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A LOOK AT DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Trabuco Canyon Water District is a complex, multifaceted special district. The District owns and operates its own:

- Water Treatment Plant,
- Groundwater Treatment Facility,
- Potable (Drinking) Water System,
- Sewage Collection System,
- Wastewater Treatment Facility,
- Reclaimed Water System,
- Recycled Water Recovery System, and
- Urban Runoff Water Recovery System.

While the number of customers the District has may be less than neighboring districts, the geographic area served by TCWD is rather large and comprised of a challenging terrain. All things considered, the District has a very complex operation. Two critical components are vital to the operation of the District. First is the enormous infrastructure: the treatment plants, pumping stations, sewage lift stations, and pipes in the ground for water, wastewater, and recycled water. The second component is the highly trained personnel of the District.

The State of California requires any individual who operates either a water system or sewer system to possess proper certification. This certification is issued by the State after these individuals obtained required educational course work, pass required tests, and earn required "in service" credit in the field. In the water and wastewater industry, these individuals are referred to as "operators." In some sense, operators are to the water and wastewater industry much like teachers are to public education, or law enforcement officers are to law enforcement. They are required to have the proper certifications or credentials to do the work they do. The level of certification that a water or wastewater operator

must possess is dictated by the complexity of the system in which he or she works. Systems are rated by the State on a one to five scale based on their complexity; five is the most complex.

In the case of Trabuco Canyon Water District, the water distribution system is a Distribution Four System (D4), the water treatment system is a Treatment Three System (T3), and the sewage treatment system is a Wastewater Treatment Three (T3) System. This means all of the District's senior operators have certifications that meet or exceed these requirements. In many cases, the District employs operators who are cross trained and hold multiple certifications for each system (water and wastewater).

Equally important, are the Maintenance Technicians in the Maintenance Department. The entire water and wastewater system is a complex design of pipes, pumps, motors, and electrical controls which need ongoing attention and care. The individuals in the Maintenance Department are specially trained in a number of fields and certified specific to their field of training; again these certifications are a result of specialized instruction and successfully passing State required tests.

In many cases in the District, maintenance personnel also hold the same certificates as operators. It should be noted that all of the District's field personnel, both District operators and maintenance personnel, are required to be involved in continuing education to maintain their respective certifications. This involves "contact time" related to specific subject instruction, and in some instances re-testing.

The field personnel also have one additional qualification that is essential for employment: possession of a Class A driver's license. Due to the number of large heavy vehicles (Dump Truck, Vactor Truck, and Slide Rail Bin Hauler), field personnel need to possess the proper license and endorsements to drive and operate these vehicles. Earning a Class A license is highly encouraged by the District. The District is fortunate that many of its field personnel possess Class A licenses. As if that weren't enough to ask of our field personnel, it is important to recognize that many of them are highly trained heavy equipment operators. The District uses various types of heavy equipment for major pipeline repairs and their expertise in this area is essential.

The District's field personnel manage to efficiently and effectively operate highly complex systems on a daily basis, seven days a week, with minimum interruption to customers. Their primary concern is maintaining the highest standards for public health and safety, while working safely. So the next time you see a District vehicle, please remember this is a highly trained and certified individual working on your behalf for the water and wastewater systems that service you.

WATER EFFICIENT GARDENING TIPS FOR THE WINTER SEASON

As the autumn season closes, it is important to remember to continue to cut back on outdoor watering. By the end of December, plants will need as little as one-third the amount or irrigated water which they needed in the warmer months, and even less if we receive normal rainfall levels this winter.

Most outdoor plants are now continuing to slow their growth rate, which is the opposite of the spring growth phase. To make sure you are applying the adequate quantity of needed water, watch for signs of stress. The typical symptoms of stress in plants and bushes are when the leaves droop or start to turn color, and lawns show stress when grass blades do not pop back up when stepped on. In order to determine if you are applying enough water, check the moisture of the soil three to six inches below the surface. Even in heavy clay soils, the clay remains moist beneath the surface even though the surface appears to be dry. Also, shrubs and trees require about half the water that turf needs.

Most importantly, don't forget to turn off your sprinklers when it rains; there is nothing more wasteful than an irrigation system in operation during the rain. If this presents difficulty, consider installing an automatic rain shut-off device to the irrigation system. As a final tip, add to your New Year's Resolution list to change out the irrigation timer battery. These small batteries have a tendency to fail at the most inopportune time, which in turn, could play havoc with your personally designed irrigation schedule.

Finally, remember that we are currently in the Cool Months period of the Conservation Encouragement Rate Program, or what is more commonly known as the tiered rate structure. The Cool Month period began in October and carries through to March. An explanation of the tiered rate structure can be found on the District website at www.tcwd.ca.gov. If you have any questions concerning efficient watering, please contact the Main Office and a District representative will be more than happy to assist you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Board of Directors Regular Meeting is scheduled to be held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District's office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Regular Board Meeting for November was held on November 21, 2012, and the following items are highlights from the Meeting:

- Board Approval of Replacement of District Vehicles.
- Status Update on Baker Regional Water Treatment Plant.
- Status Update on the Alternate Raw Water Transmission Line – PW79
- Status Update on Shadow Rock Detention Basin Facility Project