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Water Department implements mandatory odd/even water conservation
As weather gets hot, demand challenges system capacity

LITTLETON – Recent warm weather has spurred a dramatic increase in water use, prompting town water officials to implement mandatory water use restrictions for the summer in an effort to avoid an outright ban on outside watering. The department is urging compliance with an odd/even watering program that allows residents with odd numbered addresses to water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and those with even numbered addresses to water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. No watering is allowed on Mondays, nor is it permitted any day between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The town's water consumption this week has averaged nearly 2 million gallons per day, an amount close to the system's capacity, according to general manager Savas Danos. And while the department hopes to avoid more serious limitations on water use over the remainder of the summer, conditions already have stressed the town's water system, Danos said.

He cautioned that, should water use continue to rise over the rest of the summer season, the department may have difficulty meeting demand without replenishing rains.

If water use is not curtailed, the department is prepared to implement stricter limitations on water use, which may include a weekend-only schedule, or in the severest case, a complete ban on all outdoor watering. “Daytime watering is costly and largely ineffective,” Danos said. “I understand that people are trying to maintain their property, but this objective can still be met with much less water during the early morning or evening hours.”

Danos reminded customers that only one inch of water per week is sufficient to maintain a healthy lawn and asked customers to use common sense when using water outdoors. “We appreciate the outstanding efforts our water customers have made in the past when we have needed their help,” Danos said. “Without their cooperation, the challenge of managing our resources more efficiently would be much more difficult.”

Danos offered these tips for reducing water use.

- **Lawn watering** -- Water in the early morning or evening when evaporation rates are lowest. Don't water the pavement! One inch of water per week is all that is generally necessary to maintain your lawn. Avoid over watering by using a rain gauge or coffee can to measure the volume of water being applied.

- **Lawn care** -- allow your grass to grow taller in hot dry weather. Longer grass means less evaporation and will encourage roots to grow deeper leaving your lawn more drought-tolerant.
- **Car washing** -- use a bucket to wash. Keep a nozzle on your hose--don't let water run when not in use.
- **Pool** -- use a pool cover to keep water clean and reduce evaporation.
- **General Maintenance** -- use a broom instead of a water hose to clear debris from patios, driveways, and sidewalks.
- **Landscaping** -- plant trees to provide shade. Decrease lawn area. Use drought-resistant shrubs. Increase areas of ground cover. Mulch.
- **Valves and hoses** -- check outdoor pipes, hoses, and faucets for leaks.

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