

WaterSource

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A Newsletter to the Customers of Bella Vista Water Company, Inc.
an Algonquin water utility.

Time to bring you up-to-date on some issues and happenings.

BY JUDY GIGNAC

Inside this Issue!

In this issue, we'll complete our series *Groundwater Protection Begins At Home* and discuss the proper maintenance and potential hazards to our aquifer of septic tanks. Plus, we'll begin a two-part series on bottled water and home water treatment devices with a quick Q & A covering some common questions and misconceptions about both.

What are the "Top Six" things you can do to save water in the kitchen and laundry? The answers are all right here...in this issue!

As we reported to you many months ago, we are just about ready to change our billing system. Data conversion from the old system to the new will begin October 25th. The first group of customers receiving the new bills will be those living in the BVW-South System which includes Rail Oaks, Nicksville, Ash/Stump Canyons and the Wildhorse area. The other areas will follow during November. The bills will be sent in an envelope, not as a postcard as originally thought. This will allow us the flexibility to provide inserts from time to time. The new bills will also include a use chart on a month-by-month basis. Unfortunately, it will take 12 months in order to actually compare current use with a year ago, but eventually you will be able to track that use. Once the "bugs" are out of the system - and we hope there aren't many - customers will be offered the option of signing up for an automatic pay process through your bank. It is hoped that this option will be ready before the first of 2004.

Again, for the customers in the south system, we notified you on your current bill that a Curtailment Plan for the South System had been approved by the Arizona Corporation Commission. A copy of the Plan is available by calling the office and requesting one. The South System is very sensitive to the drought, because the wells are much smaller producers due to the hilly, mountainous topography of the area. This is why only the south system has such a plan. Cautious use of water is urged. The Plan is currently not in effect, but is available as a conservation tool should it be needed.

Relating to the Curtailment Plan is our ongoing pursuit of additional, high producing, water sources in the Nicksville and Wildhorse areas. If two good wells can be located, put on-line and connected to the 12" line along State Route 92, we can go a long ways towards assuring a more stable water supply.

Finally, during the winter months we all need to THINK SNOW! A good snow pack on the Huachuca Mountains will, during the spring thaw, allow for a great recharge of the aquifers along the mountain fronts. This will not only assist the public wells, but also private wells serving individual homes. So THINK SNOW, at least in the mountains. Your help in this effort is appreciated!

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GROUNDWATER PROTECTION... BEGINS AT HOME!

Part 5: Septic Tanks

In many places around your home right now, you probably have any number of common household items that contain hazardous and/or toxic substances. When these common items are disposed of improperly, they can cause serious damage to our groundwater supply. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the average American disposes of approximately one pound of such waste each year!

One common source of groundwater contamination is leaky or faulty septic systems. Septic tanks are often overlooked because they're underground and easily forgotten. Many times owners don't even know that their septic tanks/systems need regular maintenance to make sure that they're functioning properly.

Most septic system failures occur because of a lack of maintenance. Septic tanks should be inspected every three to five years and pumped if necessary. Otherwise, the tank and field may plug, causing overflows that can reach the aquifer through cracks and fissures.

If your home has a septic system, you can prevent messy - and costly - problems by carefully guarding what enters your system. Do not pour hazardous materials down drains or toilets. Even small amounts of paints, varnishes, pesticides, and other chemicals can destroy the delicate biological system that septic tanks use to break down waste. These products can then seep out of your septic system, contaminating the groundwater.

Avoid septic tank cleaners with acids and solvents such as trichloroethylene (TCE). And remember to have your system inspected by a professional at least every three to five years.

The Top 6 Things You Can Do to Save Water in the Kitchen and Laundry!

1. Use your automatic dishwasher only for full loads.

If you just have a couple of bowls that need washed, wash them by hand or put them in the dishwasher and wait to run it until the load is full.

2. When you wash your dishes by hand, don't leave the water running to rinse them off.

If you have two sinks - and many of us do these days - fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have only one sink, gather your washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse them with a panful of hot water or spray device.

3. Don't let the faucet run while you wash your vegetables.

You'll save gallons of water if you rinse them in a stoppered sink or a pan of clean water.

4. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.

Running tap water to let it "cool down" is extremely wasteful. If you keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge, you'll eliminate a lot of waste...and your water will be much cooler too!

5. Use your washing machine only for full loads.

The same principle applies here as in #1, except more so. Every load of laundry you do needs a wash cycle and a rinse cycle. By waiting until you have full loads before you run your washing machine, you'll save an amazing amount of water.

6. Check faucets and pipes for leaks.

This is crucial, because leaks in faucets and pipes never stop wasting water! Leaks waste water 24 hours a day, seven days a week until you find them and fix them. Most times you can fix common household leaks with only an inexpensive washer. This sounds simple, but even a small leak left unfixed can waste hundreds and hundreds of gallons of water!

Remember: Use water, but use it wisely!

Water Proverb!

Air and water. Men are destined to take both for granted until they have neither.

(Unknown)

So what's the truth about bottled water and home water treatment devices?

A quick (hopefully helpful) Q&A.

Q: Is bottled water really safer or healthier to drink than tap water?

A: Not necessarily. The safety of bottled water and tap water initially depends on the source of the water. Monitoring and source protection, treatment and testing ultimately determine the quality of both. The 1996 Reauthorization of the Safe Drinking Water Act requires that bottled water be monitored and tested in the same rigorous manner that our tap water has been tested for years. This helps assure that the bottled water you buy is of a consistent quality regardless of which brand you purchase.

Q: Are all bottled water products the same?

A: No. There are many different kinds of bottled water, including: sparkling water, natural sparkling water, mineral water, artesian water, natural water, spring water, well water, purified water, and distilled water. All are different in terms of their source and preparation. And remember: bottled water that contains flavoring and/or sugar is NOT considered "bottled water," and therefore is NOT subject to the same quality regulations as other bottled water.

Q: Will using a home water treatment device make my water safer and healthier?

A: Again, not necessarily. You can use a home water filter to alter (we can't be certain it will "improve") the taste, smell and/or appearance of your tap water, but it may not make the water safer or healthier to drink.

Q: Can home treatment devices ever do more harm than good?

A: Yes. Unfortunately, if regular maintenance is not performed properly, water quality problems can result.

This is the first of a two part series on bottled water and home water treatment systems. In our next issue we'll go into greater depth in the information we give you on both.

In our next issue...

More information on Bottled Water and Home Water Treatment Devices.

12-Month Water Usage Numbers

Did you know...?

DID YOU KNOW?

... that if everyone in the United States flushed the toilet just one less time each day, we could save a lake full of water about a mile long, a mile wide, and four feet deep every day?

... that of all the earth's water, 97% is salt water found in the earth's oceans and seas?

... that only 1% of the earth's water is available for drinking water? Two percent is currently frozen.

This newsletter is offered as a service to our customers. If you have any questions or comments about any of the material in this issue, or ideas or suggestions for future issues, we'd love to hear from you. Please address them to:

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