

Turlock Journal

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Water use in Turlock exceeds average

Average Turlock home uses 250 gallons a day; national average is 150 gallons

By Kimberly Horg
TURLOCK JOURNAL

A typical family in Turlock uses 250 gallons of water a day — an amount much higher than the na-

tional average of 150 gallons.

"This is a result of existing user increase. It is not because of the growth happening in the city," said Dan Madden, water resource manager for the city. "One of the biggest problems that the city has is its residents who water during the wrong hours."

The city has a watering schedule that has been in place for the past decade that enforces water conservation. During the sum-

mer, between May and October, are the peak months for water conservation in which additional water conservation is needed but year round there is an ordinance system that is important to follow. Currently residents are paying a flat rate between \$15 and \$16 for water, Madden said.

"Because residential users pay a flat rate for their water, it doesn't effect them financially like it would for your power bill if you

went overboard on usage," Madden said.

There is a proposed rate increase in which the city will get \$23 million in bond money for six additional wells and two storage tanks. Proposition 218 will be addressed during the April 27 meeting of the Turlock City Council. The increase will mean the average homeowner will pay approximately \$31.50 by 2008.

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WATER

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"If this doesn't pass, the city's water will be placed in jeopardy. If a major fire broke out during the summer, we wouldn't have enough water to put it out. This needs to pass in order to make these improvements," Madden said.

A phase approach within a 5-year period will be implemented instead of the rate increase happening all at once, he said.

The city is also taking measures to avoid wasting water. For example, Turlock Irrigation District's Walnut Energy Center will be cooled using the city's recycled wastewater. Also, landscape at Summerfaire Park is watered with recycled water.

"New parks that are built in Turlock will use that same system," Madden said.

The city has water conservationists that patrol the city to issue citations to anyone who is breaking the law.

"We can't be at everyone's door all the time so it is very important that people follow the rules," Madden said.

No watering is allowed on Mondays, addresses that end in odd numbers are allowed to water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from midnight to noon and from 6 p.m. to midnight. Addresses that end in even numbers should only water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday during the same hours. No watering is permitted for anyone between noon and 6 p.m. on any day. The purpose of the time limitations is to ensure that there is enough water pressure so that facilities can run, Madden said.

The washing down or hos-

ing of sidewalks, gutters and outside structures without the written consent of the City Manager is a violation of the law. Sweeping or brushing is required unless approval for water use is obtained, Madden said.

"If you drive around Turlock, you can see people all the time washing off their sidewalk and driveways. This type of behavior is not needed," he said.

Part of the Turlock Emergency Water Shortage Plan states that washing your car at your residence requires the use of a positive shut-off valve that operates properly and it is limited to once a week. All residential landscape watering is limited to twice a week and large commercial landscaping is limited to once a week. Make sure sprinklers are working and are properly adjusted so that the water hits the lawn and beds not the sidewalks or driveways.

A violation of the city's watering laws will result in a \$25 fine. A second violation is a \$50 and a third is \$100. Each subsequent violation results in a fine of \$250.

"During peak summer months, 150 citations are issued in a week," Madden said.

Any utility customer that has been issued four or more penalties during a year may be required to install a water meter at their premises and would be required to pay the direct cost of the meter and its installation. Failure to pay the penalty fees or the costs of the water meter would result in the discontinuation of the service.

If you see someone wasting water, call 668-5590 to report it. For questions regarding the Water Conservation Program, call 668-5590 or visit www.turlock.ca.us.