



Ventura Water Calls for 10 Percent Voluntary Water Use Reductions



Ventura Water's call for a voluntary water use reduction of 10% from our customers was supported unanimously last night by the City Council with a 6-0 vote.

“Ventura River water levels are very low and Lake Casitas, another of our primary water sources, is at 60 percent capacity,” said Ventura Mayor Cheryl Heitmann in last week’s press release. “It is a sensible step to reduce water use now by raising awareness of the need to conserve water. Our community met this challenge during the 1990s drought and we expect Ventura to once again be an outstanding partner in preserving our water supplies.”

The City’s third water supply is groundwater. A number of wells are currently undergoing urgent maintenance, which is limiting management options. One replacement well is in construction but is not expected to be operational until the summer.

We will be watching our water supplies over the coming months and are planning to bring an action plan to the City Council this summer if further restrictions are necessary. Officials from the Casitas Municipal Water District have alerted the City that if the water level in Lake Casitas drops to 50 percent, then the water district will issue water allocations. Without rain, this may occur as soon as August or September.

“In an allocation situation, we expect that the City Council would declare a water shortage emergency and enact more stringent conservation measures,” said Epstein. “Of course, anything that our customers can do to reduce their water use now will help Ventura’s supplies in the long run.”

Visit cityofventura.net/water/efficiency to learn more. Watch the recent LA Ch.7 ABC news video and LA Ch.4 NBC news video about Ventura’s water use reduction request.

Private Sewer Lateral Inspections

In January 2012, the City adopted new regulations to support the timely inspection, repair and replacement of private sewer laterals. A private sewer lateral is the pipe that connects a business or home’s plumbing system to the City’s wastewater collection main pipeline. The lateral is considered the “private” seg-



Dear Customers:

In greeting the arrival of 2014, we are facing a year that may be the driest in recorded history. Our local water sources primarily rely on the rainy season for replenishment. The Ventura River has not seen a normal winter for three years now, which means it has diminished as a reliable supply and Ventura is now dependent upon Lake Casitas and groundwater. Without the City’s full water supply portfolio, it is time to ask all customers to pitch in and use at least 10 percent less water.

For some customers that will be as easy as dropping one day of outdoor watering. For others, it may be more difficult if they have been efficient consumers all along. Bottom line, we’ll need everyone’s help to save water now to keep Lake Casitas levels from going lower, faster.

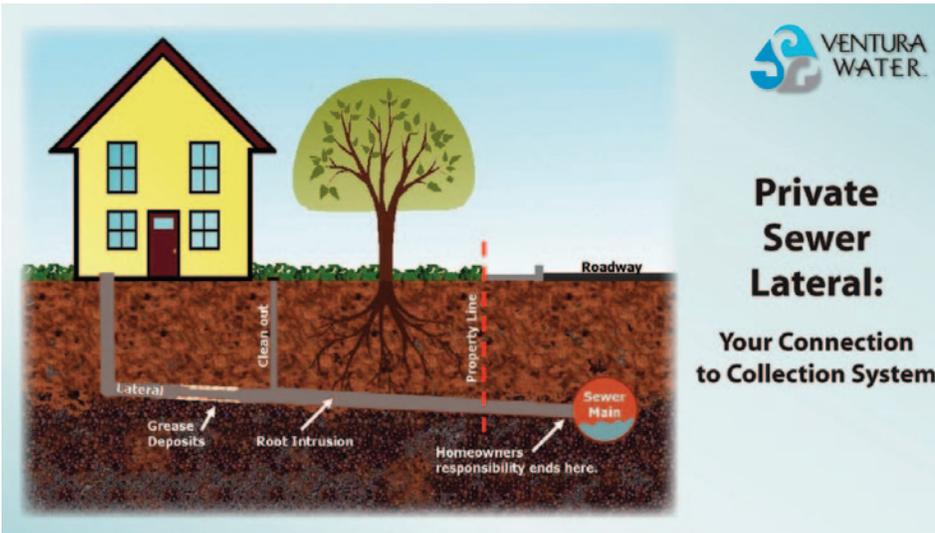
An average Ventura residential household uses approximately 21 hundred cubic feet (hcf) or 15,708 gallons every two months. A 10 percent reduction equals 1,570 gallons bi-monthly or 785 gallons per month. Many customers are al-

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Private Sewer Lateral:

Your Connection to Collection System



ment when it is located on private property and serves the purposes of an individual, privately owned building. The property owner is responsible for the entire pipe length, including the wye or saddle at the point of connection to the City's mainline.

Ventura Water is responsible for the maintenance of the main pipelines that carry used water from homes and businesses. To protect public health and safety, these pipes are regularly inspected and repaired to maintain their integrity. A good maintenance practice is to have your private sewer lateral inspected every 3-5 years to catch problems early, which will prevent expensive repairs down the road. With thousands of private sewer laterals in the City, property owners are important partners in assuring that pipes are properly maintained to protect us all.

Effective February 3, 2014, three events will require property owners within the City to hire a licensed plumber to conduct a video inspection (closed circuit TV) of their private sewer lateral, at the property owner's expense.

1. If a sewage spill occurs on private property. An inspection will identify the causes of the spill and make sure the property owner takes corrective actions to prevent further problems.
2. Upon receipt of a notification letter from Ventura Water indicating that problems, such as root intrusion or grease/rag buildup, have been identified. The letter will request an inspection by a licensed plumber to take corrective actions. It is in the property owner's best interest to respond to prevent a damaging and costly overflow or backup.
3. Prior to the close of a sale for any property. Property owners that are considering selling are strongly recommended to hire a licensed plumber to inspect the private sewer lateral early in the process. A property owner may choose the timing to submit the Private Sewer Lateral Inspection Report to the City, as long as the report is submitted before the close of escrow and the results of the inspection are disclosed to the buyer and all parties to the sale. If the inspection reveals that corrective work is needed, the seller and buyer can agree on who will pay the cost and who will be responsible for making the repairs. Visit cityofventura.net/water/privatelateral for all the details about how a property owner can meet this requirement.

In addition, commercial and common interest properties (apartments and condominiums) are required to submit a Private Sewer Lateral Inspection Report to the City every 10 years, with the first report due before January 1, 2023. These properties will be required to inspect the length of pipeline from the last private connection to the City's mainline and include the results in the report. (Sales of single units in common interest developments do not trigger change of ownership inspection requirements.)

ready pledging their support and sharing how they will save water. Some of those tips will be offered in the coming months but here are the top suggestions to get started:

- Check for leaks indoors and outdoors. One leaking toilet can waste between 300 to 60,000 gallons per month and even a slow drip from a faucet can use 450 gallons per month. There are many variables to how much water can be wasted due to leaks in irrigation systems, but it is possible to lose 225 gallons in a 15 minute watering cycle from a leak close to a sprinkler head.
- Review your water consumption history and use the Home Water Works Water Calculator to analyze your water use and receive practical information to help reduce use.
- Visit cityofventura.net/water/efficiency for more ways to save water.

Now, more than ever, it's important to remember to Save Our Water. Thank you for being our partner.

Sincerely,

Shana Epstein, General Manager

www.saveourh2o.org



<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>



New Rates = New Pipes

On January 13, the Ventura Water Rate Advisory Committee presented its recommendations to the City Council. Following five public meetings, which included reviews of future operating and capital budgets and updates to other financial policies, the Committee endorsed a four-year water and wastewater rate plan. The proposed rates reflect a combined increase to the average residential water and wastewater customer of \$9.68 bi-monthly (or \$4.84 monthly) for the first year, proposed to be effective July 1, 2014. Rates would then increase incrementally at slightly higher amounts every July for the next three years.

If approved by our customers and the City Council, these rates will fund a moderate operational and maintenance program and an increasing capital improvement plan to replace aging pipelines and facilities. During the next four years, the new monies will replace three wells to help water supply and improve well field management operations. With an average age of almost 50 years, 16.5 miles of the 380 miles of drinking water pipes are scheduled to be replaced. Treatment facilities will also be updated at the Water Reclamation Facility, and 7.2 miles of the 300 miles of wastewater collection system pipes will be replaced.

Before the City Council conducts a public hearing on rate increases (tentatively scheduled for May), we will offer an extensive outreach program to explain why the rates are needed for the water and wastewater systems. Replacing our infrastructure at the right time and at the right price represents an investment in our local economy and will prevent costly emergency repairs and service disruptions. A notice detailing the rates and the reasons for them, as well as the date and time of the public hearing, will be mailed to all customers and property owners in March.

You are invited to read the 2014 Cost of Service Study, the basis of the rates, to understand the financial plan for Ventura's Water and Wastewater Utilities. Complete information about the Rate Advisory Committee and its work is available at cityofventura.net/water/committee.



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www.home-water-works.org/calculator



<http://www.saveourh2o.org/sprinklers101>