



INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WATER

# WATER NEWS

GOLETA WATER DISTRICT

## Water Awareness High School Video Contest

This year's contest featured terrific entries from five local schools. First place was won by the team from Dos Pueblos High School with their video "H2Oh Yeah." Their video may be seen as a Public Service Announcement on area TV stations along with entries from Cabrillo High, San Marcos High, Laguna Blanca School, and Anacapa School. Goleta Water District is one of 15 sponsors of the annual county-wide event.



At the Faulkner Gallery Awards ceremony in May, students Nick Eggemeyer and Michael Le, with Advisor John Dent (center), hold the check they won for Dos Pueblos. Not pictured is student Kyle Dillard.

**The District's website is regularly updated with new information.**

**Check it out at [www.GoletaWater.com](http://www.GoletaWater.com)**

## Budget Is Balanced and Rates Remain Unchanged

In today's difficult economic conditions, Goleta Water District's Board of Directors is pleased to announce: No change in water rates for the current fiscal year, which runs from July 1 of this year until June 30 of next year.

### Building Reserves

Our budget is balanced and we are working to build reserves in preparation for future droughts, wildfires and unexpected emergencies. (See inside for the District's efforts during the Jesusita Fire and information on relief for customers affected by the fire.)

### District Investment Policies

As many of us deal with economic uncertainty in our own lives, the District feels it is important for customers to know that the District is financially sound. Our reserves are invested primarily in U.S. government issues.

We also at times own a small number of corporate bonds, as guided by California government code and the District's investment policy. The District is evaluating the holding of two such bonds that have performed poorly in the economic downturn. These bonds, issued by CIT Group, are being monitored closely by the District.

We are reviewing the current investment policy and considering the use of an independent investment advisor. Customers may view the District's investment policy and current investments at [www.GoletaWater.com](http://www.GoletaWater.com)

**Public input is always welcome at our monthly Board meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the District's offices.**



### Visit Our Booth at the Lemon Festival

The California Lemon Festival, to be held in Goleta on October 17-18, offers exciting activities for kids of all ages. Goleta Water District will provide a booth that features helpful water conservation tips and tools.



### What to Do When You Have to Evacuate

During a wildfire, local agencies recommend that you take the following steps:

- Leave promptly following an evacuation order.
- To save water needed by firefighters, don't leave water running, deactivate automatic sprinkler controls, and turn off hose bibs.
- Take a supply of drinking water with you.

### Relief for Water Used to Fight Wildfires

The District is offering financial relief to customers whose water was used for firefighting within the official Jesusita Fire boundary. The District is offering 100% rebates for the difference between the five-year average for the month of May and the difference in the actual water use during May 2009.

All claims must be made in writing to the District by October 15th, 2009.

For additional information contact 805-964-6761.

# Ensuring that We Have Enough Water When We Need It

## Wildfire: Quick Response by Water District

Over the last decade, Goleta Water District has invested millions of dollars to modernize and upgrade your water system. The improvements have included expanding reservoirs to provide emergency water storage, adding more powerful pumps, building new and enlarged pipelines, and more. The result: a District able to meet emergency demands, and provide critical water pressure in events such as this summer's Jesusita Fire.

The District regularly conducts emergency training for all types of unexpected events. The staff thoroughly understands the water system and knows how best to react to rapidly changing circumstances. During the recent Jesusita Fire—fourth in a series of wildfires over the past two years—Goleta Water District staff responded quickly and effectively to support firefighting efforts.

### Working Around the Clock to Provide Firefighting Water

District staff, working around the clock, made sure that firefighters had the water and pressure they needed to fight the Jesusita Fire. Coordinating with firefighters, the staff decided which fire hydrants were the best to use, ensured that backup generators were running, and shut off meters where the fire had melted water lines to homes, conserving water and maintaining pressure.

In addition to supplying water to firefighters, staff was able to save District facilities in the foothills from the flames, and worked tirelessly to restore water service to customers in the aftermath.



*Helicopter used for firefighting during the Jesusita Fire*



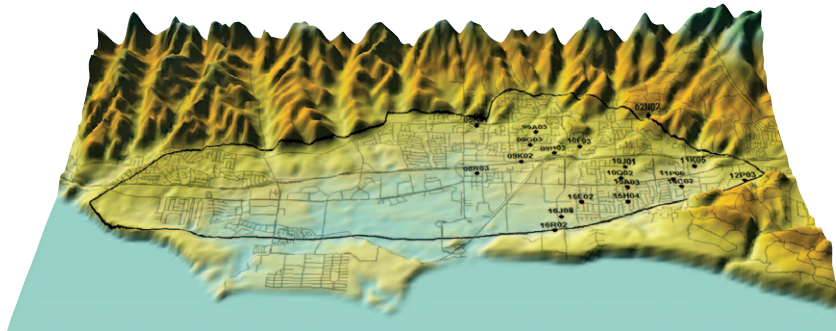
# Groundwater Management Plan Update

The District began work on a Groundwater Management Plan earlier this year with a well-attended Public Workshop on the subject. Community members received a detailed presentation of the proposed project and gave the District very helpful feedback through their questions and comments.

Nationally recognized hydrogeologist Dr. Steven Bachman is developing the plan to help the District better manage our vital aquifer, the central basin, which lies below the Goleta Valley. The District is

working cooperatively with the La Cumbre Mutual Water Company, which serves Hope Ranch, to make the best use of this important shared water resource.

The District plans to hold another public workshop when Dr. Bachman has a draft of the plan ready for review later this fall. Community participation will play an important part in the final stages of preparation of the plan. Please check our website or look at the information box on your monthly bill for date and time.



*A 3-dimensional graphical view of the area covering the Goleta Groundwater Basin, created using a sophisticated computer modeling program used to analyze Goleta's groundwater.*

## Resolving Billing Issues on Closed Accounts

Customers may have heard about a billing problem that affected certain accounts closed by customers. We want to provide more detailed information about the issue and to assure customers that current accounts are accurate.

**What is the problem?** Because of a change in our billing system, some people who closed accounts in the period 2005-2008 may not have paid their final bill or received the refund we owed them. These are the accounts we are working to correct.

**Is my account affected?** If you are a customer of the District, your current account is not affected by this glitch.

**How is this being resolved with those affected?** When the District has valid addresses, checks for credit balances are being sent to former customers. Financial Credit Network, a collection agency, is sending letters to former customers who are believed to owe a balance to the District.

**Why are you using a collection agency?** The District has used a collection agency to assist in collecting past due accounts for many years. Because of the age of the accounts in question we sent them for collection. The collection letter describes the process for those who feel they received the notice in error. Payment in a timely way ensures that there should be no impact on a person's credit report.

**Has this problem been resolved?** Yes. We have corrected the computer glitch and are confident that this problem will not re-appear. We are sending credit balances to those who are owed them. We have carefully looked at the past due accounts, and believe we have appropriately referred them for collection.

Please call us at (805) 964-6761 if you have questions or want us to review your account. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience to our customers.

# GOLETA WATER DISTRICT

**NEW**

## “Graywater” For Landscape Irrigation

The California Department of Housing and Community Development has made changes to the California Plumbing Code regarding graywater—water from clothes washers, showers and similar household sources—that can be used for landscape irrigation. These changes make legal use of graywater easily achievable.

Now, a permit is not required for small, one-fixture systems, such as washing machine-only systems. Individuals can install their own system without a plumber or a permit if they follow a series of steps called for by the new law. The state’s Building Standards Commission adopted the new standards, effective August 4, 2009.

For additional information, go to: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/news/release/Graywater7.31.09.pdf>, go to our website, or call the District office and ask for Misty.

## Introducing a New Online Tool For Water-Wise Gardeners

### Virtual Garden Tours With a Searchable Plant Database

Goleta Water District along with other area water providers, has developed new gardening information tailored to our climate and our need for water conservation.

- Extensive searchable information and photos on over 1,000 water-wise plants
- More than 300 photos grouped into garden tours from gardens County-wide
- Helpful facts, resources, and guidance on gardening design and practices
- Links to other useful sustainable gardening sites.



All of this is available at [www.sbwater.org](http://www.sbwater.org)

A limited number of CD copies are available to District customers. Call 964-6761 ext. 626 for more info.

## Ask Dale About Water Quality



Dale is the District’s water quality laboratory supervisor, and he has answers to all your water quality questions.

**Q: Can naturally occurring arsenic in water be harmful to immune function and reduce a person’s ability to fend off the H1N1 Swine Flu? — Sniffing in Goleta**

Dear Sniffing—Good news! For Goleta Water District customers, this is not a concern, since the water that we deliver to you has no detectable level of arsenic. There are news reports of a recent preliminary study; lab mice were given arsenic doses of 100 parts per billion—10 times the allowable standard for humans—that appeared to cause a weakened response in the mice’s immune system to H1N1 Swine Flu virus. We are pleased to be able to report about the high quality of our water.

Email: [AskDale@GoletaWater.com](mailto:AskDale@GoletaWater.com) or Phone: (805) 879-4678

## DO YOU HAVE TIPS FOR CONSERVING WATER THAT YOU CAN SHARE?

Send them to Goleta Water District for inclusion on our website.

Printed on FSC certified paper from well managed forests, using 50% recycled and 25% post consumer recycled paper that is elemental chlorine free, from a clean mill with a sustainability charter. Each ton of recycled paper saves 7,000 gallons of water.



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GOLETA WATER DISTRICT

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