



Important Miramar Treatment Plant Milestone is Celebrated

The Water Department recently celebrated the completion of a significant milestone as part of the upgrade and expansion of the Miramar Water Treatment Plant. The milestone, which includes new filter basins, chlorine facilities and upgraded equipment, is part of an overall project that will significantly increase capacity and reliability at the treatment plant.

When the project is complete, the treatment plant capacity will increase from 140 to 215 million gallons of water per day. The upgrades will also allow the Water Department to meet or exceed new stricter federal and state drinking water standards.

“A project this big is exciting because it is nice to be able to show to our customers exactly where their water rate dollars are going,” said Alex Ruiz, Water Department Assistant Director. “This is a tremendously important project that will benefit our customers for generations to come.”

The Miramar Water Treatment Plant, located on the shores of Miramar Reservoir, began operation in 1962. It is the sole provider of drinking water to an estimated 500,000 customers in the northern section of San Diego. Current growth and anticipated population increases within the service area have created a need for more plant capacity. Also, the plant facilities, structures and operating equipment are approaching the end of the lifespan and need to be upgraded or replaced to ensure reliability and water quality.



Attendees at the Miramar Water Treatment Plant celebration check out the new Administration Building.

“We’ve been working closely with the Scripps Ranch community during the project and I would like to thank everybody in the area for their help and understanding,” said Mr. Ruiz. “A project like this can be somewhat disruptive but the surrounding community has been very supportive.”

Among the key elements of this recently completed phase of the project are 12 new filter basins, a new chlorine facility, new chemical storage facilities, a new administration building, new mechanical and electrical equipment and new piping connecting the new facilities. ◆

Water/Sewer Departments Returning to Bi-Monthly Billing

Beginning March 1, 2008 the City of San Diego Water and Metropolitan Wastewater Departments will begin sending their combined Water/Sewer/Storm Drain bills to single-family domestic customers every other month. Each bill will contain charges for a two-month period with those charges being based on actual meter readings.

Since 2003 the Water Department has issued bills monthly, with every other bill based on a scheduled estimate of usage and charges. As of March 1, 2008, customers will no longer receive monthly bills based on scheduled estimates.

All single-family domestic customers will receive a bill in February of 2008. Half of the City’s customers (those whose meter is read in odd-numbered months) will then receive their next bill in March, which will be a bill for one month’s usage, followed by a bill in May and every two months afterwards.

The other half of the City’s customers (those whose meter is read in even-numbered months) will receive a bill in April, which will be for two month’s usage, with bills following in June and every two months afterwards.

“The Mayor, City Council and Water Department heard loud and clear from customers that they did not like scheduled estimated meter readings,” said Mike Bresnahan, Deputy Director of the Water Department’s Customer Support Division. “We want to be responsive to our customers so, at the direction of the Mayor and City Council, we are returning to bi-monthly billing.”

Because customers will be getting a bill every two months rather than every month, the amount of each bill will reflect two months of service and will basically double in size. Most commercial, industrial and multi-family customers will not be impacted by this change.



City Now Offering Better, Faster I-Pay Payment System

For San Diegans tiring of writing checks to pay bills, the City of San Diego's new I-Pay internet payment system is the answer you've been looking for. It is faster and than ever.

The City has implemented a quicker and more user-friendly I-Pay system. The system makes it simple for single-family domestic customers to pay their water, sewer and storm drain bill via the internet.

"We've been listening to our customers for the past few months, finding out what kind of I-Pay system they want and what features they would like included," said Mike Bresnahan, Deputy Director of the Customer Support Section. "The new system offers more options and is very easy to use. New customers will be able to sign up and start paying on-line in a matter of minutes."

Thousands of Water and Sewer Department customers currently use the I-Pay system to pay their utility bill. Those customers have now been transferred over to the new I-Pay system and there's room for many more.

"Signing up for I-Pay is now simpler than ever," explained Mr. Bresnahan. "Once you've enrolled you have several options which make it easy to pay your bill. By using the internet to pay bills you are reducing postage costs for both you and the City, and reducing the amount of paper used to send a bill. It really is a win-win situation for both the City and our customers."

To check out the new I-Pay system, go to www.sandiego.gov/water and click on the I-Pay logo on the left-hand side. For more information, give a Water Department Customer Service Representative a call at 619-515-3500. 💧

bi-monthly billing continued

"We are working to make the transition as smooth as possible," said Mr. Bresnahan. "The important thing to remember is that when you get your bill don't be surprised that it seems higher than normal. The two-month billing cycle means that bills will be, obviously, higher than in a one-month billing cycle."

It is expected that the change back to bi-monthly billing will save the Water and Metropolitan Wastewater Departments \$630,000 in printing and mailing costs each year.

For more information about bi-monthly billing please call a Water Department Customer Service Representative at 619-515-3500. 💧



It's up to all of us to help conserve water

Conserving water is everyone's responsibility. Each year, San Diego must import more than 85 percent of its water from Northern California and via the Colorado River. Making the most of these limited supplies is important to every aspect of the quality of life we enjoy in our city.

As part of a region-wide effort to step up voluntary water conservation, the City of San Diego Water Department, has joined with the San Diego County Water Authority in issuing a 20-Gallon Challenge. San Diegans are each being asked to reduce their water usage by 20-gallons a day of water.

The City Water Department's website has some great ideas on how you can conserve. From the Water Survey Program to the Landscape Watering Calculator, we can make meeting the 20-Gallon Challenge easy. The website is www.sandiego.gov/water.

More water conservation information is also available on the County Water Authority's website at: www.sdcwa.org. 💧

Hazard Mitigation Plan is Now Available

In an effort to identify risks posed by natural and manmade disasters, and find ways to minimize damage from those disasters, the City of San Diego has teamed with the County of San Diego, and all representatives from all jurisdictions in the region, to create the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Plan serves to enhance public awareness and understanding, creates a decision tool for City management, promotes compliance with state and federal program requirements, and enhances local policies for hazard mitigation capability.

The Plan has been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and covers, but is not limited to, disasters related to coastal storms, earthquakes, floods, fires, landslides, etc., for the entire County of San Diego.

"This Plan is an important document and a vital step towards being prepared for future disasters," said Jill Olen, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Public Safety and Homeland Security. "I urge San Diegans to familiarize themselves with it."

The Plan can be accessed via the web at www.sandiego.gov and clicking on the link under News & Special Announcements. Those without internet access can call the City of San Diego Office of Homeland Security at (619) 533-6760. 💧