

La Mesa Water Cooperative

WaterGram - January 2014

Update on Arsenic Monitoring

In September we reported that the arsenic level of well #6 had increased from 8.5 ppb (parts per billion) when it first went into service in April to 13 ppb in August. The August reading was above the Federal standard of 10 ppb, so we have been carefully monitoring this situation. We also moved the planned installation of arsenic treatment facilities for well #6 from the summer of 2015 to the summer of 2014. Fortunately, by November the arsenic level had fallen to 8 ppb. We have verified the accuracy of this measurement by sending samples to two different laboratories. Based on these results, the Board has decided not to install arsenic removal facilities at well #6 at this time.

2014 Rates and Fees

Because of the changed situation at #6, we do not expect significant increases in our operating costs for 2014. For this reason, the Pricing Committee has recommended no change in fees for 2014. The Board has accepted this recommendation. This is our second consecutive year without an increase in fees.

Traveling this Winter? Don't Leave Your House Unprotected.

Every year the Board receives reports of frozen pipes and flooding in unoccupied homes. It doesn't take much water to produce extensive (and expensive) damage. If you will be gone for more than a few days, it is prudent to turn your water heater to the vacation setting (but do not turn it completely off) and turn off the water to your house. Although not all houses have

inside turn offs, most do. The turn off is usually located in your garage. If you don't know where it is, a friend or neighbor may be able to help you locate it.

One of the most important things you can do is have a friend walk through your house every few days. Walking through the inside of the house is essential because malfunctioning furnaces, leaking water heaters, or burst pipes may not be detectable from outside.

Important Change in Leak Policy

At the December meeting the Board voted to abandon our policy of offering some relief from charges resulting from the accidental loss of water. Property owners have always been responsible for the cost of water delivered to their property. In the past we have offered some fee relief to members who experience large bills because of accidental water loss.

This policy has always been controversial. The policy was well intended, but as a member owned cooperative, our fees are based on actual expenses. The cost of producing wasted water is no different than the cost of producing useful water. This means that if members do not pay for the water they use, the costs must be passed on to the rest of the coop members. In essence, the policy benefited a few members but penalized all the others.

The abandonment of our leak policy in no way limits the right to any member to address the Board or appeal its policies.

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