

# Splash

Metro Water  
Newsletter  
Spring 2010

## Native Plant Workshop

*If your green thumb is itching, now is the best time of the year to plant in the Sonoran Desert. To help you along, we are offering a workshop all about low maintenance and low water using plants. The Water Conservation Alliance of Southern Arizona (Water CASA) is presenting the workshop.*

*This event will be Saturday, March 20, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the Metro Water District office.*



*The workshop will discuss plants that thrive in the Sonoran Desert and provide your yard with variety and color. Learn how to select the best plants for your yard, and more importantly, how to maintain them with ease with the least impact on your water bill.*

*RSVP is required, and seating is limited to 40 people. To sign up for the workshop, there is a \$5.00 fee. Please RSVP at 575-8100. ■*

## Frank Fotta Retires

**Everyone at Metro Water wishes Frank Fotta well as he starts his retirement. Frank has been the Utility Division's Customer Service Supervisor. He has been the point-man for working with customers in the field whether there's a suspected leak or high usage.**

**Frank started working for Metro Water in October 1988 when Metro was still a private water company. He has seen all of the improvements made since Metro Water District was formed in 1992. He knows where all the system valves are located to turn water on or off, which is especially important when emergency work must be done right away. Frank has been our premier hydrant maintenance and repair technician. He has also overseen the meter replacement program, which improves the accuracy in recording how much water is being used.**

**Frank was honored as Metro Water's first Employee of the Year in 1997. He is a loyal and dedicated employee, who will be missed very much and whose expertise will be hard to replace. ■**



## NEW RTA PROJECTS

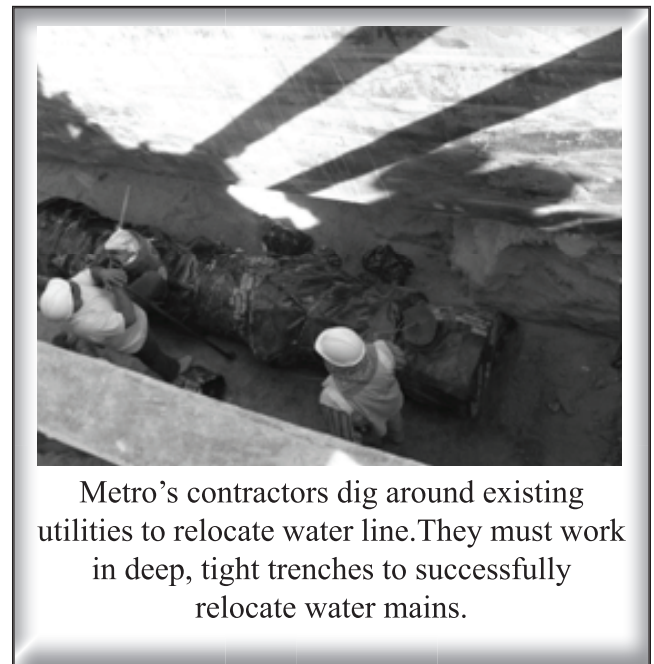
Metro Water is bracing itself for three more Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) projects that are currently scheduled for 2011. Like the current La Cañada Road project, Metro Water will be required to relocate its infrastructure that is in conflict with the new RTA roadway projects. The District must relocate at its own expense even though these water line relocations do not provide any benefit or improvement to Metro's water system.

The three upcoming projects include Magee Road expansion from Mona Lisa to La Cañada, La Cholla Blvd. expansion from Magee to Lambert, and widening La Cañada from Ina Road to River Road. These projects are currently scheduled to start in 2011. Metro is awaiting the road plan information from Pima County to determine the extent of waterlines that will need to be moved. Metro Water has encouraged Pima County to design the road improvements in such a way that would minimize waterline relocations.

Until the road designs are finalized, Metro does not know what the financial impact of these RTA projects will be. The La Cañada RTA Project has cost the District almost \$1.5 million for moving its waterlines. Last June, Metro's Board established a \$3.00 fee to cover the costs to relocate waterlines due to the RTA projects. The Board will review the fee as the exact costs for the three additional relocations become known. ■



Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) project sign for La Cañada Road: Ina Road to Calle Concordia



Metro's contractors dig around existing utilities to relocate water line. They must work in deep, tight trenches to successfully relocate water mains.

**CURRENT DROUGHT RESPONSE**

**STAGE 1 - ALERT**  
**STAGE 2 - WARNING**  
**STAGE 3 - EMERGENCY**  
**STAGE 4 - CRISIS**

## *La Cañada Road Woes*

### **Metro Water Gains New Customers**

Metro has 1,400 new customers through its acquisition of three water companies located in the southwest area of metropolitan Tucson. The Diablo, E&T, and Lazy B Water Companies were purchased through a loan agreement with the Water Infrastructure Financing Authority of Arizona (WIFA).

“We only considered the purchase after determining there was no negative impact to our existing customers,” said Jim Doyle, Chair of Metro’s Board of Directors. “After careful analysis, we concluded expanding our service area would benefit all of our customers by providing economies of scale and increasing our voice in regional water issues.”

The owner of the three water systems approached the District over a year ago about selling his assets. The area is not built-out and residential development is planned, which will add new customers. The overall service area will now be known as Metro-Southwest.

“We look forward to serving our new customers as well as to continue to provide quality service to our present customers,” said Mark Stratton, General Manager. The District will centralize customer service and billing inquiries at its Northwest office. Staff is rapidly becoming familiar with the new service area and its customers. ■

The current construction activity along La Cañada Road has created many challenges for Metro Water District. We are in the midst of relocating our water lines before the RTA road construction begins. Our construction work is happening the same time as various other utilities are relocating their lines.

In this maddening dash with many contractors performing utility work in the same area, the District anticipated inadvertent disruptions to our piping network along La Cañada Road. True to form, Metro staff has had to respond at least a dozen times to repair water lines that have been broken during this ongoing construction.

We want our customers to know, Metro Water is very sensitive to water outages caused by water line breaks. Unfortunately, even our best preparations cannot avoid the problems mentioned above. We do our best to restore service as quickly as possible. We appreciate everyone’s patience while this work is done. ■

#### **Board of Directors:**

**James O. Doyle, Chair**  
**James M. Tripp, Vice Chair**  
**Dan M. Offret, Member**  
**Bryan Foulk, Member**  
**Reb Guillot, Member**

#### *Upcoming Meetings:*

*February 8th*

*March 8th*



6265 N. La Canada Dr.  
Tucson, Arizona 85704  
520-575-8100 phone  
520-575-8454 fax

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TUCSON, AZ  
PERMIT NO. 455

Office Hours:  
Mon-Thur  
7:30-5:30  
Fri 7:30-Noon  
[metrowater.com](http://metrowater.com)

## ***POPULAR REBATE RUNNING OUT OF \$\$\$***

Metro Water's toilet rebate program has been so popular this year, the District has already expended the rebates' \$5,000 budget. The Board agreed to allow funds from the graywater/rain water harvesting rebate program to be used also for the toilet rebate program. However, once that additional \$5,000 (for a total of \$10,000) has been used, no more rebates will be given this fiscal year.

"We have had our toilet rebate program since 1995 but we have never seen before such a high interest from the residents," said Mark Stratton, Metro's General Manager. "We are pleased to encourage conservation; however, our funds for this rebate are limited."

To date, \$7,000 in rebates have been issued, which equates to 145 high efficiency toilets (1.28 gallons per flush) being installed this fiscal year. Metro offers a \$50 rebate for the first toilet installed and \$40 for an additional toilet. The rebate is only for High Efficiency Toilets (HET), which use no more than 1.28 gallons of water per flush. Since its inception, Metro Water has provided rebates for over 2,250 toilets.

In 2002, a rebate program for graywater harvesting and water harvesting system was created. Metro gives \$50 for materials used to install either type of system. ■

*Splash Newsletter ~ Spring 2010*