

MUD 18 Newsletter
May-June 2013
www.mcmud18.com

Debt Refunding Yields \$555,000 in Savings: Like many homeowners who have refinanced their home mortgage, the board has recently refinanced some of the District's older bonds to take advantage of lower interest rates. Previously the Board has refinanced bonds in 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2012. This recent refinancing will replace bonds originally issued in 2004 and 2006 at rates averaging 4.3% with new bonds averaging 2.7%. These lower rates will save District taxpayers \$555,000 over the next 17 years or an average of about \$33,000 per year. While this may not be a lot relative to the current annual debt payment of \$2.7 million, every bit helps.



Hurricane Season - Be Prepared: Hurricane season began June 1 and ends Nov. 30. The



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted 13 to 20 named storms this year, seven of which could become hurricanes. While no one knows if we will experience a named storm, all residents are encouraged to become aware of the steps to take if a hurricane heads for our area. The National Hurricane Center, area news media and civil defense agencies will provide information and advice for residents in the upper Texas coast region. Issues within Bentwater will be addressed by the POA and MUD 18. MUD 18's role focuses on potential problems related to water supply, sewage handling, garbage pickup and storm water drainage. The POA will serve as the Command Center and can mobilize a trained Community Emergency Response Team.

Prior to the start of the hurricane season, MUD 18 conducted inspections of all major storm drainage areas to ensure they are clear of any blocking debris. Neither residents nor their yard crews should ever dispose of yard debris in any of the natural drainage areas or in the storm drains. In recent years, MUD 18 has installed natural gas generators on many of our lift stations, at a cost of one million dollars, to provide sewer service during an extended power outage. In May, preventive maintenance with extended test run times was performed on all generators to ensure readiness to provide back-up power. Access to diesel fuel has been arranged to keep equipment at the water plant operating. Residents should understand the importance of minimizing use of water, minimizing the production of waste water and other helpful actions during a large storm event with an extended electrical power outage.

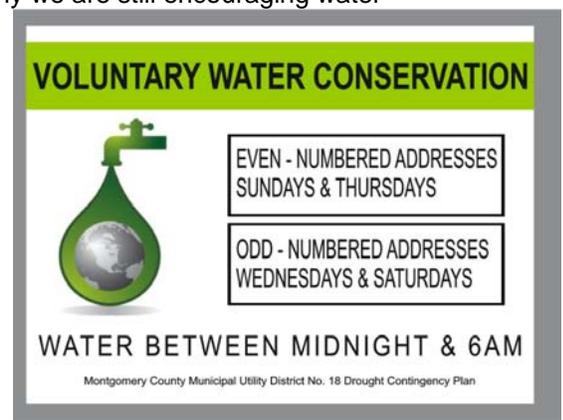
MUD 18's *Homeowner Hurricane Information* is being included with your June billing. This information includes guidelines for advance preparation and important advice for dealing with the aftermath of a storm, including communication procedures to provide access to the most reliable information on conditions within Bentwater. A copy of these guidelines is always available on our website at www.mcmud18.com.

Take Action Early. Be considerate of neighbors. Stay informed. Be Safe.

Mild Drought Conditions Went Into Effect June 1: Have you noticed the signs posted at major intersections reminding homeowners to voluntarily conserve water? Some may wonder why we are still encouraging water conservation now that we have a producing well in the Catahoula. For decades, the Jasper aquifer was a reliable primary water source for Montgomery County until concern of overuse prompted a serious consideration for alternative water sources. While the Catahoula aquifer provides a good long term alternative water supply, we need to be mindful of our responsibility to share this precious resource with future generations. We cannot assume an infinite supply. *We must use water responsibly. It is the right thing to do.*

So even with the new well, the Board will continue to adhere to the Drought Contingency Plan we developed several years ago. Accordingly, the Board has declared a MILD DROUGHT Condition to be in effect as of June 1 and to stay in effect until Sept 30. The objectives of this stage of our plan are to:

1. Encourage responsible water conservation while encouraging healthier lawns and landscapes. During recent droughts, we learned more about actively managing our landscape irrigation systems and how to encourage healthier root systems for landscapes that can better tolerate both drought and freezing conditions. Please continue those practices.
2. Avoid exceeding the "safe operating conditions" of our wells. If our water supply facilities reach or exceed these conditions, mandatory water usage restrictions will be necessary. The new Catahoula well and additional storage tanks give us greater capacity than we have had before. With the expanded facilities and everyone's attention to conservation, we can avoid mandatory restrictions.



Reminders for responsible lawn irrigation:

During summer months, 80% of our water usage is for lawn irrigation and 50% of that water is WASTED. The water coming into your irrigation system is clean and wholesome -- a lot of money has been spent to pump it from far below the earth's surface, to treat it and to deliver it to you. The following tips will help each of us use it responsibly:

1. Conduct regular inspections of your irrigation system. Once a month, turn on your system during day light hours to check for missing, broken, clogged or misaligned sprinkler heads. Make sure you are reaching areas you want and NOT watering the concrete. Make appropriate adjustments and repairs.
2. Adjust your irrigation schedule based on plant water needs. Poor irrigation scheduling (i.e. watering too often and for too long) is the number one source of waste associated with irrigation systems. Most plants need 1" or less of water a week to thrive. Overwatering weakens your grass and plants. During the summer months, twice per week watering can maintain a healthy landscape. If your system is creating run-off, you are wasting water and money. Adjust your sprinkler cycle times to fit the absorption rate of the soil in your yard. On your watering days, split run times over two different intervals to allow absorption and avoid wasted runoff. Daytime watering is wasteful due to evaporation and can be stressful to plants and lawns. Watering between midnight and 6AM is healthier for your lawn and helps us maintain steady water pressure.

Water conservation saves you money and protects our precious water resource.

Residents Tour Catahoula Water Plant: In late May, Danny Wright with Hays Utility Services and John Bleyl with Bleyl Engineering & Associates conducted a tour of the new plant to residents who had expressed an interest. We can all be very proud of this new facility.



Sign-up for E-Blasts:

If you are not receiving our E-Blasts, you are missing out on timely information. Go to our website www.mcmud18.com and give us your email address. Your address will not be shared with anyone and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Need to Report a Problem?

Don't assume the problem has already been identified or reported. If you observe a water leak, sewer odor, discolored water, open manholes, alarms are sounding, or other problems, please help us by calling:

Hays Utility Service @ 936-588-1166.

Hays has someone in Bentwater every day, seven days a week. They can and will respond 24 hours a day. Their general office hours are from 8:00AM to 4:30PM Monday through Friday.

Meetings Open to the Public:

Our regularly scheduled monthly meetings are the **2nd Tuesdays at 2:30PM** in the Country Club Board Room. Meetings are open to the public. The agenda is posted on our web site and the message board in the breezeway entrance to the Country Club Grill near the Golf Pro-shop.

Sincerely,

Your MUD Board:

Lou Tichacek	President	597-7010
Linda Pierce	Vice President	597-5463
Roy Champagne	Treasurer	597-8786
Joe Constantino	Secretary	597-8029
Chris Uzelmeier	Assistant Secretary	449-5198