Winter 2003 CARMICHAEL WATER DISTRICT Vol. 15 No. 1

Water Ways

Whether Rain or Shine, Water Wisely

Even though the hot summer days are behind us, it's important to continue to be water efficient. In the fall and winter months, that means being aware of when your outdoor landscaping actually needs water.

During the cooler months, lower temperatures, shorter daylight hours and moisture from rain and fog all combine to reduce the water demands of your lawn, trees, shrubs and plants. Little, if any, irrigation is needed, which means you need to reduce or eliminate your irrigation timing and frequency.

Easy Tips for Winter Water Efficiency

Here's what you can do this winter:

- Reset your irrigation system to water your lawn once a week, if at all, during winter months.
- Water with the weather. If it is raining outside, turn off your irrigation system.
- Alternatively, install a rain sensor to automatically shut off your irrigation system and eliminate unnecessary watering. Rain sensors are inexpensive and available at most home improvement stores.

Winterize Your Water Pipes

In addition to practicing fall and winter outdoor water efficiency, prepare your indoor water system for winter. Despite its moderate climate, Sacramento can sometimes experience freezing temperatures during the winter. To protect your pipes from freezing, follow these simple steps:

- Wrap foam around your pipes to keep them insulated.
- Locate and learn how to use your water shutoff valve in case your pipes burst.
- If your pipes freeze, thaw them by wrapping them with rags and pouring warm water over the rags. Then, remove the rags and rewrap the pipes with foam to prevent further freezing.

Customers Give High Marks to District's Customer Service

Carmichael Water District customers are largely satisfied with the service provided to them by the district, according to a recent questionnaire answered by 685 customers. Two out of three (65 percent) awarded the district a five or four "favorability" rating on a five-point scale.

The survey was designed to assess customer attitudes and reactions toward a number of topics related to the CWD. These topics included water conservation, metered rates, water quality, and customer outreach and satisfaction.

When it comes to conservation, the survey found that a majority of customers are getting the message. A majority of respondents (57 percent) claimed they are already doing all they can to conserve water at home, both inside and outside. A substantial 31 percent stated that they had taken some conservation steps but would like to take others.

Identifying information like this helps the district learn who and how best to reach customers with conservation information. The survey also helps the district determine customer issues/concerns so it can address them. The survey report is available for review at the district office located at 7837 Fair Oaks Boulevard in Carmichael.

District Advises Customers of Travel and Overtime Policies

You may have recently read articles and editorials in the *Sacramento Bee* regarding a local water agency's travel expenses for board and staff members and overtime paid to managerial staff.

The Carmichael Water District Board of Directors wishes to reassure its customers that our policy requires board approval of conference travel in advance, expenses to be substantiated by receipts prior to reimbursement, and traveling as cost efficiently as possible. The district does not issue credit cards to board or staff members.

Carmichael Water District's management employees are exempt salaried employees and as exempt employees they do not receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.

The district's policy manual, monthly activity report listing meetings attended by directors and yearly budget are available for review at the district office located at 7837 Fair Oaks Boulevard.

Chamber Mixes it Up!

CWD hosted a Carmichael Chamber of Commerce business mixer at the district headquarters on September 19. The after-hours event provided an opportunity for 60 members of Carmichael's business community to hear how the district employs water and energy conservation at its facility and tour the district's administration building.

Lucky Winner Chosen at Founder's Day Event

Bill Frondal, Tracy Lenck and Steve Nugent man the Carmichael Water District exhibit at the annual Founder's Day celebration this past fall.

Carmichael Water District promoted water efficiency and showcased a giveaway of a super water-efficient washer at the annual Founder's Day Celebration, September 21, in Carmichael Park. The Chamber of Commerce and Recreation and Park District hosted the annual event.

The washer was given away to a lucky CWD customer who completed and returned a survey included in the summer 2002 edition of *Water Ways*. Maytag, in partnership with SMUD, donated a brand-new Neptune washing machine for the event.

District Charts Course for the Future by Developing Master Plan

Carmichael Water District is in the process of preparing a new master plan, which will address a number of its future needs. The effort maps out how the district will sustain infrastructure and continue to provide a reliable, high quality water supply in an efficient fashion. When complete, the master plan will direct the district's future, with a project-specific capital improvement plan, focused water supply strategies and guidance for future decisions regarding capital investments. This plan will look at both near-term (10- to 25-years) and long-term (through 100 years) needs.

Teens Learn About Careers in the Water Industry

Carmichael Water District staff members LaNell Little and Steve Nugent recently joined with personnel from Above and Below the H2o, a firm specializing in underwater documentation, to meet with students at the North Area Teen Center to discuss the water industry as a career choice. During the presentation, students participated in a hands-on demonstration of robotic video equipment used to film belowground water facilities and other underwater documentation.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for the students in our program," said North Area Teen Center Executive Director Joyce Arredondo. "The students were able to take what they're learning in the classroom, apply that to an exercise and translate it to a potential career opportunity."

According to Arredondo, many of the students didn't realize so many different opportunities exist in the water industry. One student is now exploring the possibility of an internship in the water industry as a result of the presentation.

Working with teens has enabled CWD to make an important link with a future generation. "We want high school students to consider career possibilities at our water district and at other agencies in our area," said CWD General Manager LaNell Little. "There will be a serious shortage of employees in the water industry in the near future and we want to get students interested in one day coming to work in an exciting field."

CWD Viewed as a Model of Technology and Efficiency

Carmichael Water District has gained statewide recognition as a model of innovative technology and high efficiency in the water industry. Groups such as the Water Education Foundation and the Water Forum have included the district in recent regional water treatment plant tours by industry leaders.

CWD was one of several water districts visited during the Water Education Foundation's Sierra Watersheds Tour in September. In addition, it served as the location for a Water Forum orientation event in October. Leo Winternitz, executive director of the Water Forum, expressed that he received a lot of "positive feedback" about the tour from those who attended.

Carmichael Water District opened its new water treatment facility in September 2001. The district is dedicated to participating in water planning and conservation efforts through the Water Forum.

Carmichael Water District
7837 Fair Oaks Boulevard
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 483-2452
www.carmichaelwd.org

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CWD to Receive Grants as Part of Regional Effort

As a member of the Regional Water Authority — a joint effort among regional water agencies — Carmichael Water District is set to receive a portion of over $500,000 in grants for projects aimed at improving water use efficiency in the Sacramento area.

The Proposition 13 Urban Water Conservation grants will provide participating agencies like CWD a total of $386,750 for leak detection and repair projects, enabling them to purchase state-of-the-art monitoring devices and data loggers that will help detect water leaks quickly and efficiently.

Another $150,000 will be made available to CWD and other agencies for large landscape irrigation system improvements. This money will fund rebates for customers with large landscapes (more than one acre) who participate in irrigation reviews. Participating agencies expect to offer at least 50 rebates.

The leak detection devices and large landscape rebates will also help CWD and other participating agencies cost-effectively meet the guidelines of Water Forum best management practices (BMPs). The BMPs were established to ensure a reliable, safe water supply and preserve the integrity of the Lower American River.

Other agencies receiving the grant funding include Citrus Heights, Fair Oaks, San Juan and Rio Linda/Elverta water districts, the city of Folsom, Florin Resource Conservation District/ Elk Grove Water System, Orange Vale Water Company, Placer County Water Agency and the city of Sacramento Department of Utilities.

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