

## **NEW WATER RATES APPROVED FOR 2016**

At a public hearing held on December 15, 2015, the Rainbow MWD Board of Directors approved a revised rate structure that took effect on January 1, 2016. These new rates affect water consumed after January 1<sup>st</sup>, so you won't see the impact of the new rates until the February bill. These new rates were developed over a nearly 12 month process in which a series of 11 publicly noticed meetings were held by the RMWD Budget and Finance Committee and the RMWD Board of Directors. Complicating the process was the California Supreme Court acceptance of an Appellate Court decision regarding water rates in a case involving the City of San Juan Capistrano. This court case set strict guidelines for how water agencies are allowed to apportion costs among ratepayers, essentially prescribing some of the methodologies that we must use to establish water rates.

The District was also faced with mandatory cutbacks that were imposed by the State of California for our residential customers, as well as smaller cutbacks for our agricultural customers who are on the Transitional Special Agricultural Water Rate (TSAWR). These challenges have the effect of reducing sales, so some of the fixed costs that are recovered through water sales rather than through meter access fees come up short.

Through all of this, RMWD's cost controls that are in place resulted in one of the smallest overall rate increases in San Diego County – a 6% total revenue increase. Within the new rate structure we tried hard to both follow the edicts of the courts AND try to ease the burden of the new structure from falling onto one group disproportionately. This was a big challenge but we think we found a good balance. Here are some of the notable changes:

- Small residential lots who use very little water may actually see their monthly bills go down. The court mandated Cost of Service study found that these small users have a low impact on our system and as such have a lower responsibility for their share of fixed costs.
- Residential users who use large amounts of water will see larger increases, primarily due to a State of California requirement that we adopt tiered rate structures for residential users. This requirement was part of a Conservation Order that was levied on the District in August. If you are a large residential water user with no agricultural use, you may want to check into having a home water audit done to help manage your consumption – and bill. Check our website for details.
- Agricultural customers with large meters will see an increase in their monthly service fees but will not see the tiered rate increases that are within the residential classes. If you have a large agricultural meter but only use a small amount of water you may want to consider downsizing your meter as your monthly fixed fees will be increasing. If you use a large amount of water, the impact of the fixed monthly increase is mitigated by a smaller increase in the unit cost of water.
- TSAWR customers will also see a somewhat higher fixed monthly fee, but the unit cost of the water actually drops this year. TSAWR customers who use medium to large amounts of water will see very little change in their monthly bills. Again, if your meter size is large and your consumption is small, you may want to consider downsizing your meter – contact our Engineering Department for details.

Finally, the District had a practice of reducing the monthly fixed fee for customers who locked off their meters. Regrettably, a court case from Northern California has caused this practice to be inconsistent with State Law, so we must discontinue this discount. The argument is that every property where service provision is in the control of the landowner or tenant has an obligation to pay for fixed fees irrespective of whether they use water or not. This change will affect a few hundred customers at RMWD. We regret having to make the change, but at the end of the day we must follow State Law with our water rate structure.

**RAINBOW  
MUNICIPAL  
WATER  
DISTRICT**

3707 Old Highway 395  
Fallbrook, CA 92029  
760-728-1178  
[www.rainbowmwd.com](http://www.rainbowmwd.com)

**2015  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Division 1  
Helene Brazier  
(760) 723-0465  
hbrazier@aol.com

Division 2  
Jack Griffiths  
(760) 940-8935  
arcus@dslextreme.com

Division 3  
Tory Walker  
(760) 414-9212  
tory@trwengineering.com

Division 4  
Bob Lucy  
(760) 728-8325  
bobl@delreyavocado.com

Division 5  
Dennis Sanford  
(714) 299-9865  
dennissanford@gmail.com

**STAFF**

**General Manager**  
Tom Kennedy

**Finance Manager**  
Vanessa Martinez

**Engineering Manager**  
Sherry Kirkpatrick

**Human Resources Mgr.**  
René Bush

**CARLSBAD DESALINATION PROJECT**

The Carlsbad plant, which is the most energy-efficient desalination plant in the world, started commercial production in December. This project is part of the San Diego County Water Authority's long-term plan for improving our water supply dependability. Although the entire county doesn't directly receive desalination seawater we all benefit from its use. Having another reliable source in the San Diego region has allowed us to have enough water to meet our normal demands even with the supply cutbacks from Metropolitan Water District.



Division 3 Director, Tory Walker

**ARE YOU READY FOR EL NINO!**

Many of us have dealt with El Nino before and many others are new to this phenomenon. Either way it has been some time since we have seen this kind of rainfall; therefore, we need to be prepared. So are you ready? Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- 1) The days are becoming shorter and the nights colder so plants need less water. Adjust your watering schedule to accommodate these conditions.
- 2) Turn off your system entirely during the rains to save on your water usage.
- 3) Make sure your drainage passageways are clear to allow proper runoff.
- 4) Free sand bags will be available on a first come, first serve basis at your local Fire Station #4 located at Old Highway 395 and Pala Mesa Road so contact them beforehand at (760) 723-2024.



**Get Your Free North County Water Agencies "Be Water Smart" 2016 Calendar**



Posters were created by fourth graders as part of the 2015 North County Water Agencies Water Awareness Poster Contest. These posters were then incorporated into these colorful 2016 calendars and are available for free at the District offices. Please be sure to stop by and get your calendar showcasing the creativity of these children and their new appreciation of water! (Available while quantities last.)