

Irvine Ranch Water District Pipelines

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / July 2007
Volume 2007 Number 07

Irvine Ranch Water District Approves 2007-08 Operating Budget

The Board of Directors of the Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) approved the fiscal year 2007-08 operating budget at their June 25 meeting. The \$94.8 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.

The budget includes an increase for both water and sewer rates for IRWD customers.

The average total monthly bill for the typical residential customer will increase from approximately \$34.90 to \$37.51 per month in the IRWD service area and from approximately \$45.95 to \$48.58 in the former Los Alisos Water District (LAWD) service area. The average rate for former Santiago County Water District (SCWD) customers will increase from \$51.20 to \$53.21.

One of IRWD's critical business objectives is to keep costs, and therefore rates, as low as possible for customers. Despite the increases, IRWD's rates remain among the lowest in Orange County. Using recycled water for non-potable uses such as landscape irrigation helps to keep rates down. Use of recycled water helps minimize the amount of drinking water that must be pumped from underground aquifers or imported into the IRWD service area, thereby reducing the cost of water to all IRWD customers. Approximately 20 percent of IRWD's overall water supply now comes from recycled water.

A number of factors have contributed to the proposed rate change, including an eight to 12 percent increase in costs of chemicals; 16-19 percent increase in electricity costs to operate wells, pumping stations and the water reclamation plants; labor costs and the fees paid by IRWD to the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) to purchase water and to the Orange County Water District (OCWD) to pump local groundwater.

There has been a large increase in the fees paid for local groundwater. While the Orange County Water District has increased the

replenishment fees by \$14 per acre-foot 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. MWD has increased charges by \$31 per acre-foot, plus an additional capacity charge of \$14 per acre-foot to recover the cost of providing peak capacity within the distribution system. In the coming year, IRWD will pay \$361.80 per acre-foot of local groundwater, compared to more than \$540 per acre-foot of imported water. One acre-foot is

continued on page two...

Fall Residential Landscape Workshop

FREE!

Friday, September 14, 2007
6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at
IRWD Headquarters
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Irvine, CA 92618

The Fall 2007 workshop will feature plant displays and fact-filled talks by local irrigation, gardening and landscape specialists. Attendees will also receive a free "Southern California Heritage Gardening Guide," a CD with colorful photos of many native and California-friendly plants well-suited to our local climate.

Workshop topics may include:

- How to water for plant health and low water bills
- Landscape design basics
- Irrigation system basics

Limited seating. Reserve your seats online at <http://www.irwd.com/FreePrograms/workshops.php>

If you do not have internet access, please call 949-453-5327 to make your reservation.

continued from page one...

IRWD Approves 2007-08 Operating Budget

approximately 326,000 gallons, or enough water to supply two typical families for a year.

Approximately 65 percent of the potable water delivered in most of IRWD's service area comes from local groundwater wells.

The IRWD base commodity water rate will increase from 91 cents to 98 cents per 100 cubic feet (ccf). The water rate for the former LAWD will increase from \$1.40 to \$1.46 per ccf. The base water rate for the former SCWD will increase from \$2 to \$2.06 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 \$6.75 to \$7.50 per month. The former LAWD service charge will increase from \$7.70 to \$8.65 per month. The fixed water service charge for the average customer of the former SCWD will increase from \$15.20 to \$15.95 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. The IRWD and LAWD sewer service charges will be uniform at \$13.65 per month. 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 and mostly relies on higher-cost imported water. SCWD and IRWD consolidated a year ago and customers in the former SCWD actually saw their rates decrease markedly. This area uses septic tanks and does not pay a sewer charge.

Recycled water rates for landscape irrigation will increase from \$356.75 to \$384.25 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 \$335 to \$372 per acre-foot. Untreated water comes from water purchased from MWD and from rain water captured in Irvine Lake.

IRWD's Board Approves New Rebate Funding Levels

The following table outlines new residential customer rebate levels (in red), effective August 1, 2007. Customers whose rebate applications are mailed and processed by July 15, 2007 will receive rebates at the current levels. For complete details, please visit www.irwd.com or call (949) 453-5563.

Eligible Appliance or Fixture	Residential Customer Type	IRWD's Rebate* changes effective August 1, 2007	Additional Regional Water Agency Rebate*	Total Rebate Amount*
High Efficiency Clothes Washer (HECW)	Single-family in detached home	\$200	\$100	\$300
	Multi-family in condo, apartment or mobile home	\$200	\$75	\$275
High Efficiency Toilet (HET)	Single-family in detached home	\$100	\$150	up to \$250 per HET
	Multi-family in condo, apartment or mobile home	\$100	\$165	up to \$265 per HET
Ultra Low Flush Toilet (ULFT)	Single-family in detached home	\$0	\$50	\$50 per ULFT
	Multi-family in condo, apartment or mobile home	\$0	\$60	\$60 per ULFT

* **Note:** To receive previous rebate funding levels (effective March 1, 2007) completed rebate applications must be received and processed by July 15, 2007. All rebate amounts may fluctuate and are subject to funding availability.



- **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

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%**

**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 CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAY:

- Monday, September 3

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.

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON EVENTS:

- **Bat Walks on August 10 & 17 from 7 to 8:45 p.m. at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.** The Bat Walk is one activity that truly deserves the designation of "unique." Local bat specialist Stephanie Remington dispels many myths about bats with a slide presentation and a walk after dark around the San Joaquin Marsh with sonar detectors tuned to the frequencies of the two most common species of bats living in the area. Cost is \$12 per adult and \$6 for children 7-12.

For information, visit the Sea & Sage Audubon website at:

www.seaandsageaudubon.org or call (949) 261-7963.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF IRVINE

- **Assistance League of Irvine Thrift and Gift Shop**, 17801 Main Street, Suite H (Sky Park South), Irvine, (949) 955-3437. Donations welcome during normal business hours: Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- To learn more about Assistance League and membership call (949) 725-9188.

Assistance League of Irvine is a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to providing programs and services that will enrich and improve the quality of life in Irvine.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

- **Submit your coastal stewardship story by August 1 for the chance to win a "Coast-Lover's Prize Package"** - The California Coastal Commission is inviting the public to submit personal stories of coastal stewardship for posting on their website, in conjunction with their Coastal Stewardship Pledge. If you have taken part in something (small or large) to care for the coast and ocean, please share your story and/or pictures in order to inspire others to take action in their daily lives. Make your submission by e-mail to coast4u@coastal.ca.gov or by postal mail to: Coastal Steward Stories, California Coastal Commission, 45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000, San Francisco, CA 94105. Be sure to include your phone number, mailing address, and e-mail (if available) in order to be eligible for the contest. More information is available on their Web site at www.coastal.ca.gov. Online voting will take place in August.

FAMILIES FORWARD

- During the entire month of July, Families Forward will be collecting school supplies for their Back to School program which happens the month of August. Backpacks filled with school supplies such as paper, crayons, markers, rulers, erasers, and scissors will be provided to children whose families are facing difficult times. This will help students return to school in the fall, ready to start a new school year.
- Families Forward continues to provide groceries to families in need. Food donations are welcome, especially during the summer months when children are home from school and families do not have the support of lunch programs. Donations of school supplies and food may be brought to the Families Forward facility at 9221 Irvine Blvd., Irvine 92618 Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., (949) 552-2727. Serving families for over 22 years, visit www.families-forward.org to find out more about the mission of Families Forward.

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

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

General Manager

Paul D. Jones II

Pipelines

Published by the
Public Affairs Dept.
IRWD
P.O. Box 57000
Irvine, CA 92619-7000

**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

Printed on recycled paper.
Recyclable
July 2007 • 84K