

RATE ADJUSTMENT APPROVED BY BOARD

Metro's Board of Directors approved a rate adjustment at the October 25, 2010 public hearing. The Board acted after listening to a staff presentation and hearing comments from the ten customers who attended. The new rates became effective November 1st for the Metro Main and Metro Hub service areas.

The Board took action to 1) secure necessary funds for debt retirement including maintaining adequate bond debt ratio requirements; 2) ensure overall operations and maintenance of existing facilities; and 3) continue addressing needed non-bond funded capital improvements.

The rates were restructured to cover more of the fixed costs that exist for the District no matter how much water a customer uses. This was done by increasing the base rate by \$2.47. To cushion that increase for customers who conserve and use a minimal amount of water, a new tier is proposed from 0 to 4,000 gallons that charges only \$2.00 per 1,000 gallons.

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Protect Your Groundwater

We all need to do our part to keep groundwater safe from contamination by human activities. One way to protect our groundwater is by proper use and maintenance of septic systems. Approximately 2,200 Metro Water customers dispose of sanitary waste into septic systems. If you own a septic system, here are some steps you can take to ensure its proper functioning:

- Conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Repair leaky faucets and use low-flow fixtures. Consider installing a graywater system so shower and laundry water can be used on your plants.
- Do not use the system as a trash can. Don't put hazardous chemicals, grease, medicines, disposable diapers, paper towels, paint, pesticides, or other items in it.
- Avoid planting trees or shrubs over and near your septic system. The roots may clog and damage the absorption field.
- Keep roof drains and other rain or surface water drainage systems away from the absorption field. Flooding can keep the soil from naturally cleansing the waste water.
- Be alert. Unpleasant odors, soggy soil, liquid waste flow, or excessive grass growth over the soil absorption area can be signs that the system is in need of service.
- Have the septic system checked every one to two years and pumped to remove accumulated solids every three to five years by a professional septic system contractor. By having the system pumped regularly will keep the system operating effectively and prevent it from failing.

For more information about septic systems, go to www.wellowner.org, and under "Well Basics" click on "Septic Systems." ■

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The 4th tier was modified by lowering the amount from 28,000 gallons to 25,000 gallons. This is to encourage greater water efficiency and conservation among higher water users.

The Board also approved two new fees. The first one is the Private Fire Service Line Fee, which is for non-metered lines used to ensure water is available for fighting fires. The fire system line is generally associated with commercial and multi-family customers. The second one is the Residential Dual Meter Fee, which would be for residential customers who opt to install a second meter to track specifically outdoor water usage, which is described further in the article below. ■



Dual Meter Program

Metro's Board approved implementing a dual meter option for the benefit of single family residents. The dual meter option allows for a resident to have installed a second meter following the main meter. This second meter would act as the irrigation meter, measuring the water flow used outdoors.

The dual meter option is in response to customers inquiries about how to reduce their sewer user fees charged by the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department. The sewer user fee is calculated on the three lowest water usage months, and Pima County uses the months of December, January, and February. The assumption is only indoor water use occurs in those months. However, if a resident can show that others months are lower in consumption or more precisely show the exact amount of indoor water consumption, the County will recalculate the sewer fees based on that information.

Customers would be responsible for installing all plumbing and connection to the irrigation system after the meter box. The customer would be responsible for paying for 5/8" meter, its installation, meter box inspection, and dual check valve, which would be a cost of \$380. There would be a monthly base rate of \$5.83, one-third the cost of the regular single family residential base rate.

Customers would need to calculate the estimated payback from lowering sewer fees with those installation costs of connecting to a dual or irrigation meter and paying the associated fees. Based on comments already received, some customers believe the dual meter option would help them reduce their monthly sewer fees.

For more information, please contact Tim Dinkel, Development Supervisor, at 575-8100. ■

Metro Water wishes you a joyous holiday season, filled with family, friends, love and peace.

CURRENT DROUGHT RESPONSE:

STAGE 1 ALERT

STAGE 2 WARNING

STAGE 3 EMERGENCY

STAGE 4 CRISIS

Board of Directors:

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

Winter Public Board Meetings (6:00 pm):

December 13, 2010
January 10, 2011
February 14, 2011



The 2009-2010 Board of Directors, pictured left to right are: Reb Guillot, Jim Doyle, Dan Offret, Bryan Foulk, and Jim Tripp. The District would like to thank Mr. Jim Tripp and Mr. Reb Guillot for their service, as their terms are ending. Their dedication to Metro Water has been instrumental in its development and success.

ELECTION RESULTS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Based on the results from the November 2, 2010 election, Metro Water's Board of Directors will have two new Board members and one returning Board member on January 1, 2011. Judy Scrivener and Helen Ireland were elected along with Jim Doyle, who was re-elected to serve a fifth term on the Board. The three directors will be joining Dan M. Offret and Bryan Foulk, who are both in the middle of their four-year terms on the Board.

Jim Doyle is the Ina Road Wastewater Plant Manager, where he has worked for 34 years. He served on the Northwest Fire District Board for 20 years. He has been a director of the Metro Board since 1994.

Helen Ireland is a Database Specialist of the Arizona Geological Society. She was employed by Metro Water from 2005 to 2008.

Judy Scrivener is Senior Special Staff Assistant for Pima County Wastewater Management. She served on the Metro Board from 2004 to 2008.

Jim Tripp and Reb Guillot's terms end this year. Jim Tripp has served off and on the Board since Metro Water's creation in 1992. He contributed much to ensure Metro had solid employees to meet the day-to-day operations of the District as well as supported the capital improvements to increase the reliability of the water system. Reb Guillot served twice on the Board. He was influential in helping the Metro-Hub service area be annexed into the District and helped to ensure capital improvements occurred in the Metro-Hub service area.

As a public water utility, Metro is governed by a five-member board, similar to a school or fire district. Directors must be a resident of the District. The Board meets regularly the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. The Board establishes rates, approves and oversees the budget, and sets policies for the District. ■



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Keep your pipes from freezing this winter!

As the cold months quickly approach, it is important to pay close attention to pipes subject to freezing. The District receives many calls during the months of December through March asking how to keep water pipes from freezing.

Many times frozen water lines can cause a complete blocking of water supply to a customer. Other times a section of a customer's dwelling may be without water. Finally, if the temperature is severe enough, water lines can burst, further compounding freezing pipe issues. In preparation, the District advises customers to protect their pipes by following a couple of helpful tips.

1 – Take a quick survey look for any water pipes exposed to the elements – typically, this would include the main pipe entering the house (located typically with the house valve), irrigation lines, backflow preventers and, if applicable, swamp cooler lines and swimming pool lines.

2 – Any water line that is normally exposed to the elements, where water does not constantly move, is a potential candidate for freezing. There are a variety of ways to protect exposed lines with pipe insulation. Pipe insulation is a low cost solution to protect pipes from freezing and can be purchased at local hardware stores. ■

Cool Water Saving Tips

With cooler weather, remember to change your watering practices. Most landscapes will do fine with less water during the cooler winter months. Too often plants receive more water than needed. The winter season is a great time to see how little water your plants really need. This means also changing your irrigation timer.

Consider low maintenance and low water use plants for your yard. Once established, they should be able to sustain themselves with what nature provides except during exceptionally hot periods. This also means you can enjoy your yard more and spend less time working in it. Check out Metro Water's website for plant ideas, or better yet, come visit our demonstration garden. ■

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