

Irvine Ranch Water District Pipelines

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / June 2008
Volume 2008 Number 6

Way\$ to Pay

When it comes to paying your water bill, there is certainly more than one way to accomplish the task. IRWD strives to make bill payment as convenient as possible for customers. Here are your options:

- **eBill Payments** - IRWD, in partnership with CheckFree, offers the convenience of receiving your bill electronically and paying online, free of charge, from your checking or money market account. To sign up, visit IRWD's web site at www.irwd.com and click on e-Bill in the Special Features box.
- **Credit Card Payments** - Customers may process water bill payments over the phone or by computer any time day or night with a credit card. EDS, a third party service provider, charges a \$4.95 convenience fee to pay by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover). To make a payment by phone, call (866) 500-5256. To make a payment by computer, visit www.paybill.com/irwd.
- **Automatic Payment** - Customers may sign up with IRWD to automatically have their water bills paid by direct debit from their checking account each month. There is no charge from IRWD for this service. Call Customer Service at (949) 453-5300 to

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IRWD Welcomes Orange Park Acres Mutual Water Company to Its Service Area

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) welcomes into its service area the former customers of the Orange Park Acres Mutual Water Company (OPAMWC), who voted overwhelmingly (514 to 6) to approve a merger with IRWD.

The vote was recorded at a shareholders' meeting in April. The merger took effect on June 1.

In March 2007 IRWD began providing contract services to operate OPAMWC's water system while the wheels were set in motion for consolidation. The boards of directors of both agencies unanimously approved the decision to consolidate and filed the application to be approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). In December, LAFCO approved the merger, contingent upon the shareholder vote.

Former OPAMWC customers will immediately realize a 20 percent reduction in their water rates and a committed \$7.6 million in system upgrades for the OPAMWC service area, much of which was constructed back in 1929. While these system improvements will be financed by IRWD, the former OPAMWC customers will pay for the improvements through a "water rate differential" which is the difference between the water rate charged (after the 20% rate decrease) and the water rates paid by IRWD's Irvine service area customers. In the coming months, IRWD

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Changes Coming July 1 to High Efficiency Clothes Washers (HECW) Rebate Eligibility List

Effective July 1, 2008, HECWs purchased on or after July 1, 2008 must have a water factor of 5.0 or less to be eligible for a \$275 or \$300 rebate. To view the list of eligible washers, please visit irwd.com.

Coming Soon!

Customers should expect to receive their Annual Water Quality Report during the month of June.

If you want additional copies, please contact IRWD's Public Affairs Department at (949) 453-5500.



For Healthy Plants & Water Savings

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) recommends three practices to help you save water (and money) while safeguarding the health of your plants. These are: 1) *cycling* your sprinklers; 2) using the *percentage option* on your automated controllers; and 3) *hydrozoning*.

Cycling

In the heavy clay soils found throughout IRWD's service area, sprinklers can put out more water in a given amount of time than the soil can absorb. Runoff can occur in as little as four minutes, even sooner on slopes. Fortunately, this problem is easily solved by *cycling*, which is setting the irrigation timer to turn on multiple times for a recommended lower number of minutes--and one hour apart. With the use of cycling, deeper watering and healthier root growth are gained, while runoff is reduced.

To determine the maximum run time for a group of sprinklers on the same irrigation valve, perform this simple test: Run the sprinklers and observe them as you time how long it takes until runoff begins. This is your maximum run time. To prevent runoff, do not exceed the maximum run time you have determined for each group of sprinklers. When more water is needed, set your timer to cycle your sprinklers on again, one hour later. Apply water again for a third cycle only when plant needs and weather conditions call for it.

The Percentage Option

Many automated irrigation controllers have a water budgeting feature that lets you increase or decrease the run times of all stations on each program by a select percentage. Also known as the "percentage (%) option," look for this button or dial setting on your irrigation timer's control panel.

The percentage option uncomplicates the monthly irrigation scheduling adjustment process by permitting the watering run times for all electric valves managed by a controller to be increased or decreased *with just one simple adjustment* by percentage. These adjustment percentages are calculated based on the programmed maximum run times for each station. For example, if a station is programmed to run for 5 minutes and you set the water budget to 80%, the station will run for 4 minutes (80% of 5). The percent option doesn't change watering days.

When you program the maximum recommended water usage required in the hottest summer months as 100% water coverage (as shown in the schedule below), this allows you to use the percentage option feature to quickly adjust down the irrigation schedule during the cooler or wetter months.

Hydrozoning

Efficient irrigation begins by choosing Mediterranean-type plants that are well adapted to our semi-arid climate, such as California natives and plants from South Africa, Australia or New Zealand. When establishing or enhancing your landscape, always place plants in groupings with similar water and sunlight needs called *hydrozones* as follows:

- A. Turfgrass
- B. Shrubs in sun
- C. Shrubs in shade (continued on page three)

IRWD's Suggested Summertime Weekly Irrigation Schedule

The following chart suggests a weekly June, July and August schedule for spray-head irrigation, assuming heavy clay soils common to most local areas. Generally, these are the MAXIMUM times you will need for full sun areas. Start with this schedule and increase the times only if your plants show signs of stress. If stress occurs only in isolated areas, check your irrigation system for breaks, leaks or clogs before increasing the time.

Month	Turfgrass	Tree, Shrubs & Groundcover	% Option
June	3 days, 2 cycles of 5 minutes each	3 days, 2 cycles of 3 minutes each	90% - 100%
July and August	4 days, 3 cycles of 3 minutes each	2 days, 3 cycles of 4 minutes each	100%



Hydrozoning (continued from page two)

Each of these three hydrozones requires a separate irrigation program. Turfgrass, for instance, is the most thirsty vegetation you can plant and requires more water to stay healthy than shrubs planted in either sunny or shady areas.

Never combine spray heads, rotors or drip irrigation in the same hydrozone. Because the water application rates are different for each of these, running them in the same hydrozone will create either wet or dry spots.



Every year, IRWD judges water-related projects at the Irvine Unified School District's Science Fair. This year's winners are from left, Margaret Yoo, Sarah Mae Garcia, Kristie Moeljanto, Phoebe Deans, Audrey Fong and Joshua Kim. Margaret was also a winner last year and Joshua's project is headed to the state competition.

Check out these Web sites:

- www.irwd.com - information about Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD). Visit IRWD's web site to access your IRWD account or get other information about your water district 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- www.shadetreepartnership.org - tree planting events. Community service hours available.
- www.h2ouse.org - this site features current information and resources to help you be water efficient.

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will develop a priority list of infrastructure improvement projects and a timeline for constructing the improvements.

The consolidation will provide economies of scale and efficiencies that equate to better value for all customers of the combined districts. It will also result in greater reliability between the two water systems.

Former OPAMWC board members Tom Davidson, Sonny Bryant and Doug Benecke will serve on an advisory committee to the IRWD board to ensure an orderly transition of service and assist in prioritizing and coordinating the repair and replacement projects.

OPAMWC served a population of 1,750 in Orange Park Acres. IRWD serves a population of 322,000 including the city of Irvine and portions of Lake Forest, Tustin, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, Orange and unincorporated areas in the foothills.

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Way\$ to Pay

request an enrollment form, or print one from the IRWD web site at www.irwd.com/IRWDServices/DDebit.pdf

- **Other electronic payment options** - If your financial institution offers either pay-by-phone or computer-based home banking, you have the option of paying your IRWD bill through most of these electronic services. Check with your bank for further information.
- **By Mail** - Mail your water bill payment stub along with your check in the courtesy reply envelope provided with your bill.
- **In Person** - Payments may be made at the Customer Service Department in the IRWD offices at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays. For payments during non-business hours, a drop box is conveniently located in the parking lot. Payments received in the drop box will be processed on the next business day.

Community Calendar

Irvine Ranch Water District will be closed for the following holiday:

- Friday, July 4 (Independence Day)

SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

- Community service hours are available for all volunteer tree planting activities. For more information call (949) 453-5670. Online registration available at www.shadetreepartnership.org.

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON EVENTS

- **Bat Walks** - Sea and Sage Audubon Society invites you and your friends to experience a Bat Walk at night in the IRWD San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. The bat walks are scheduled on Friday evenings June 20 and August 22, and Thursday evening August 7. Adults-only walk is scheduled for Thursday evening August 28. All walks will begin at approximately 7 p.m. Cost is \$12 per adult and \$6 for children seven (minimum age) to 12. Call (949) 726-0858 for questions or visit www.seaandsageaudubon.org.
- **Summer Education Program. Fledgling Camp** for 6-8 year olds scheduled for June 23-27; **Marsh Bird Camp** for 9-12 year olds scheduled for July 7-11 or July 14-18; and **Advanced Bird Camp** for 11 year olds and above scheduled for July 21-25 and July 28 through August 2. Call (949) 261.7963.
- **Become a member** of the National Audubon Society and the Sea and Sage Audubon Chapter. For more information visit their Web site at www.seaandsageaudubon.org or call (949) 261-7963.

CITY OF IRVINE EVENT

- **Friday, July 4 - Irvine Police Association's 24th Annual Concert on the Green & Fireworks Show** at Irvine High School Football Stadium. Gates open at 3 p.m. Children's activities include field games, arts and crafts; bounce house, face painting and more. Pyro musical and fireworks show at 9 p.m. with historical narration. Adult tickets (14 and older) \$12, senior/child tickets (+60/13 and under) \$7. Under two free. Tickets available in advance or may be purchased at Irvine High School Football Stadium on July 4. Family tickets are available in advance only (two adults/ four children) for \$40. For tickets and further information call Vince Palazzolo at (949) 724-0488.

FAMILIES FORWARD

- There are a growing number of families facing financial difficulties in south Orange County. Families Forward exists to help families in need achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through housing, counseling, education and other support services. Currently 50-75 families receive groceries each week from the food assistance program. Help support these families through food donations as well as grocery and gas gift cards!
- **Back To School Program** – Starting in July! Families Forward distributes backpacks filled with school supplies to local low-income families who are facing financial difficulty. Donations of backpacks and school supplies will be accepted in July and August to provide for these students. Visit www.families-forward.org to see the many needed items.
- Bring all donations to Families Forward, 9221 Irvine Blvd., Irvine, CA 92618, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Questions: (949) 552-2727.

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 5:30 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. To learn more about Assistance League and membership call (949) 725-9188 or visit their Web site at www.irvine.assistanceleague.org. 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.

MASTER GARDENERS OF ORANGE COUNTY

- The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County are a dedicated group of trained volunteers that provide assistance and share information about gardening in and around the Orange County area. For more information call their hotline at (714) 708-1646, visit their Web site at www.uccemg.com or send an e-mail to ucmastergardeners@yahoo.com.

IRVINE GARDEN CLUB

- Come and join the Irvine Garden Club for regular speakers on local gardening topics and to exchange growing tips and ideas. Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. (except Jan./July/Sept.). The meetings are held in the offices of the Irvine Ranch Water District. Visit their Web site at www.irvinegardenclub.com or send an E-mail to Irvinegardenclub@yahoo.com.

CASA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is seeking volunteers to serve as advocates and mentors for abused children. An information session will be held on Tuesday, July 22 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Irvine Heritage Park Library, 14361 Yale Avenue. R.S.V.P. (714) 619-5155.



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

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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

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