduce their reliance on groundwater by 30% by 2015. The purpose of the rule is to reduce the pumping of groundwater to stop water level subsidence in the aquifer.

The SJRA plan includes a surface water system to be completed in phases between 2015 and 2045 costing a total of \$2.5 billion. The project would initially provide treated water from Lake Conroe to high density areas along the IH 45 corridor between Conroe and the Woodlands and would ultimately provide surface water to most of the developed county. The project is estimated to initially (Phase I) add \$2 per 1,000 gallons of water used to water bills throughout the county. Based on the 2007 water use, the fee would increase monthly water bills in Bentwater by an average of \$31/month. Your MUD Board is engaged in the discussions and will make every effort to look after the best interests of the District. *Dockline*, a monthly publication delivered to residents, includes status reports by the SJRA and LSGCD. Reading the reports is a convenient way for you to stay informed. **We encourage everyone to be mindful of reducing your water usage as we meet the challenge of long term supply.**

Water Conservation Starts on Our Lawns:

Our grass and shrubbery are mostly dormant this time of year. Have you adjusted your lawn irrigation system accordingly? In Bentwater, 75% to 80% of our water usage feeds our irrigation systems. Too often, we are over watering, sending large amounts of wasted run-off going down the street and into the storm drains. Some suggestions that can save our water supply and save you money:

- If your irrigation system has a water sensor, check to be sure it is still functioning. If not, take steps to replace it or repair it. If you do not have a sensor, consider adding one to your system. This may be

the most important step you can take to avoid watering when Mother Nature has given us rain. And it will save you money on your water bill.

- Water deeply versus frequently. Healthy and properly irrigated lawns require no more than one inch of water per week during the summer months. How much water are you putting on your lawn each week?
- Check your irrigation system timers. Have you reduced the running time since summer months?
- It's best to water in the early morning hours (3 to 5am) for maximum effectiveness. If you choose to install or upgrade to a new irrigation system, consider low output sprinkler heads, bubblers, or drip irrigation systems.
- Mulch in flower beds and landscape areas will help hold moisture and cut down on water needed to keep plants healthy.
- When purchasing plants, choose varieties that do not require frequent watering.

We encourage all residents to be aware of your water usage patterns. Your monthly bill from MUD 18 provides usage information. Doing so may save you money. It will also help our community be conscious of water conservation opportunities. As our water becomes scarce, the price will go up. Conservation will save you money.

Recycling, Reducing, Reusing:

Curbside recycling in Bentwater began in early December. Since that time, the Board has received much positive feedback from the community. Many residents are noticing a significant reduction in their landfill trash. Did you know that:

- **Recycling pickup is only on Fridays.** Two separate pickups are scheduled for Fridays – one truck for recycling material and the other for regular garbage.
- **Please - at this time, no glass can be accepted.**
- Corrugated cardboard boxes are recyclable. Waste Management requires that these boxes be “broken down” and made to lay flat for pickup.
- The energy saved from ONE recycled can will operate a TV for 3 hours.
- Recycled aluminum requires 95% less energy than new aluminum made from bauxite ore.
- For every 2000 pounds of newspaper, magazines and catalogues we recycle, 17 trees are saved. And landfill space is significantly reduced.
- The recycling process creates more jobs than incinerators or landfills.
- We can each make a difference.

Fire Hydrant Maintenance:

We thank you for your patience during the recent flushing and servicing of our fire hydrants. This work is done bi-annually as part of our preventive maintenance procedures. No significant issues were identified.

Housing Report for Bentwater:

There are currently 39 homes under construction, 8 of which are spec homes. Eight additional homes have been approved for construction, but not yet started. Adding all these to the currently built homes brings the total to 1664. In April 2008, the number of total homes was 1635.

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.

Meetings Open to the Public:

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.

Sincerely,

Your MUD Board:

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