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Basic services for a complex world

The South Tahoe Public Utility District is a special district formed in September 1950, and provides environmentally and fiscally responsible water and wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling for the community of South Lake Tahoe. Special districts are a form of local government that are usually created to provide specific services that are not being provided by other governmental entities. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors that are elected in staggered four-year terms. Directors must reside within the service area of the District. Special districts provide focused, specialized service and are considered, by many, the most responsive form of local government. Board meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of each month at the Board Meeting Room located at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive. The District welcomes your attendance and participation.

The District has over 18,000 sewer connections and over 14,000 water connections. Our unique and innovative recycled water export system transports an average of 4 million gallons-per-day of reclaimed water 27 miles to the Harvey Place Reservoir, where it is stored for agricultural land application to ranches, under contract, during the dry summer months. The District is proud of this cutting edge system.



Sprinkler Spruce-Up

It's been a long, dry winter for your yard. While your plants go dormant to cope with the colder weather, your sprinkler system can feel the effects of winter, too. Cracks in the pipes can lead to costly leaks, and broken sprinkler heads can waste water and money. You could be losing up to 25,000 gallons of water or more over a six-month irrigation season!

Now is the perfect time to spruce up your irrigation system before you ramp up your watering efforts this spring and summer. To get started, follow these four simple steps—inspect, connect, direct, and select:



- **Inspect.** Check your system for clogged, broken, or missing sprinkler heads. If you're not the do-it-yourself type, go with a pro—look for an irrigation professional certified through a WaterSense labeled irrigation program.
- **Connect.** Examine points where the sprinkler heads connect to pipes/hoses. If water is pooling in your landscape or you have large wet areas, you could have a leak in your system. A leak as small as the tip of a ballpoint pen (1/32nd of an inch) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.
- **Direct.** Are you watering the driveway, house, or sidewalk instead of your yard? Redirect sprinklers to apply water only to your lawn or prized plants.
- **Select.** An improperly scheduled irrigation controller can waste a lot of water and money. Update your system's schedule monthly, or select a WaterSense labeled controller to take the guesswork out of scheduling.

Don't forget to add "sprinkler spruce-up" to your spring cleaning list this year. The South Tahoe Public Utility District offers FREE Irrigation Efficiency Evaluations to assist you with your Sprinkler Spruce-Up! Visit www.stpud.us/water_conservation.html or call 530.543.6268 for more information. You can also learn more about maintaining a water-smart yard by visiting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense website at www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor.

South Tahoe
Public Utility
District

Special
points of
interest:

- Upcoming Public Workshops
- Turf Buy Back Program
- Drink Tahoe Tap
- A Brush with Kindness

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District Digest

Spring Edition

April 2014

Why Conserve Water?

Water is California's most precious natural resource, but the state is currently facing its worst water shortage crisis in modern history. On January 17, 2014, Governor Brown proclaimed a State of Emergency and called on Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent. Calendar year 2013 was the driest year in recorded history for many areas of California, and current conditions suggest no change is in sight for 2014.

Water conservation is always important in California, but this year no one can afford to waste any water. We all need to do our



part.

Saving water is not hard. We simply need to be smart about using what we have. Rethinking the way we use water—both indoors and outdoors—will help

stretch our limited supplies and ensure water is there when we need it.

The South Tahoe Public Utility District is committed to conserving water and fostering a culture of efficient water use in our community. Our Water Conservation Program offers a variety of water efficiency incentives, services, and resources to help residents and businesses use water wisely.

To learn more about our program, visit www.stpud.us and select Water Conservation or contact the Water Conservation Specialist at 530.543.6268.

Watering Restrictions in Effect

Spring has arrived! As you may be thinking about your summer gardening plans, please remember that watering restrictions are currently in effect.

The following provisions of the Water Conservation Program are necessary to conserve water resources and minimize cost to the District and our customers:

- Do not allow water to flow over the ground surface or from sprinklers onto surfaces that are not able to absorb water, or on neighboring properties.
- Repair all leaks in plumbing and irrigation systems.
- The irrigation of non-landscaped, natural vegetation or undeveloped property is prohibited.
- Always use an automatic shut-off nozzle on hoses. Continuous discharge from a hose is prohibited.

Please report to the District all signs or indications of water leaks or water waste. And remember, Water the Right Day...and the Right Way!

The Right Day is...

Even Numbered Addresses:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Odd Numbered Addresses:

Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday

NO LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION ON SATURDAY

The Right Way is to properly amend the soil before planting, and to water the appropriate amount for the vegetation type and soil conditions.

Turf Buy Back is Back!



A beautiful example of Tahoe-friendly landscaping.

The South Tahoe Public Utility District (District) recognizes that lawn areas help to provide defensible space, play areas for children and pets, and serve an integral role in a comprehensive landscaping plan. However, turf is one of the most water intensive landscaping options and requires substantial maintenance. Non-functional lawns - those that are rarely used - waste water and represent an ongoing cost in both time and resources for the home and business owner. From an environmental perspective, lawns tend to be over fertilized and over watered. With porous Tahoe soils, this combination can push nutrients intended for the lawn into the watershed where they even-

tually make their way into Lake Tahoe. Once there, they provide nutrients for algal growth that can affect the legendary clarity of the Lake.

The Turf Buy-Back Program is a rebate program that offers homeowners the opportunity to remove their lawn and replace it with Tahoe-friendly native or adaptive vegetation. The District is excited to announce the return of the Turf Buy Back Program this summer!

The Turf Buy-Back Program 2014 offers a rebate of \$1.50 per square foot of turf removed, with a maximum rebate of \$3,000. The program requires that a minimum of 400 square feet of turf be re-

placed, and the area to be converted must be an irrigated/maintained, established lawn.

Your lawn must be verified by District Water Conservation Program staff prior to turf removal in order to be eligible.

The program is partially funded by a water conservation grant from the California Department of Water Resources. It is available to all District water customers and is offered on a first come, first served basis. Funds are limited and terms and conditions apply. Please contact the Water Conservation Specialist at (530) 543-6268 for more information, or to be placed on a waiting list.

“Each year, billions of empty plastic water bottles are taken to landfills.”

Better than Bottled Water...

The Tahoe Water Suppliers Association (TWSA) is a regional partnership of Nevada and California Water Suppliers serving the Lake Tahoe region. The South Tahoe Public Utility District (District), along with other members of TWSA, urge you to kick the bottled water habit and drink from the tap! Here's why:

QUALITY! - Tahoe Basin tap water is some of the best in the world. The District pumps its drinking water from deep underground aquifers fed by the Sierra snowpack and mountain streams. Who knows where your bottled water came from? Tahoe Tap means proven quality.

SAFETY! - Drinking water in California is regulated by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and meets the most stringent standards in the world. Bottled water is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and meet significantly lower standards.

COST! - The District's water costs fractions of a penny per gallon. Contrast that to the average price of nearly \$3.00 per gallon in retail stores. It's a bad deal. That's almost as expensive as gasoline!

IT'S BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT! - Each year billions of empty plastic water bottles (estimated at 1.5 million tons annually) are taken to landfills. These bottles take years to biodegrade! They are an unnecessary waste of a resource, not to mention a huge cost to produce and dispose of.

So the next time you have a choice, Just Say NO to Bottled Water!



Habitat for Humanity - A Brush With Kindness



Are you a homeowner who needs a little help with the exterior of your home, and are you unable to do it yourself or pay someone else to do it? Do you need exterior paint, minor exterior repairs, or basic landscaping or yard clean up? If so,

Habitat for Humanity has a program called *A Brush with Kindness* for qualified homeowners.

A Brush with Kindness is a program of El Dorado County Habitat for Humanity that helps low-income homeowners by offering exterior home improvements. Volunteer teams work to improve the condition of homes by painting, landscaping, and performing minor exterior repairs at minimal costs to homeowners who would otherwise be

unable to complete these repairs on their own. Able-bodied homeowners are encouraged to work alongside the volunteers in a cooperative effort.

For more information or to find out if you qualify, contact Carolyn Meiers at 530.541.4654 or email us at sltaohohabitat@gmail.com.

“The District must find a balance between the speed of improvements and the rates our customers pay.”

Upcoming Public Workshops

The Board of Directors of the South Tahoe Public Utility District is seeking public input about critical decisions that could affect your sewer and water rates, as well as your quality of service, public health, and environmental protection. There are three specific challenges that are important for our customers to understand:

- Need to provide enough water to all the neighborhoods we serve if another major wildfire should strike in our area. This involves replacing undersized pipes and upgrading pumps and other facilities.
- Need to conform to a state law that requires us to meter all water

connections.

- Need for the wastewater system to be secure against leaks and breaks that can cause sewage spills, and to ensure that we can continue to pump our recycled water to Alpine County, as required by state law.

District engineers have already developed a 10-year plan of necessary system improvements and repairs, as well as estimated costs. The bottom line is that it will cost tens of millions of dollars to undertake the work. The District must find a balance between the speed of improvements and the rates our customers pay. You will soon be receiving a Proposition 218 notice which

outlines the maximum amount your rates could increase in the next 5 years.

Please consider participating in one of the upcoming public workshops to provide your input in the process:

Thursday, April 17th at 6:00pm

Thursday, May 15th at 6:00pm

All workshops are held in the District's Board Room, located at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive in South Lake Tahoe. If you are unable to attend but would like to provide your input, we encourage you to do so by contacting the District at 530.544.6474, or by email at info@stpud.dst.ca.us.

Your questions and feedback are important to us!

2013 Consumer Confidence Report

The 2013 Consumer Confidence Report, which contains valuable information regarding your drinking water, will be available for viewing at www.stpud.us/2013_CCR.pdf on July 1, 2014.

If you do not have access to the internet, you may have a hard copy mailed to you after July 1, 2014 by contacting the Customer Service Department at 530.544.6474 during regular work hours (M - F 8am to 5pm.)