

## Irvine Ranch Water District Approves 2005-06 Operating Budget

The Board of Directors of the Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) approved the fiscal year 2005-06 operating budget at its June 27 meeting. The \$81.1 million budget will become effective July 1 and will provide the funds to serve potable water, reclaimed water and sewer service to customers during the coming year.

The budget includes an increase for both water and sewer rates. The average total monthly bill for the typical residential customer will increase from approximately \$25.91 to \$30.01 per month in the IRWD service area and from

approximately \$38.85 to \$44.95 in the former Los Alisos Water District (LAWD) service area. Despite the increases, IRWD's rates remain among the lowest in Orange County.

The increase in water rates is primarily attributable to cost increases imposed by external entities for water supplies and sewage treatment and disposal, as well as other uncontrollable factors such as chemical costs. This year there have been large increases in the fees paid both for local groundwater and also for imported water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern

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### Dialysis Patients, Fish Owners Take Note

## IRWD to Return to Regular Disinfection Method in Early July

If you've noticed a stronger chlorine taste or odor to the water recently, it's not your imagination. The good news, however, is that the odor will soon go away.

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) temporarily switched its method of disinfection in late May, using chlorine alone to purify the water. IRWD will return to its regular method of disinfection by using chloramines, a combination of chlorine and ammonia, beginning the week of July 11. It will take several days for the change to be noticed in all locations within the service area. Customers who had noticed a stronger taste or odor of chlorine should now see those changes gradually disappearing.

Water utilities that use chloramines must periodically change to using chlorine alone, known as "free chlorine." IRWD makes these routine changeovers during the summer months when most of the water used is local well water. Between October and April, IRWD uses mostly imported water from the Colorado River, which is purified by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) using chloramines. IRWD had planned to continue with free chlorine through the remainder of the well water season in early October. However, due to the heavier-than-normal rainfall this winter, MWD is making additional imported water available to local

agencies. By taking advantage of this regional program, IRWD will be able to turn off most of its wells and allow the Orange County Groundwater Basin to be replenished faster than would otherwise be possible during a typical well water season.

Dialysis patients and fish owners (whether in aquariums or ponds) need to be aware of this change in disinfectants so that they can make adjustments to the special treatment needed for their uses. These groups of customers are impacted because water comes into direct contact with the bloodstream during dialysis treatment and because fish take in water through their gill systems, also contacting their bloodstream. These groups need to ensure that they are taking appropriate steps to remove chloramines from their water. Other customers do not need to take any action as the water remains safe to drink and is treated according to both state and federal standards.

IRWD maintains a database of fish owners, dialysis patients and businesses whose manufacturing processes must change according to the type of disinfectant used in the water. Those customers receive mailed notices prior to such changes being made. If you'd like to be added to that database, please call (949) 453-5321 or e-mail [smithm@irwd.com](mailto:smithm@irwd.com).

*continued from page one...*

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California. While the Orange County Water District has increased the replenishment fees that local agencies like IRWD must pay to pump groundwater, that water source still remains much less expensive than water imported from the Colorado River and Northern California. In the coming year, IRWD will pay \$297.50 per acre-foot of groundwater compared to over \$472 per acre-foot of imported water. Approximately 65 percent of the potable water delivered in most of IRWD's service area comes from local groundwater wells.

In addition, IRWD's extensive use of recycled water helps to keep rates among the lowest in the county. Approximately 20 percent of IRWD's overall water supply now comes from recycled water, which is used for landscape irrigation, agriculture, toilet flushing in some commercial buildings and industrial uses such as carpet dyeing and cooling towers. Increased use of recycled water helps to minimize the amount of water that must be pumped from underground or imported from outside the area.

The IRWD base commodity water rate will increase from 83 cents per 100 cubic feet (ccf) to 88 cents per ccf. The water rate for the former LAWD will increase from \$1.30 to \$1.40 per ccf.

The ccf is the standard unit for water billing and is equal to 748 gallons. The fixed water service charge for most customers will increase from the current \$3.90 to \$5.45 per month. The former LAWD service charge will increase from \$4.60 to \$6.60 per month.

The differences in rates between the former LAWD area and the rest of the IRWD area can be attributed to LAWD's almost total reliance on higher-cost imported water to meet its potable water demands. Only about 5 percent of the potable water for the LAWD area comes from wells.

The IRWD sewer service charge will increase from \$8.35 to \$10 per month and the LAWD rate will increase from \$10.85 to \$13.15 per month. The increase to sewer rates results almost entirely from increased costs assessed to IRWD from the regional sewer agency to in part meet more stringent ocean discharge requirements.

Recycled water rates for landscape irrigation will increase from \$287.50 to \$345 per acre-foot, reflecting the District's policy of setting recycled water rates at 90 percent of domestic water rates.

Untreated water rates for agriculture irrigation will increase from \$307.50 to \$320 per acre-foot. Untreated water comes mostly from Irvine Lake, which is a local resource that is less influenced by increases from outside agencies.

## **Irvine Student Honored**

*Thanks to her creative ability, Irvine's own Casey Prottas (center) of Meadow Park Elementary School and her teacher, Mrs. Diane Zembal, (right) are going to Disneyland. Fifth-grader Casey produced a video about Orange County's water. Her project was chosen from among hundreds of entries because of its creativity and demonstration of what she learned at the 2005 Children's Water Education Festival. In the video, Casey demonstrated how she learned at the IRWD booth to make a model aquifer out of ice, ice cream, soda pop and sprinkles. She also collected and displayed a variety of recyclable items in our environment. Casey was the first place winner of the "What Did you Learn at the Festival" contest, earning two one-day park passes to both Disneyland and California Adventure, donated by Disney. Her teacher earned two passes also. The contest was co-sponsored by the Orange County Water District Groundwater Guardian Team, Disneyland Resort and the National Water Research Institute. Also pictured is Meadow Park Principal Nancy Bower (left).*



# Water Conservation Tips



- **Water your lawn when it needs it.** Check by stepping on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water. If it stays flat, it's time to water. Trees and shrubs generally require about half (some shrubs even less) of what the lawn needs. Check the moisture of the soil 3-6" below the surface. With our heavy clay soils, the surface will dry out in hours, but the clay remains moist beneath the surface.
- **Brown "hot spots" require extra care.** Don't turn up the water if you see a small patch of brown turf. It will mean over-watering other plants and will result in higher water bills. Instead, looked for blocked sprinkler heads or an uneven coverage. Adjust the irrigation system or water that spot by hand.
- **Water during the cool parts of the day.** Night and early morning are the best times to water. Also, avoid watering on windy days.
- **Don't water the gutter!** Position your sprinklers so water lands on the lawn or garden, not on paved areas. Watch for runoff-that is your sign that your lawn can no longer take in water at the rate your sprinkler is dishing it out. Try watering for a shorter period with repeat cycles.
- **Cycle your lawn clippings.** Mow frequently (every five to seven days) and leave the clippings on the lawn, if they are not too long. Build up should not occur if you have cut back on the fertilizer. The clippings will restore nutrients to the soil and slow water loss due to evaporation during the high temperature months. Consider raising the height of your mower blade, but make sure your lawn does not grow to block the sprinkler heads.
- **Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants.** Mulch will slow evaporation of moisture and discourage weed growth, too. Keep mulch a couple of inches away from trunks and stems.
- **Yellow leaves on shrubs may be a sign of over-watering.** More plants suffer from over-watering than from becoming too dry!
- **Check for broken sprinkler heads and for leaks in hoses and couplings.** Leaks outside the house can go unnoticed for a long time, especially when sprinklers are timed to go on when no one is watching.
- **Feed roses and annual flowers regularly for the best blooms.**

## SUGGESTED WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE FOR THE MONTHS OF JULY AND AUGUST

### WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE FOR SPRAY HEAD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

	Turf grass	Trees, shrubs, groundcover	Percent Option**
July & August	4-5 days, 2-3 cycles* of 3-4 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles* of 4 minutes	100%**

*\*By "cycling" your irrigation timer to turn on for the suggested number of minutes an hour apart, you reduce runoff and gain deeper watering and healthier root growth. Start with this weekly schedule and increase the times only if your plants show signs of stress. If stress occurs only in isolated areas, check your irrigation system before increasing the time.*

*\*\*Some irrigation controllers have a feature by which the watering time can be set by changing the percentage instead of specifically entering the days, cycles and minutes. If you don't have the instructions for your controller, check the manufacturer's website. Many controller manufacturers provide online access to the owner's manual.*

**IRWD OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAY:**

- Monday, September 5

**SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS**

Community service hours are available for all volunteer tree planting activities. For more information call (949) 453-5670 or visit their Web site at [www.shadetreepartnership.org](http://www.shadetreepartnership.org).

**SEA & SAGE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES**

- **Saturday, July 30 at 5:30 p.m. - Summer BBQ.** Bring the family and join Sea and Sage Audubon for this special occasion: dining under the stars, evening walks around the marsh, and a great program celebrating 100 years of Audubon. Tickets for the barbecue and program are \$15 for adults, \$7 for children under five. For more information, contact Nancy Kenyon at (949) 786-3160 or e-mail her at [kenyon@exo.com](mailto:kenyon@exo.com).
- **August 14 at 8 a.m. - Monthly Bird Walks.** Join Chris Obaditch for a monthly bird walk around the ponds of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary on the second Sunday morning of each month. Open to interested birders of all ages. Meet at the front door of Audubon House. Children under the age of 11 must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call Audubon House at (949) 261-7963.
- **Sunday, August 21 from 10 a.m. to noon - Butterfly Walk** at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Fee of \$5 for adults and \$3 for children ages 8-12. Includes handouts about local butterflies and how to make your backyard "butterfly-friendly." Pre-registration required. Call Trude Hurd at Audubon House at (949) 261-7963.
- **Naturalist training class.** The next nine-session class begins in the fall. Volunteers lead school children on tours of the wetlands twice a month and help them use binoculars and microscopes. Call Trude Hurd at (949) 261-7963 to reserve your space.
- **Directions to Audubon House and the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.** From the San Diego Freeway, exit on Jamboree and go south toward Newport Beach. At the first signal, Michelson, turn left. Continue on Michelson to the third signal which is Riparian View, turn right toward the Irvine Ranch Water District Operations Center. Follow the signs directing you to Audubon and the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

**IRVINE GARDEN CLUB - Monday, August 1 starting at 6:30 p.m.**

Cheryl Mitchell from Village Nursery will give a presentation on "Beneficial Insects for the Garden." The meeting will be held at the Irvine Ranch Water District offices, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine. The group meets the first Monday of the month. The goal of the club is to learn from one another and share gardening tips. For information call Carol Green (949) 551-3962.

**FAMILIES FORWARD**

The Families Forward pantry is in dire need of nonperishable food items. Food is needed now to insure that families in need continue to receive food. Items most needed include peanut butter, jelly, canned stew, tomato sauce, canned beans, canned meat, rice mix, plain rice, soup, and condensed milk. Donations may be delivered to 9221 Irvine Blvd., Irvine, 92618 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday. All donations are greatly appreciated and needed.

**ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF IRVINE**

New to Irvine and want to get involved? Recently retired and have some extra hours to fill? A stay-at-home mom who wants adult interaction? An empty nester who enjoys volunteering? A professional who wants to give back to her community? Be part of this nationally recognized, dynamic group of like-minded women - Assistance League® of Irvine. New members are welcome any time. Visit National Assistance League's Web site at [www.nal.org/home2.cfm](http://www.nal.org/home2.cfm). For further information call (949) 798-5020.

*As a service to residents we feature a calendar of community events in "Pipelines." Events or activities of community-wide interest can be included in the calendar on a space available basis. We reserve the right to print those items of most interest to the public. If your group has an event you would like to include, please submit written information **at least two months** prior to your event. Please include date, time, place, contact person's name and telephone number. Mail your request to: Public Affairs Department, IRWD, P.O. Box 57000, Irvine, CA 92619-7000, fax your request to (949) 453-0527, or e-mail your request to [velazque@irwd.com](mailto:velazque@irwd.com).*

The mission of Irvine Ranch Water District, a public agency, is to provide reliable, high quality water and sewer service in an efficient, cost effective manner and environmentally sensitive way that provides a high level of customer satisfaction.

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For comments, suggestions or questions, call (949) 453-5500.

**24 Hour Service  
(949) 453-5300**

Should you discover a disruption in your water service or other problems call the IRWD 24-hour emergency line and a representative will assist you.

Visit the IRWD Web site:

**[www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com)**

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