

Chisholm Trail Special Utility District
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In the April Newsletter customers read about District projects and the associated costs to upgrade the water system. In this issue we will explain the necessity of these expenditures and why water conservation is so important.

IS THERE A WATER SHORTAGE?

Last summer when Chisholm Trail Special Utility District had to go to Stage IV drought restrictions, there were many calls from customers asking why the City of Georgetown's residents could water three times per week and District customers could only water once per week. More than once customers asked, "Is there a shortage of water?" This is a very good question since Lake Georgetown is the water source for both the City of Georgetown and the District.

The answer is a little more complicated. Yes, there was a water shortage last summer as the District's water supply was impacted in two ways: loss of groundwater due to the drought and lack of treatment capacity for available surface water.

First, the drought caused the levels in the District's water wells to drop too low to pump. These wells supply about 3 million gallons/day. Without wells (groundwater) to compliment the available surface water, the District had to start rationing the water supply. The District's surface water (4.5 million gallons/day) comes from Lake Georgetown and Stillhouse Lake, but lake water requires a great deal more treatment to make it drinkable. Surface water is treated at the City of Georgetown's water treatment plant. Several years ago the District secured an ample supply of "untreated" water from Lake Georgetown and Stillhouse Lake. Based on the predicted growth of the District, this reserve of water will supply current and future customers for the next 40 to 50 years. The District's current situation is not one of a "water shortage" but rather a "treatment shortage." That is, the City of Georgetown's water plant cannot treat anymore water on a daily basis than is currently being treated.

During the drought, City of Georgetown residents were able to irrigate more often because the City has more treatment capacity in the plant. The District has contracted with the City to treat approximately 4.5 million gallons per day of the District's available supply of surface water. With



*Don't forget
to conserve
water this
spring
and summer!*

both 4.5 million gallons per day of surface water and 3 million gallons/day of well water, the District can deliver a total of about 7.5 million gallons/day of treated drinking water to our customers. The District can deliver this quantity of water for limited periods of time then storage tanks need time to recharge or refill.

In July 2009 the demand for water peaked to a historical all time high. Chisholm had to declare Stage 4 Drought restrictions but, to help customers maintain landscaping the District imposed an "interim" stage to allow outside watering once per week with hand-held hoses only.

The loss of the wells and the limited surface water treatment available created the "perfect storm". About 18 months ago, a partnership began with the City of Georgetown to both enlarge the current water treatment plant and to begin engineering plans for a second water treatment plant. The new water treatment plant will be shared by the District and the City and will result in a treatment capacity to serve customers of the District for many years to come. Unfortunately the 2009 Drought came before the treatment plant expansions were completed.

Under normal circumstances, 7.5 million gallons/day would have been more than enough potable water to supply the District's water needs until the new water treatment plant was up and running. No one predicted the intensity of last summer's heat or duration. The 2009 drought surpassed the 1957 drought, previously the worst drought in central Texas history. With the expansion of the existing water treatment plant, the construction of the future water treatment plant, and distribution system improvements underway, the District is investing in your need for water well into the 21st century.

CHISHOLM CHAT

WHY SHOULD I CONSERVE WATER?

Most of us think water conservation is a good thing to do. We understand the importance of saving the earth and we think of water conservation as a “global” cause. But there are many more reasons for water conservation that have an immediate impact on our own community. As more and more people use more and more water, more and more facilities must be built to supply the demand. For Chisholm Trail SUD, customer demand has increased dramatically over the past few years. The District is working to expand the existing water plant and looking to build a new water treatment plant. The District’s cost for expanding the existing water treatment plant is expected to be approximately \$9.33 million. The District’s cost to build the new water treatment plant is expected to be over \$18 million. These costs are in addition to the costs for water treatment, water distribution, general maintenance of facilities, and repairs to existing infrastructure.

By conserving water customers can reduce the need for more treated water, more water distribution lines, and more maintenance

on existing infrastructure. By conserving water, YOU can help keep the cost of water lower!

Did you know that State law requires water suppliers to have the infrastructure in place to meet peak demands? That is, if one single day out of the year our customers use 10 million gallons of water, then all year long the infrastructure must be available to meet that demand. Additionally when customer usage reaches 80% of a system’s production capacity, State law requires the water supplier to begin expanding the system. This expansion cost is borne by YOU, the Chisholm Trail SUD customer. In winter months, District customers use an average of 230 gallons per home per day. In the summer months this increases to an average of 660 gallons per day per home. On average, only about 150 gallons of water per day per home is used for drinking water,



“About 70% of summer water usage is for outdoor irrigation.”

Smart Outdoor Irrigation Equipment

What is the most efficient irrigation system?

Drip irrigation is the most efficient method of watering for non-turf areas such as bedded plants, trees or shrubs. Drip systems minimize or eliminate evaporation, impede weed growth, and may help prevent diseases caused by under or overwatering. Tubing should be inspected regularly for damage, leaks, and debris that may have clogged the lines. Soaker hoses are an easy and inexpensive alternative to drip irrigation. Soaker hoses perform best when the water flow rate is low. Soil moisture should be monitored to determine when enough water has been applied.

What type of sprinkler should I use?

Use a low-angle sprinkler that produces large drops of water close to the ground, rather than an oscillating sprinkler or a sprinkler that produces a mist or fine spray. This will help to minimize evaporation. Sprinklers with adjustable spray patterns are useful for irregularly shaped areas (or just use the hose). Use a timer so you don’t forget to turn it off.

What should I look for in an automatic sprinkler system?

The controller of new sprinkler systems should have a multiple scheduling option, a rain-shutoff device, a water budget feature (which allows percentage adjustments without having to reprogram), and test functions. Proper maintenance is imperative for automatic sprinkler systems! Check sprinkler heads regularly to remove dirt or debris that may be clogging the nozzle and to make sure they are working at the proper pressure and not leaking. When spray heads are inactive they should be as close to the ground as possible to avoid damaging them with lawn mowers.

showering, and toilets. By conserving additional water YOU save money and the entire community saves money!

About 70% of summer water usage is for watering grass and plants. District customers are urged to learn more about how they can reduce outside water usage. This will not only reduce individual water bills, but will save the entire community from increasing water costs. Water conservation information is available for FREE in the District office and on the website at www.ctsud.org. If you would like information mailed to you, please call (254) 793-3103.

