

**Municipal Utility District No. 18**  
**Newsletter**  
**November 2009**

**2009 Tax Rate:**

At our September meeting, your **MUD 18 Board adopted a reduction in the tax rate from \$0.45 per \$100 of assessed valuation to \$0.44.** 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. You should have received your 2009 tax bill by now. Our tax bills are set partly by the rate and also by what the Montgomery County Appraisal District (MCAD) declares as the official taxation value for our homes. The tax payment is due in January 2010. We have been advised by our tax collector that Texas State law requires us to offer e-checks for payment of tax bills. **Customers that use e-checks should be aware that they may begin incurring extra fees charged by the financial processing agent(s).**

**Response to Water Conservation Measures:**

During this summer's drought, we were forced to issue guidelines for voluntary restraints on water usage. We appreciate the efforts many residents made to comply with the guidelines. While the drought was not welcome, it was an opportunity to learn more about our electronic sprinkler systems. **We thank those of you who took extra steps to adjust the frequency and duration of your systems.** We observed the positive impact of your efforts in the daily pumpage levels during this period.

However, we still have a long way to go in using our precious water resource wisely. On the hottest day of the drought, we pumped 2 million gallons per day, twice the average demand in December. **Both wells saw a significant drop in water level during this period -- an estimated 30 foot drop.** We will do testing in February to learn how much recharge effect we will get during the winter months.

**We estimate during summer months, 80% of the water demand is used for lawn irrigation; 60% in the off season. Studies suggest that 50% of this water is not used effectively. It is a fact that our lawns do not need this much water.** Now that we are experiencing frequent rain showers and cooler weather, has your sprinkler continued to operate as usual? If you have not already done so, we encourage you to adjust your system in response to your lawn's lower water requirements. Take steps to ensure your rain sensor is working. If you do not have a rain sensor, we encourage you to install one. A working rain sensor can cut 45% of water usage in one month. If you will be out of town, please arrange for someone (e.g. yard service, neighbor, friend) to adjust your system for wise use of water. **Study the water conservation insert included in this newsletter for ideas on how you can save water – which also saves you money.**

The Board has asked Hays Utility to do an analysis of water usage in Bentwater to help residents develop a better sense of their water consumption. We expect to be able to publish a chart that shows a frequency distribution of household water usage in intervals from highest to lowest. You will be able to use your rolling 12 month usage currently printed on your water bill to gauge where you fit in the overall distribution. Look for this information as an insert in an upcoming bill. We encourage you to review the current rate structure (printed on your water bill) to see how your water usage determines your monthly bill. As our water becomes scarce, the price will go up.

To help educate our Bentwater community in water conservation methods, the Bentwater Civic Association, the Property Owners Association and MUD 18 have joined together in a project to demonstrate methods and concepts to conserve residential water consumption in Bentwater. You will be hearing more about this project in the upcoming months.

**Coming soon - MUD 18 Website:**

We are pleased to announce that MUD 18 will have a web site available for your use before the end of the year. We expect the website will be a convenient and timely source of information: garbage pick-up schedule; contact info for Hays, Waste Management and Board members; helpful information on water conservation, recycling and hurricane preparedness; previous newsletters for reference; tax rate information, etc. For those who want more information on MUD 18, you will have access to topics such as background on our bond rating, our financial policies, meeting agendas and minutes. The web site will also give us the exciting capability to send out timely e-blast messages to our customers with information related to weather events, service interruptions or other time critical information.

## Five Year Plan:

The Board manages a Five Year Plan to prioritize capital improvements and repairs. Some of the projects currently underway or planned within the next year include:

1. Scheduled Maintenance on Water Well # 2. Starting in December, one of our water wells will be taken out of service for planned preventive maintenance. The well will be back in service no later than February. This work is part of our long term facilities maintenance plan; not related to the drought this summer. Next year, the other well will be taken out of service for similar maintenance.
2. Continue installing natural gas generators on selected lift stations. Currently 6 new generators are online. Landscaping will soon be planted around these lift stations so the sites will be more attractive. Five additional lift station generators will be installed over the next several months. With backup power provided to these lift stations, the remaining lift stations can be kept functioning using operational backup procedures.
3. Continue a multi-year plan to replace water meters with improved electronic models.
4. Provide all weather road access to selected equipment
5. Installation of water plant controls to allow more efficient operation.
6. Installing waterline interconnects at 2 locations that had no backup routing for water line redundancy.
7. Drainage improvement projects

## Recycling, Reducing, Reusing:

Curbside recycling in Bentwater began in early December 2008. A recent survey by Waste Management found that we have an average of 963 households participating, equivalent to 61% of Waste Management's customers in Bentwater. This is up by 21% since an informal survey was made in early spring. These numbers are considered good for a community who has had recycling less than one year. We encourage all residents to give it a try!

Some of our residents have found the recycle bins are not large enough to hold one week's worth of material. The capacity of the initial container provided by Waste Management is 18 gallons. Additional 18 gallon containers can be purchased by the resident from Waste Management for \$7.25 by calling 713-686-6666. Alternatively, 18 gallon blue recycle containers can be purchased at Home Depot for \$11.99.

Some residents have reported difficulty in getting the bins to the curb. As reported in our last newsletter, Bentwater has been added to a list of future test communities for a new 64 gallon collection container on wheels. Since the implementation depends on Waste Management's completion of a new recycling facility in Houston over the next few months, a date for Bentwater has not yet been set. We will keep you advised.

## Housing Report for Bentwater:

There are currently 17 homes under construction. Two additional homes have been approved for construction, but not yet started. Adding all these to the currently built homes brings the total to 1690.

## Need to report a Problem?

**Don't assume the problem has already been identified or reported.** If you observe a water leak, sewer odor, discolored water, open manholes, alarms are sounding, or other problems, please help us by calling:

**Hays Utility Service @ 936-588-1166.**

Hays has 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 in the Country Club Board Room. 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