



# CITY OF JERSEY VILLAGE, TEXAS

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## MAYOR'S NEWLETTER - June 2010

Water. It's a commodity we often take for granted. Who would have thought that we would see whole aisles at the store dedicated to bottled water. The days of free water are long gone. There is some expense to bringing potable water directly to your house.

People who have lived in Jersey Village for more than ten years will remember the notice we received at our doors about ten years ago demanding that residents not use any water outside to water lawns and plants. That happened two years in a row with no apparent solution. Our wells were in disrepair and failing, and the water from those wells had high levels of chemicals. Few people know how close the city was to not having any water. This was the very reason that I decided to run for elected office: I thought we should be able to get clean drinkable water delivered to our house.

Jersey Village made a decision to annex a MUD district that included a modern, working well and shortly thereafter made a deal with the City of Houston to buy water from them. The contract we signed with Houston made sure we would get their best price for water. No other city or MUD district would be able to buy water from them at a lower price, but the contract also allowed Houston to charge us what the water cost them.

As this was taking place, the Harris County Subsidence District has mandated that all entities must start using surface water and stop using ground water. Almost all the surface water rights in this county are owned by the City of Houston so, in effect, they have a monopoly on water.

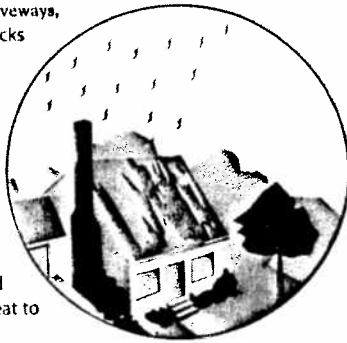
Jersey Village is responsible for delivering water and sewer services to its residents. It is, however, a lot more complicated than just buying water at a wholesale price and selling at retail. The water flows through a maze of water towers, pumps and miles of pipe, all of which require maintenance and or replacement by the city. We are seeing the end of the effective life cycle of our original systems. We have been systematically replacing parts of the system as we replace the streets. We are slip-lining the sewer system to improve its function, and have added new sections of pipe to complete water loops that will improve pressure and ensure that a single leak will not shut down the system.

The City accounts for income and expenses in the Utility Fund to make sure that we are charging an appropriate rate and taking care of capital improvements. We monitor that fund to ensure it will provide the expected services and that there are sufficient reserves to keep up with the replacement of the failing parts of the system.

The City of Houston has informed us that the price of water is going up. They recently completed a new water treatment plant that will provide water for most of the county (as other MUDs and cities are forced off their wells) for the foreseeable future. The new rate will jump from \$6.57 to \$7.41 per 3,000 gallons -- a 13% increase. Currently, Jersey Village charges a base rate of \$14.09 for 3,000 gallons. The difference between the wholesale and retail rate is the cost of running the system, maintenance, meter readings, sending bills and the reserve for capital improvements.

The City Council will be discussing an increase of the water rates at the council meeting on June 21. The proposed rate increase will be approximately three to five percent. I invite you to look into the issue, come to the June meeting and share your opinions with myself and the Council members.

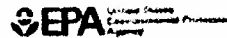
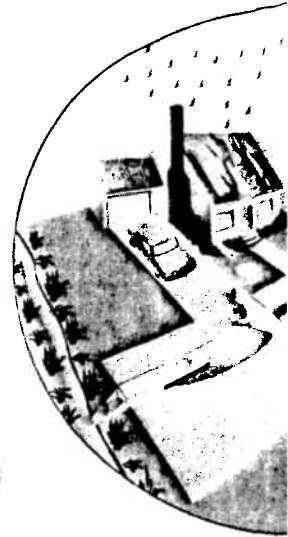
**A**s stormwater flows over driveways, lawns, and sidewalks, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants. Stormwater can flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.



By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of stormwater. Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters. Remember to share the habits with your neighbors!

Make your home  
The  
**SOLUTION  
TO STORMWATER  
POLLUTION!**

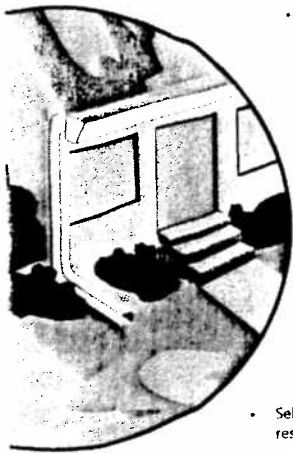
A homeowner's guide to healthy habits for clean water



### Healthy Household Habits for Clean Water

#### Vehicle and Garage

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local waterbody.



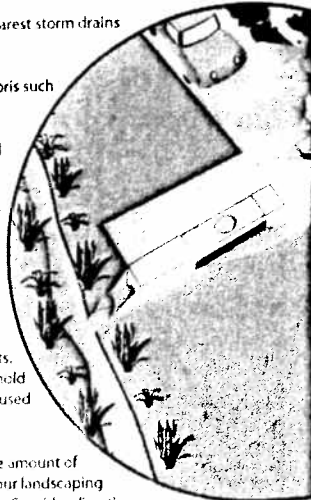
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand, and don't rinse the spills into a nearby storm drain. Remember to properly dispose of the absorbent material.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.

#### Lawn and Garden

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain; otherwise, chemicals will be washed into your local stream.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought- and pest-resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides.
- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible.
- Don't overwater your lawn. Water during the cool times of the day, and don't let water run off into the storm drain.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into local waterbodies. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent soil erosion.

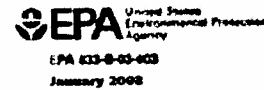
#### Home Repair and Improvement

- Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other materials.
- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.
- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible and follow the directions on the label. Clean up spills immediately, and dispose of the waste safely. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.
- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable recycled, and recyclable products whenever possible.
- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Filter and reuse paint thinner when using oil-based paints. Properly dispose of excess paints through a household hazardous waste collection program, or donate unused paint to local organizations.
- Reduce the amount of paved area and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Use native plants in your landscaping to reduce the need for watering during dry periods. Consider directing



Remember: Only rain down the drain!

For more information, visit  
[www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater)  
or  
[www.epa.gov/nps](http://www.epa.gov/nps)



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#### Pet Care

- When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.

#### Swimming Pool and Spa

- Drain your swimming pool only when a test kit does not detect chlorine levels.
- Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system.
- Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in a covered area to avoid exposure to stormwater.

#### Septic System Use and Maintenance

- Have your septic system inspected by a professional at least every 3 years, and have the septic tank pumped as necessary (usually every 3 to 5 years).
- Care for the septic system drainfield by not driving or parking vehicles on it. Plant only grass over and near the drainfield to avoid damage from roots.
- Flush responsibly. Flushing household chemicals like paint, pesticides, oil, and antifreeze can destroy the biological treatment taking place in the system. Other items, such as diapers, paper towels, and cat litter, can clog the septic system and potentially damage components.

Storm drains connect to waterbodies!