



## The Water Chronicles

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#### Don't allow city fees become your new tax.

It is no surprise; everything that is purchased or used through local government systems has quickly increased in price. With local governments losing the ability to increase taxes only have one other place to go for funds and that is through the fees that we pay. Water use is one of these fees. When you use water for home from the city, you pay a usage fee. This usage fee covers the cost of the infrastructure and maintenance of both the water and sewer service. These fees which are collected go back into the general fund. These fees have to off balance the cost to maintain the system. With foreclosures and vacant residencies on the rise, the share of the cost burden will be shared by those who still use the services. The increase of the fees will not only reflect the percentage of vacant homes, but also the decrease in usage of water in general. For those of us who enjoy lush gardens and maintaining the complete value of our homes, we pay the largest portion of that burden. So how can we contain these costs and keep landscapes to a level that is acceptable.

#### Here are some suggestions

**Install separate meter:** Many cities charge both sewer and water rates on water that is used for landscape. This can triple the price of usage even when none of the water will ever touch the sewer pipes. Some cities now allow you to install a meter to monitor the water that you use for landscape. This water is then only charged for

only water usage rates and not for sewer rates.

**Update your existing irrigation system:** If your irrigation system is more than 5 years old, there are many new sprinklers which promote more uniform coverage. Systems which may be 10 years or older, may have some design flaws which now can be addressed.

**Have your irrigation system audited.** An audit is simply a measurement of how your system operates through pinpoint measurements. The results will give information on how to program the operation of the system throughout the season. This will put the right amount of water down all the time.

**Install a smart controller.** There are many controllers available which take in weather information to reconfigure the program each day to match the needs of the turf according to the weather.

**Install a rain barrel.** A rain barrel can effectively water your foundation plantings, eliminating the need for sprinklers near the house.

These are just a few suggestions to help you create a better more efficient operating system. If you would like more information on how to improve your system give us a call at 320-410-4241 and ask for Chris. Using one or more of these methods can help you to save from 30%-70% on your water usage bill. Don't let the city dig to far into your pockets, it's your money, we want to help you keep it.

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