

# El Toro Water District

# WaterViews

## 2003/04 Budget Adopted

The El Toro Water District recently completed and adopted its budget for the 2003/04 fiscal year. As a result of our budget review process and an extensive evaluation by outside water engineering experts, we are announcing an increase in water/sewer rates for the coming year. Beginning October 1 2003, the average monthly cost for residential customers will increase by approximately \$3.39 or 7.6%.

See page 2 for more details...

## El Toro Water District Emergency Preparedness

A critical mission of the El Toro Water District is to continue to meet the demands of its customers during any emergency conditions.

Historically, ETWD has made significant investments in equipment and personnel training to ensure the quickest and most appropriate response to emergencies. ETWD's objective is to safely preserve or restore service to its customers as quickly as possible.

ETWD has developed a detailed Emergency Preparedness Plan. This plan serves as a basis for training of ETWD personnel as well as a manual to which personnel may refer in the event of an emergency. The plan is regularly updated and provides appropriate direction to initiate an efficient response.

ETWD has invested in stand-by equipment dedicated to emergency response. Critical facilities are equipped with standby generators that will keep them running in the event of power

failures. ETWD also owns several portable generators. Emergency preparedness material and supply facilities are maintained at two different locations to facilitate ETWD response to any emergency.

ETWD is fully prepared for after-hours emergencies. The immediate response is initiated by the

ETWD's primary "on-call" person. At any given time there are at least three trained, certified operators

"on-call". Phone calls placed to the District's after-hours emergency line or automated alarms from ETWD facilities spur immediate action by the "on-call" person. Additional personnel are always available as necessary.

Emergency planning and response is coordinated with local police and fire as well as with neighboring water agencies, regional



**ETWD Backup Generator**

wholesale water suppliers, the State Department of Health Services and the State Office of Emergency Services.

ETWD customers may rest assured that ETWD is well prepared to respond to emergencies impacting the service the District is dedicated to providing. ♦

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*Dennis Cafferty, Director of Operations and  
Engineering*

# POLLUTION AWARENESS

## CARPET CLEANING BUSINESSES

ETWD wants its customers to be informed about important commercial carpet cleaning “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) that are necessary to reduce the amount of pollutants reaching sanitary sewers, storm drains and our beaches.

In South Orange County, water in the streets, gutters, parking lots, and storm drains flow directly to local creeks and then to the Pacific Ocean without any treatment. Wash water used in carpet cleaning often carries dirt, soap and degreasers that damage sensitive habitats and finally end up polluting the ocean. In fact, discharging any kind of a polluting substance into a storm drain, or any place where it will run off into a storm drain, is against the law.

### **BE ADVISED - carpet cleaning businesses should abide by the following BMP's:**

1. Purchase and use the most environmentally friendly products you can.
2. Eliminate any hazardous products that you use. Switch to water based cleaners.
3. Collect all wastewater generated at the facility being cleaned.
4. All wastewater may be discharged from the premises being cleaned to the sewer system. This may be done through a sink, mop sink, toilet or clean-out located at the facility.
5. ***Prior to any on-site discharge to the sewer system the wastewater shall be filtered to remove carpet fibers, grit or any noticeable large material.***
6. Include these BMPs in your employees training and work practices.
7. Educate your customers and let them know that you take extra measures to be an environmentally protective business.
8. **Discharge of carpet cleaning wastewater directly into a publicly owned sewer system manhole is prohibited.**
9. Discharge of carpet cleaning wastewater anywhere that allows it to flow into a storm drain is prohibited.◆



# RATES AND THE BUDGET

At a public meeting held on September 25, 2003 the Board of Directors of the ETWD adopted a combination of rate increases in conjunction with borrowing from District reserves to balance the operating budget for fiscal year 2003/04. This decision was not made easily and reflects the Board's strong desire to hold down costs to our customers.

The ETWD and the water industry in general have been faced with increased costs, many of which are beyond our control. These factors include rising import water costs, increased regional wastewater treatment and disposal costs, post 9/11 water safety and security mandates, increases in labor related medical and workers compensation insurance, projected infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs and more aggressive and stringent regulatory requirements.

In spite of all these outside pressures, by partnering with neighboring water agencies, keeping our internal operating expenses lean and investing in technology, we actually reduced the water rate by 21% in the year 2000. In fact, water rates have not increased since 1994, despite ongoing inflationary factors.

However, as we studied the situation and with a report from water engineering experts Black and Veatch in hand, it was clear that additional revenue was required to continue to maintain the District in a responsible manner.

ETWD Board of Directors made a decision to mitigate the size of the rate increase by tapping into reserves. Obviously, we cannot continue to balance our budget by using our savings, but the Directors wanted to hold the line on increases this year as we search for options for the future.

As explained in our June publication of the ETWD Water Views Newsletter, during the course of the 2003/04 fiscal year we will continue to assess projected increases in business costs and to identify opportunities to offset those increases to help minimize future adjustments. However, it is likely that future rate increases will be unavoidable. Under consideration are options to collect revenue deemed necessary to fund cost of services inclusive of collecting a portion of the cost of services on the tax roles. Utilizing the County as a revenue collection vehicle is a common practice for public agencies such as ETWD.

As we review our situation, we will continue to keep you and our other ratepayers informed of our ongoing financial needs. If you would like more information please contact our Customer Service Representatives at (949) 837-0660.◆

# WATER CONSERVATION CORNER

## Fall Watering Schedules

### Keep Your Eye on the Target

What is the target?

The target always relates to having healthy plants while using the right amount of resources (water, fertilizer, etc.). October is typically a month of high over-watering. Why? It may still feel hot to gardeners; however, the ET (evapotranspiration rate), the water use target for plants, is dropping rapidly.



Summer schedules may still be programmed into controllers, yet the ET, or the target water use, is 50 percent less in fall months. It's time to change controllers by reducing the irrigation schedules by approximately 50 percent. That may mean less time, but more likely it means fewer days. Why?

The soil needs to dry between watering, especially for trees, shrubs and ground-covers.

When the rains come, wet, saturated soils mean rainwater will run off. Applying irrigation water and then allowing the soils to dry somewhat will allow rainwater to penetrate into the soil.

Allowing the soil to dry out between watering means air will move into the soil and plant root zone. This enables plants, including turf, to increase root mass and depth. (If the soil constantly stays wet, roots rot and become more condensed in the soil).

Shallow roots become the rule if Fall watering is not turned down. Rain makes the problem worse from more water being added to already wet soil. This is true for both trees and turf.

By applying only the water the plants need now (ET), you can:

- Reduce root rot
- Reduce water bills
- Reduce runoff ♦

## High Efficiency Washing Machine Rebate Program

### Rebates through December

Orange County residents can purchase qualifying high efficiency washing machines at a retail outlet of their choice and submit an application for a **\$100 rebate through December 31, 2003**. These washers can save you 15 - 25 gallons per load.

For an application, program guidelines, and a listing of approved machines, please call (800) 954-4344.

For the coin/card operated high efficiency commercial clothes washer rebate program, commercial customers can call (877) 728-2282. ♦



## Residential Toilet Exchange Site Saturday, November 29

Laguna Hills High School  
25401 Paseo de Valencia  
Laguna Hills

- ♦ \$30 Co-Pay
- ♦ Exchange pre-1992 toilets for a water-saving Ultra Low Flush Toilet
- ♦ ULFT's save 2 - 3.5 gallons per flush
- ♦ Limit 2 toilets per household
- ♦ Required to return old toilets for recycling (Return date: Saturday, December 13)

For more information, please visit our website at [www.etwd.com](http://www.etwd.com) or call (800) 693-5331.

# Water Education Corner



## Interesting Facts About Water

What percentage of the earth's surface is water?

80%

Of all the earth's water, what percentage is ocean/seas?

97%

How much of the earth's water is frozen and unusable?

2%

How much of the earth's water is suitable for drinking water?

1%



How much does 1 gallon of water weigh?

8.34 pounds

How many gallons of water are in one cubic foot?

7.48 gallons

How many gallons of water does one person use per day?

Apprx. 70 - 100 gallons

How many gallons of water does a family of 5 use in 1 year?

Apprx. 182,500 gallons

### Quick Takes.....

"Nothing makes a person more productive than the last minute."

**Unknown**

"Imagination is the highest kite one can fly."

**Lauren Becall**

Regular meetings of the El Toro Water District Board of Directors are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 8:00 A.M. at the District's Administration Offices at 24251 Los Alisos Blvd. in Lake Forest.

## EL TORO WATER DISTRICT

24251 Los Alisos Boulevard  
Lake Forest, CA 92630  
(949) 837-0660

The Mission of the El Toro Water District is to provide its customers a safe, adequate and reliable supply of water and wastewater service in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

Water Views is published quarterly to keep water users in the El Toro Water District informed about water and sewer related issues and events. It is prepared by District staff. [Your comments and suggestions are welcomed.](#) Please call Customer Service at (949) 837-0660 or visit our website at [www.etwd.com](http://www.etwd.com).

The El Toro Water District is a California Water District governed by an elected Board of Directors.

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