

Irvine Ranch Water District Pipelines

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / July 2006
Volume 2006 Number 07



2006 Photo Contest Winners

Manuel Martinez
First Place
Category: 18 & older



Laura Hughes
Second Place
Category: 18 & older



Jerry Santo Tomas
Third Place
Category: 18 & older

*See IRWD Celebrates 45th
Anniversary on back page...*

Irvine Ranch Water District Approves 2006-07 Operating Budget

The Board of Directors of the Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) approved the fiscal year 2006-07 operating budget at their June 26 meeting. The \$88.3 million budget became effective July 1 and will provide the funds to serve potable water, reclaimed water and sewer service to customers during the coming year.

Additionally, the consolidation of the Santiago County Water District (SCWD) with IRWD became effective July 1. SCWD customers will notice an immediate 20 percent reduction in commodity rates and the service charge on their monthly water bills.

The budget includes an increase for both water and sewer rates for the remainder of the IRWD service area. The average total monthly bill for the typical residential customer will increase from approximately \$30.01 to \$34.90 per month in the IRWD service area and from approximately \$44.95 to \$45.95 in the former Los Alisos Water District (LAWD) service area. Despite the increases, IRWD's rates remain

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e-Bill is Here!

Now you can receive and pay Irvine Ranch Water District bills online anytime...24/7. Anywhere...at work, home, or on the road! Schedule your payment in advance!

Irvine Ranch Water District, in partnership with CheckFree, is pleased to bring you an e-Bill service that offers the convenience of receiving and paying your water bill online, free of charge. When you sign up for e-Bill you will no longer receive a paper bill. Instead, you can simply go online and view your most recent bill. It has the same details as the paper version but instead of receiving it through the mail, you will view and pay it online. Not only will this save you time, but this optional service is FREE.

Here's how it works: once enrolled, every month we will send you an e-mail to let you know that your IRWD bill is available for viewing and payment. No more stamps to buy, checks to write, or envelopes to mail.

Save time by paying your bill on-line.

You can sign up through IRWD's Web site (www.irwd.com) or you may choose to sign up with an authorized e-Bill payment provider. Payment providers are typically a bank, credit union, brokerage or other portal that offers you the added benefit of being able to pay your bills online.

For more information please visit IRWD's Web site (www.irwd.com) or call IRWD Customer Service at (949) 453-5300.

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.

IRWD Board of Directors

Peer A. Swan, President
Douglas J. Reinhart, V.P.
Mary Aileen Matheis
Darryl G. Miller
John B. Withers

General Manager

Paul D. Jones II

Pipelines

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IRWD
P.O. Box 57000
Irvine, CA 92619-7000

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

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SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

• **Saturday, June 24 from 8:30 to 11 a.m.** - Shadetree Partnership Nursery Event on the UCI campus

• **Saturday, August 26 from 8:30 to 11 a.m.** - Shadetree Partnership Fifth Annual "Hot August" Nursery Event and Barbecue

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.

CITY OF IRVINE EVENTS

• **Saturday, September 16 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.** - **Fifth Annual Irvine Global Village Festival** - Celebrating Irvine's cultural heritage at the Bill Barber Park in Irvine (located adjacent to the Irvine Civic Center on Harvard between Barranca and Alton). Now in its fifth year, this multifaceted festival features international cuisine, live entertainment, children's activities, cultural exhibits, a community partners' pavilion, and world marketplace. One of the City's most popular events, the festival is a wonderful opportunity for people to learn, experience, and share the cultural traditions of their friends and neighbors. Festival admission is free. Food court tasting tickets are available for purchase at the event for \$1 each. For more information, call (949) 724-6606 or visit www.irvinefestival.org.

FAMILIES FORWARD NEWS

Families Forward is a non profit organization in Irvine dedicated to helping low income and homeless families in Orange County. Families Forward has a transitional housing program, a food pantry, counseling and career coaching. The food pantry serves up to 50 families per week and survives solely on donations from the community. Presently, the food pantry is extremely low on certain food items such as jelly, peanut butter, canned fruit, bottled juice, juice drinks, canned meats and rice. If you are interested in donating these items or organizing a food drive in your community, school, work or church please contact Families Forward at (949) 552-2727. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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.

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IRWD Approves 2006-07 Operating Budget

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 energy and repair and maintenance costs. There has been a large increase in the fees paid for local groundwater. 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 \$321.80 per acre-foot of local groundwater, compared to more than \$498 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 non-potable uses such as landscape irrigation, agriculture, toilet flushing in some commercial buildings and industrial uses like 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 88 cents to 91 cents per 100 cubic feet (ccf). The water rate for the former LAWD will stay the same at \$1.40 per ccf. The base water rate for the former SCWD will decrease from \$2.50 to \$2 per ccf. The ccf is the standard unit for water billing and is equal to 748 gallons. The fixed water charge for most customers will increase from the current \$5.45 to \$6.75 per month. The former LAWD service charge will increase from \$6.60 to \$7.70 per month. The fixed water service charge for the average customer of the former SCWD will decrease from \$19 per month to \$15.20 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 five percent of the potable water for the LAWD area comes from wells.

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- 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, look 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

JULY AND AUGUST

Turf grass: 4-5 days, 2-3 cycles* of 3-4 minutes

Trees, shrubs, groundcover: 2 days, 3 cycles* of 4 minutes

Percent option: 100%**

*Watering Schedule Notes: *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.



Winners of IRWD's marsh photo contest display their certificates at the Duck Club during the June 10 "Day at the Marsh" event. Other winning photos will be published in future issues.



More than 450 people attended the "Day at the Marsh," which observed IRWD's 45th anniversary. Highlights included marsh tours, environmental displays and a photo contest presentation.

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IRWD Approves 2006-07 Operating Budget

The IRWD and LAWD sewer service charges will be uniform at \$13.05 per month. The uniform rate was anticipated when the districts consolidated in 2001. The fixed sewer rate includes a user/replacement component that will be used to fund the replacement of aging infrastructure. The SCWD area serves the rural canyons of unincorporated Orange County. This area uses septic tanks and does not pay a sewer charge.

Recycled water rates for landscape irrigation will increase from \$345 to \$356.75 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 \$320 to \$335 per acre-foot. Untreated water comes mostly from Irvine Lake, which is a local resource that is less influenced by increases from outside agencies.

IRWD Celebrates 45th Anniversary in Style

What better way to observe IRWD's 45th birthday than with "A Day at the Marsh?" More than 450 members of the community turned out June 10 to enjoy environmental displays, take tours of the San Joaquin Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and to see photo contest winners honored.

Out of the more than 150 entries received for the first-ever photo contest with the marsh as a topic, 16 were chosen as winners (see front page). Photos were judged by Mark Avery of the Orange County Register, Mike Schwartz of the Irvine World News and Warren Smith of the Irvine Fine Arts Center.

Tours of the 320-acre marsh highlighted the reconstructed wetlands that naturally clean urban runoff from Irvine and other communities before it reaches environmentally sensitive Upper Newport Bay. At the same time, the marsh provides a diverse habitat and peaceful environment for all who come to enjoy the 12 miles of trails or just sit on a bench and relax.

The event featured hand-on children's activities, wildlife displays and informational booths. Inside the Duck Club guests could relax with snacks or view the winning photos from the contest. Another display featured photos chronicling the District's history.

A host of dignitaries presented proclamations and photo contest winners were presented with awards. Children in the audience were called up to lead the group in singing "Happy Birthday" to the District.

The San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary is located on Riparian View just south of Michelson Drive in Irvine. It's open seven days a week from dawn to dusk.



Santiago County Water District (SCWD) customers visit IRWD's conservation display during a community welcome picnic at Irvine Lake June 17. SCWD and IRWD's consolidation became effective July 1.