



Water



### TIMELY PAYMENTS HELP ENSURE LOW RATES

It goes without saying that an unreliable income leads to tough financial times. Just as individuals depend on a reliable income to monitor their bank accounts, so does SJWD. Managing past-due accounts impacts the district's ability to predict cash flow and operate an efficient budget. In addition, delivering past-due notices and processing late payments costs time and money. Eventually, these additional costs can result in higher rates for everyone, including those who are conscientious about making timely payments.

Each month, 150 to 250 past-due notices are delivered to customers, resulting in substantial administrative and operational costs for the district. To help recover these costs, please note that a \$15 late payment fee is applied when a notice is delivered. Ideally, penalties would never need to be assessed, but the late payment fee helps ensure that public funds aren't being spent on costs stemming from a small percentage of our customers.

#### Avoid Late Fees With Simple Payment Options

SJWD offers these free bill payment options to make it easy for you to make payments on time.



**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT):** You can have your water payments automatically deducted directly from your bank account.



**Credit card payments:** We accept Visa and MasterCard, and you can sign up to have the amount of your bill automatically charged to your credit card each billing cycle. You can also call us to make a credit card payment over the phone.

Applications for both bill payment options are available online at [www.sjwd.org](http://www.sjwd.org) or you may request an application by calling (916) 791-0115.



### FALL BACK INTO WATER EFFICIENT HABITS

As the summer months come to an end, so should many of our summertime water habits. With the cooler weather comes increased moisture, which satisfies nearly all the demands of your lawn and outdoor landscaping. Here are a few helpful water efficiency tips to keep in mind this fall:

- When it rains, turn off your irrigation system. Or, simply install a rain sensor to automatically shut it off and eliminate unnecessary watering. Rain sensors are inexpensive and available at most home improvement stores.
- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean your driveway and walkways. This saves water and reduces the amount of pollution washed down our storm drains.
- Look for leaks in your irrigation lines and indoor water fixtures. Leaks can waste thousands of gallons of water every month. Visit [www.h2ouse.org](http://www.h2ouse.org) for helpful tips about how to check for and fix leaks. Or, call us at (916) 791-2663 for a FREE landscape irrigation review.

### REBATES HELP FLUSH THE EXPENSE OF NEW TOILETS

As a San Juan Water District customer, you are eligible for a \$75 rebate when you replace a two gallon per flush (GPF) or greater toilet with a more efficient one. Now, thanks to a partnership with the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, you may be eligible for another \$50 rebate if you reside in Sacramento County, for a total of \$125 in savings!



By replacing a larger GPF toilet with a more efficient model (1.6 GPF or less), you can save between 10,000 and 26,000 gallons of water per year.

If you'd like to know whether you qualify for either or both of these rebates, call us at (916) 791-2663 or visit [www.sjwd.org](http://www.sjwd.org) for program details and other eligibility requirements.

## ASK MIKE!

Your Water Quality Questions  
Answered by Mike O'Bleness,  
Water Quality Manager

*Q: Should I install a water softener at my home?*

**A:** San Juan Water District already delivers soft water to our customers, so you don't need to worry about purchasing and maintaining a water softener. When water softeners are used with soft water, it can cause corrosion to pipes and plumbing fixtures.

San Juan's unusually soft water doesn't contain many minerals. Because of this, only small amounts of detergent or soap are needed to clean dishes, clothes and automobiles. Always use detergents sparingly and consider using lower phosphate detergents. If you've recently purchased a new appliance, check the manual for additional information about appropriate detergent levels relative to San Juan's hardness level, which is 1.75 grains per gallon.

If you have additional questions about water softeners or water quality, in general, please contact me at (916) 791-6920 or [mikeo@sjwd.org](mailto:mikeo@sjwd.org).

## DISTRICT ENTERS FINAL PHASE OF RATE STANDARDIZATION

To move toward a more equitable rate structure, customers have experienced some changes in their water bills. This is the third of a three-year plan to standardize rates for some of our flat rate customers. All metered customers and most flat rate customers were fully converted to the standardized rate two years ago. A rate change notice will be mailed to those customers who are still in the conversion process. Once this third and final phase is implemented, all customers will pay an equal share of the cost of providing service under the standardized rate structure.

## DISTRICT APPLAUDS CUSTOMERS FOR PATIENCE

We would like to thank our customers for patience and understanding throughout the process of streamlining our billing procedures. In recent months, the district has overhauled the billing format and reconfigured the service period. The most recent change was in the way flat rate customers are billed. Starting with the July and August billings, flat rate bills are now calculated over a different service period. This enables SJWD to make better use of our new customer information and billing software and prepare for metered billing in 2005. We apologize if any glitches have caused you inconvenience.



## NEW OAKS PROJECT IS BECOMING AN OLD TRADITION



This marks the 13th year of the district's New Oaks Project — a program to replace old oak trees throughout the community that were lost during development. On Saturday, December 6, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, local youth organizations are invited to join us in continuing this tradition by planting acorns.

The acorn-planting will take place at the district's offices, located at 9935 Auburn-Folsom Road in Granite Bay. The planted acorns will be nurtured until they are ready to be planted into the ground as saplings, at which point they will be made available to the community free of charge.

Youth organizations interested in participating in the project must reserve a spot by calling (916) 791-2663. All participants will receive a merit badge.

## BOARD-APPROVED RATE INCREASE IN EFFECT

In order to bring the district's water treatment plant in line with new, more stringent federal regulations, the SJWD Board of Directors approved a rate increase in June to help the district fund water treatment plant upgrades. The 12 percent increase was approved after a public hearing on June 11. It took effect September 1, so you should see a difference — \$4.40 per month for the average flat rate customer — on your water bill.

In addition to helping cover the costs of treatment plant upgrades, the rate increase will fund improvements to pump stations and reservoirs that are more than 20 years old, all of which will allow the district to continue providing reliable, high-quality water. Grant money from Proposition 13 funds through the California Department of Water Resources will also help pay for the upgrades, keeping this necessary rate increase to a minimum.

## RATE COMPARISONS COMING SOON FOR FLAT RATE CUSTOMERS



All flat rate customers will be transitioned to a metered rate due to a federal mandate

To prepare for our federally mandated requirement to implement metered billing by 2005, SJWD has been reading customer meters to gather water consumption information. At the end of the year, watch for a comparison of your flat rate to a metered rate based on your household's water consumption.

The "Account Activity" section of your bill will show what you would have paid on a metered rate based on your consumption during the same service period as your flat rate bill. Visit our Web site at [www.sjwd.org](http://www.sjwd.org) for more information about water meters.



SAN JUAN  
WATER DISTRICT  
P.O. Box 2157  
9935 Auburn-Folsom Road  
Granite Bay, CA 95746  
(916) 791-0115  
[www.sjwd.org](http://www.sjwd.org)

Board of Directors  
Kenneth H. Miller,  
*President*  
Lyle N. Hoag,  
*Vice President*  
Joe Alessandri  
Edward J. "Ted" Costa  
Dorothy Kilgore

General Manager  
Jim English