

**MUD 18 Newsletter**  
**August 2016 – September 2016**  
[www.mcmud18.com](http://www.mcmud18.com)

**Catahoula Well #2 Update:** Weather has delayed the scheduled completion of the project, particularly in regard to providing an expanded power supply from Entergy. Entergy had to redirect their priorities after the power outages caused by the violent storms in late Spring. Thereafter, recurring wet weather slowed Entergy's work on both the repair of overall storm damage and on installation of our power supply. Most of the delayed work has been completed and we are now focused on completion of the above-ground facilities to support the new well. Completion is still scheduled for October. Generally the water from the new well will contain even lower mineral content than water from our Catahoula Well #1. Some homeowners may notice changes from this improvement in purity as the percentage of water derived from the Jasper aquifer declines.

**Summer weather conditions** are mostly behind us. Concerns about drought are fading and you may see changes in our postings about water conservation. There is actually a law which requires us to have a drought contingency plan to protect water supplies. Our plan, developed a few years ago, followed the most common practices of utility districts -- i.e., postings according to certain calendar dates and water supply metrics. Some people wondered about postings being instituted in one of the rainiest periods of recent years. We will revisit the construction of our plan in order to make it less confusing. In any case, there is quite a bit of sense to making good practices habitual. This applies not just to us homeowners, but to our plantings as well. Plants lose whatever drought tolerance they naturally have if we get in the habit of very generous watering.

**Reliability:** Another seasonal effect, that of hurricanes, is largely behind us. Nevertheless, we are proceeding with installation of a new emergency power generator in the new water plant. It will be fueled by natural gas as part of a continuing program to install such generators at key facilities. We continue to have portable diesel-powered generators as backups for power outages. The expected advantage of natural gas generators is their more reliable fuel supply, especially when storm debris blocks roads which would need to be used for transporting portable generators and fuel.

**Five Year Plan:** We habitually produce and maintain a 5 year plan for the current fiscal year (Oct 1 to Sept 30) and for each of the following 4 years. Many of the items in the plan are of a preventive maintenance character, focused where "a stitch in time will save nine." Some items lower the cost of maintenance, others improve reliability (as in the case of the emergency generators.) As our array of facilities has grown, the plan has had to grow also. The amount budgeted for the 2016 to 2017 budget year is currently \$1,112,800; this is significantly higher than in previous years. Many residents have probably noticed the significant damage done to many of our storm water drainage channels, with failures of bulkheads along creeks, meandering of drainage creek beds, etc. These issues have led us to increase the size of the 5-year plan to start a program of repairs and corrections.

**MUD Taxes:** The Montgomery County Appraisal District has finished hearing and resolving complaints about property valuations. We have gotten our appraised values for Bentwater, including all our homes, lots, Country Club facilities, etc. Certified value reckoned as of December 2015 is \$958,070,398 and these property values will be the bases for our next property tax bills. The new tax rate, recently set by the Board of Directors, is 33 cents per \$100 of valuation, one cent lower than last year. The 33 cents consists of 20 cents for paying interest and principal on outstanding bonds, and 13 cents for maintenance and operations. Bonds are gradually being paid off, so the bond payments have been declining. Operating facilities, in large part, have been growing older and requiring more maintenance; thus the maintenance tax has had to be raised. For comparison, valuation of property in our District was \$911,171,455 last year.

**Recycling:** You may have noticed that the truck which picks up the heavy recycle bins is automated. An arm with "claws" reaches out to grab the container, lift it above the truck and then tip it to dump the contents. In order for this to work, the bin has to be placed properly at the curb. Unfortunately, the way the bin is constructed seems counter-intuitive. The wheels must be placed against the curb in order for the process to work, yet it can seem easier to place the bin with wheels away from the curb. The truck claws are able to lift the bin in any case, but if the wheels are not at the curb, the lid will open in a way that lets trash spill on the street. Last year, while Waste Management was working out the new pickup process, there was a second person in the truck to handle failures. The trucks have all been debugged, and now there is only a driver who can't easily jump out to reposition the bins. So we need to keep the wheels against the curb. If you forget all this, there is a notice on the top of the lid, where you open it, opposite the hinges, with arrows noting the direction for placement.

**Trash Pickup Schedule on Holidays.** When a holiday falls on a Monday or Friday, do you ever wonder if we will have trash pick-up on the normally scheduled day? Although Memorial Day, July 4 and Labor Day all fall on a Monday, WMS will provide regularly scheduled trash pick-up. The only holidays that Waste Management discontinues scheduled pick-up is on Christmas and New Year's. If you wonder about Thanksgiving, you can always go to our web site [www.mcmud18](http://www.mcmud18) and find the holiday pick-up schedule.



**Sign-up for E-Blasts:** If you are not receiving our E-Blasts, you are missing out on timely information. Go to our website at [www.mcmud18.com](http://www.mcmud18.com) and give us your email address. Your address will not be shared with anyone. You can unsubscribe at any time.

In conjunction with setting the tax rate, the Board has put together its operating budget for the coming fiscal year. We will post this and similar information on the web site. One of the many things we are required to do every year is to hire an auditor to examine our books and make a declaration on the state of our finances. We will make this document available on our website [www.mcmud18.com](http://www.mcmud18.com) when it is ready. If you don't like computers (or even if you do) you can always find out what's going on by attending our monthly Board of Directors meeting. It's easy because --

**Meetings are Open to the Public:**

Our regularly scheduled monthly meetings are the **2nd Tuesdays at 2:30PM**, generally in the Country Club Board Room. Meetings are open to the public. No reservations are necessary. 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:

Linda Pierce	President	597-5463
Lou Tichacek	Vice President	597-7010
Susan McFarland	Treasurer	597-7503
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Gary Montgomery	Assistant Secretary	597-9256

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