

POTPOURRI

Harris County Water Control and Improvement District #110

Web pages: hcwid110.com and fosrc.com; Water/Sewer Service: Environmental Development Partners (EDP), 832-467-1599; Forest Oaks Swim and Racquet Club, the Water Board Building and Jody Dellinger, Parks and Recreation Manager: 281-353-0998; Kay Divin, Water and Sewer Manager: 281-355-1400; Constable's office: 281-376-3472; Trash pickup: Waste Connections, 281-446-0239; Recycling: Residential Recycling of Texas, 1-866-516-9805 (or call Kay at 281-355-1400).

July, 2010

► **THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT CONVERSION** was completed on June 15. All publicly distributed water must meet certain standards established by law. This requires treatment facilities. For years chlorine treatment has been used to guard against the presence of harmful substances in water pumped from wells. The results have been excellent. However WCID #110 is in an area where regulations require that by 2010 20% of the water used must be surface water. By 2020 this figure rises to 70% surface water and by 2030 to 80%. Chloramines instead of chlorine are used to treat surface water. This necessitated the treatment plant conversion. This is also why WCID customers have received notices containing facts about water treated with chloramines. This subject can become quite technical, but our Water and Sewer Operations Manager, Kay Divin, can sweep some of the cobwebs away. If you would like more information call Kay at 281/355-1400.

► **THE PROJECT OF SELLING NEW LOWER INTEREST BONDS** to raise money to retire some of the older higher interest bonds is nearing completion. Delays in the project were experienced due to fluctuations in the bond market interest rates. The professionals helping WCID #110 were able to lock in a reasonably low interest rate for the new bonds. The interest savings for the District over the next 9 years will be \$114,572.00.

► **BY THE TIME THIS ISSUE OF THE "POTPOURRI"** is in your hands about 30% of the water you are using will be coming from surface water sources. The North Harris County Regional Water Authority plans called for the surface water to reach "Wun Ten" customers around the middle of July. Most folks will not notice any differences between water containing surface water and the 100% well water previously used. If any issues do arise call Kay at 281/353-4100.

► **WATER RUNNING IN THE STREETS** from a fire hydrant looks terribly wasteful. However, this is a necessary part of the process of furnishing the District with surface water. All the delivery system to the WCID #110 distribution system must be flushed thoroughly so everyone can enjoy only pure, potable water.

► **IF YOUR RECYCLING BINS ARE A MITE SMALL** we have an answer for you: Recycling Labels. Put them on a regular garbage can and "Voila!!" – you have a larger recycling container. Again: phone Kay at 281/353-1400.

► **A bit of philosophy:** "People's lives are delicate; you cannot interfere with them without running the risk of changing them profoundly. A chance remark, a careless involvement may make the difference between a life of happiness and one of sorrow." – *Alexander McCall Smith: The Kalahari Typing School For Men; Anchor Books, New York, 2002.*

The WCID #110 Board of Directors

James Williams, President
281-353-5118.

Jeannie Satterwhite, Vice President
281-288-3427

Jerry Strickland, 2nd Vice President
281-353-6028

Texas Stevens, Secretary
281-353-0789

Tom Dowdy, Treasurer
281-645-6290

BE WATER-WISE:

CONSERVE WATER, SAVE MONEY.

When you conserve water you help minimize the ever-present possibility of depleting present water resources. You also save money by a lower water bill.

LOWERING THE WATER BILL could well call for learning and establishing new behavior patterns. The person who usually leaves the water running while soaping the hands or brushing the teeth learns to turn off the faucet until needed. When taking a shower he learns the same lesson: stopping the flow of water until it is needed. Water is used on the lawn only when necessary. Only a modest trickle of water is used when washing the car until rinsing time. Examples could be multiplied. Generally the person who would lower the water bill becomes water conscious when engaging in anything involving the application or use of water.

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June, 2010

- ▶ **“INTEREST RATES ARE AT AN ALL-TIME LOW,”** so say some financial institutions today. They stress that refinancing your home is a good idea – and they may be right. Lower interest rates impact the bond market also. Your Harris County WCID #110 Water District (the District) sold bonds around the turn of the century on which interest must be paid at a much higher rate than today's rates. So, guess what! The District Board (the Water Board) can sell new bonds at today's lower interest rates, use the proceeds to retire some of the older bonds bearing a higher interest rate, and save a significant amount of money for our taxpayers. That procedure is in the works now. The District plans to refund \$2,475,000 of the older higher interest bonds without increasing their maturities. After all costs for a bond sale are paid the District will realize an estimated savings of about \$117,423 for our taxpayers from now through 2019.
- ▶ **“SAVING MONEY”** is something practically everyone likes to do. This goes for the Water Board, too. The Davis Development company (the Company) plans to develop property within the District located generally in the southwest corner of Holzwarth and Louetta Roads. Their development plans necessitate the enlargement of the sewer line running south along Holzwarth Road. They are fronting the District's share of the cost of this project. The District is obligated to repay the Company for the fronted funds after completion of the project. Ordinarily the repayment would require a bond sale by the District. However the Company has agreed for the District to repay the Company's portion over a period of five years thus eliminating the need for a bond sale. Eliminating bond sale expenses and the interest that would be paid on the bonds over a 25-year period saves the District about \$250,000.
- ▶ **IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN** when some companies send mail-outs offering to file owners' Homestead Exemptions for a fee. For those who desire to “do-it-yourself” and save the fee you can do it by computer or telephone. Using the computer, type in “harris county homestead exemption” on your search engine. Select “HCAD Property Tax Exemptions for Homeowners,” read carefully, follow instructions, and print out the proper form. If your computer decides to give you fits, just phone HCAD (Harris County Appraisal District) at 713/957-7800 and someone will help you. Be sure to check to see if you are eligible for exemptions in addition to the Homestead Exemption.
- ▶ **FOR THE “WUN TEN” RESIDENTS** who like to frequent a cantina: Rejoice!! Plans have been made to open “Juan and Lefty's Mexican Cantina” just west of the Cheddar's restaurant.
- ▶ **A bit of philosophy:** “I wish you could see Rome. They got a lot of things they call forums. They are where the Senators used to meet. I didn't know before I got there that Ancient Rome had Senators. Now I know why it declined.” – *Will Rogers, 1879-1935*

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SAVE WATER EVEN DURING GROWING SEASON. Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆Condition the soil with mulch or compost before planting grass or flowerbeds so that water will soak in rather than run off.
- ◆Fertilize lawns at least twice a year for root stimulation, but do not over-fertilize. Grass with a good root system makes better use of less water. It is also more drought-tolerant.
- ◆Do not scalp lawns when mowing in hot weather. Taller grass holds moisture better.
- ◆Grass should be cut fairly often so that only $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch is trimmed off. A better looking lawn will result.

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May, 2010

- ▶ **SIX HUNDRED SEVEN THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY AND NO/100 DOLLARS!!** That's about how much interest your Water Board saved by retiring some bonds. In 2009 the Board was able to retire \$715,000.00 worth of bonds, some of which would have matured in 2026. The estimated interest the Board would have paid through 2026 on the retired bonds would have amounted to the said \$607,750.00. In 2009 the Board was not restricted to an "either/or" parameter: either retire bonds or provide amenities for residents of the District. It was a "both/and" year: both retire bonds and provide amenities. While every year cannot be a "both/and" situation, especially during economic downturns, the Board maintains a goal of retiring bonds when possible.
- ▶ **THE ELECTION LAST MAY 8** resulted in keeping the three incumbents in the race on the Board of WCID #110. Tom Dowdy, Jerry Strickland and James Williams have served on the Board for many years gaining both invaluable experience and knowledge. Their knowledge and expertise as well as their pro-resident attitudes will continue to be a great asset to the Board.
- ▶ **"KEEPING FIT" OPPORTUNITIES** abound in the WCID #110 District. A state-of-the-art fitness center is just west of the District's office on 19023 Joanleigh. The east and west walls of the fitness center are lined with professional exercise machines. They will work and develop muscles some people do not even know they have! Just west of the fitness center is a world class swimming pool. Someone has gone to the trouble to figure out that it holds 170,000 gallons of water. Eight tennis courts line the south and west sides of the swimming pool. These amenities are available to members of the Forest Oaks Swim and Racquet Club (FOSRC). Phone 281/353-0998 to learn the ridiculously low rates for the whole family to belong to FOSRC. The 30+ acre park south of these facilities is available to everyone. It boasts 2 miles of walking trails, composed mostly of crushed granite that provides a softer surface for walking or jogging. There are enough "Keeping Fit" opportunities in the District to make any "couch potato" groan.
- ▶ **TO BE "FAIR AND BALANCED"** mention must also be made that quite a few restaurants and fast-food establishments offering various cuisine choices are also within the District's boundaries. Another well-known food establishment will be available before too long. Plans are being developed for a Furr's Cafeteria to be located just north of Cheddar's Restaurant.
- ▶ **A bit of philosophy:** "I am to go and perform in the *Zigfield Follies* and I have no act. So, I thought I'll run down to Washington and get some material." – *Will Rogers, 1879-1935*

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HOW OLD ARE THE SHOWERHEADS in your home? Many houses in this area are thirty or more years old. The original showerheads used ten to twenty gallons of water per minute. After 1994 new showerheads sold in the USA can use no more than 2.5 gallons per minute. New showerheads are ridiculously cheap. They can be installed easily. Figure it out for yourself. The 2.5 gallons per minute showerhead can save as much as 75 gallons of water during a ten minute shower. Water is more expensive now than it was thirty years ago. With today's rates it is easy to save several dollars per month per person by establishing habits that conserve water.

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April, 2010

► **PLEASE PLACE A CIRCLE** around Saturday, May 8, 2010 on your calendar. This is the date on which registered voters in the WCID #110 district have the privilege of choosing three of their neighbors to serve on the Board of Directors of Harris County WCID #110. Voting will be from 7:00 a. m. to 7:00 p. m. Four people are running for the three positions: Tom Dowdy, David Patterson, Jerry Strickland and James Williams. Dowdy, Strickland and Williams are incumbents. The election will take place at the Water Board building at 19023 Joanleigh across from Lemm Elementary school. Early voting is on weekdays from April 26, 2010 to May 4, 2010, 8:00 a. m. to 4:00 p. m., at the home of Emmett Poindexter, 118 West North Hill Drive.

► **THE FOREST OAKS PARK** with its three lakes, walking trails, playground, picnic areas, park benches and ancillary accoutrements is fast becoming a favorite neighborhood spot. The beautiful spring weather during the last few weeks has made the outdoors so lovely. Reports are that around 200 people were in the park area on Easter Sunday. To keep the park beautiful and inviting be sure to exercise common decency like picking up after yourself and even placing trash left by other people in the provided receptacles. Who knows but that, when you visit the park, you may even find out what an ancillary accoutrement is!

► **JODY HAS ARRIVED!** Jody Dellinger has been the manager of the WCID #110 park and recreation facilities for a little over a year. Now his work and dedication are being recognized by others. He has been chosen to be a presenter in one of the classes during the spring meeting of the Texas Association of Water Board Directors (AWBD). Only a few Water Districts in the state are providing park and lake facilities for their constituents but the number seems to be increasing. The park and lakes Jody has nurtured for the past year are an outstanding example of what can be done. The AWBD has asked him to share his insights with others. Jody is very deserving of this special recognition.

► **FOUR MORE OFFICERS** are now occupying space in the WCID #110 facilities building. These policemen are part of the Harris County Fire Marshal's department. While their main focus is arson investigation, they also will be patrolling the District's park areas and assisting our constables in various ways as time allows. They are fully qualified officers with the authority to arrest miscreants.

► **A bit of philosophy:** "You see, there is one thing no nation can accuse us of, and that is secret diplomacy. Our foreign dealings are an open book – generally a checkbook." – *Will Rogers, 1879-1935*

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A LITTLE CAN MEAN A LOT. ♦ Installing aerators on kitchen and lavatory faucets can cut water usage by several hundred gallons per month for the average family of four. ♦ Using a cup instead of allowing water to run continuously while brushing the teeth can save 14 gallons of water per day. ♦ Using a pan instead of continually running water when washing vegetables or rinsing dishes can result in significant water savings. ♦ A slowly dripping faucet (100 drops per minute) will waste 350 gallons per month (gpm), a fast drip – 600 gpm, a small stream - 2,000-2,700 gpm and a large stream - 4,600 gpm. ♦ Cutting the time for the daily shower from 15 to 10 minutes will save about \$100.00 annually. It pays to be water-wise.

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March, 2010

- ▶ **EACH MONTH** Sergeant George Beck and his fellow constables furnish the Water Board with a report of the calls they have received and investigated regarding illegal activities within the Water District boundaries. An overwhelming majority of the calls they make are in the commercial areas. Most people would be surprised at the number of calls the officers receive regarding theft of items from UNLOCKED vehicles sitting in a parking lot. Although professional thieves have no trouble opening a locked car, it doesn't seem very smart to make it easier for them by leaving an unattended vehicle unlocked. Also leaving valuables inside the vehicle in full sight is almost an invitation to a thief to do his thing. Practically everyone knows to lock the car and leave no valuables in plain sight, but sometimes a REMINDER is in order.
- ▶ **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS** are still occurring within the Water District. The strip center on Louetta just west of Cheddars Restaurant in which "Spec's Wine, Spirits and Fine Foods" is located will soon have another occupant: a State Farm insurance office. A large plant nursery, "Texas Big Tree Nursery," is occupying the DeMontfond area at the corner of I-45 North and Magic Oaks Drive. Four acres on the west side of Holzwarth just south of "Shipley Donuts" has been reserved for commercial usage.
- ▶ **FOR SEVERAL YEARS** the "Forest Oaks 'Barracuda' Swim Team" has been a favorite activity for ages 5-18. The team participates in swim meets each year with an impressive record of wins. Registration for this forthcoming season is on two Sundays: April 11 and 18 from 2:00 to 5:00 P. M. at the "Forest Oaks Swim and Racquet Club" facility at 19023 Joanleigh Drive, across from Lemm Elementary School. For more information call Gary Cooper at 281/757-5453 or visit their splendid web site www.fostbarracudas.org.
- ▶ **MOTORIZED VEHICLES** are prohibited from using the slopes of the several detention ponds within the WCID #110 water district. The beautiful greenery on the slopes did not just happen. The areas have been professionally seeded, an operation that needs to be repeated periodically. Just one vehicle can cause damage to the slopes that would take thousands of dollars to repair.
- ▶ **A DISTRICT-WIDE "GARAGE SALE"** has been planned for Saturday, April 17. Residents within the district are urged to bring their items for sale. Vendors are also welcome. To sign up for the sale call the "Forest Oaks Swim and Racquet Club" at 281/353-0998.
- ▶ **A bit of philosophy:** "I really can't see any advantage of having one of your own Party in as President. I would rather be able to criticize a man than to have to apologize for him." – Will Rogers, 1879-1935

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IF YOUR HOUSE is 15 or more years old chances are the commodes are wasting your water as well as your money. Many of the older commodes use up to 7 gallons of water each flush. If you want to replace the older water-wasting commodes the ones on the market now will be of the low water volume variety. Since January 1, 1994, only low volume toilets (1.6 gallons or less per flush) can be sold in the United States. An alternative to buying new commodes is to partially displace the water in the tanks of the older ones with a large plastic bottle filled with rocks sealed inside, or some other such device.

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February, 2010

► **“TAX EXEMPTIONS,”** two words we all like to hear. Many Harris County taxing authorities, grant tax exemptions under certain specific circumstances, among them: homestead exemptions, over-65 (or surviving spouse at 55) exemptions; disability exemptions; disabled veterans exemptions, and a new 100% exemption for veterans receiving 100% disability payments from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for service-incurred injuries. Some companies are offering to apply for these exemptions in your behalf for a fee. By going to the Web page of Harris County Appraisal District you can find all the information you need about the various exemptions, as well as application forms. For information on tax exemptions offered by WCID #110 phone Equi-Tax, Inc., at 281/444-4866. This is an easy “do-it-yourself” project without incurring fees.

► **SOME TIME AGO** a company by the name of Portrait Homes purchased the parcel of land west of Shipley's Donuts and south of the child-care center on Louetta. They cleared the land with the intention of building homes on the approximately 28-acre site. Because of the turn-around in the home market these houses were never built. Now another company, Davis Development, Inc., plans to build some beautiful apartment units on the site. Completion of the project could take as long as two years.

► **THE STAND-BY GENERATOR** at Water Plant No. 1 on Enchanted Oaks Drive has served the District well for a number of years. Recently it made itself known by emptying volumes of smoke over the neighborhood during a test run. The neighbors will be glad to know that the WCID Board got the message. The generator is to be repaired and refurbished in the near future.

► **THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (TCEQ)** has mandated that all water districts prepare an Emergency Preparedness Plan. TCEQ wants to be sure that when hurricanes or other disasters occur, the people of Texas will still have access to potable water without which they could not survive. John Davis of Langford Engineering has submitted to the Board for approval an Emergency Preparedness Plan for WCID #110. The plan is a little more involved than one would ordinarily expect. It took about 150 typed pages to tell the whole story. The final product is to be submitted to TCEQ by July 1.

► **WCID #110 SERVICES** a little more than 1800 residential connections. Only 49% of the households participate in the recycling program. While this is a much higher percentage cooperation than in many other Districts, the people of WunTen can still do better. All residents are encouraged to become part of this program and to their part in protecting the environment.

► **A bit of philosophy:** “Politics has got so expensive that it takes lots of money to even get beat with nowadays” – *Will Rogers, 1879-1935*

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IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT SAVING WATER and lowering your bill try a good ol' "common sense" approach. Then you will not really need for someone to remind you to: take a shower instead of a bath; install a low-flow shower head; shorten the time spent in the shower; turn off the shower while washing and back on again to rinse; shampoo your hair while showering rather than shampooing separately. It does not take a "rocket scientist" brain to think of these and many more "common sense" ways to conserve water.