

In-ground sprinkler systems should have annual inspection

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recommends that homeowners have pressure-type vacuum breakers on in-ground sprinkler systems tested annually. For more information, please contact Don Callahan, Water Operations Administrator at 978-486-3104.



Mae Thompson named office supervisor



Mae Thompson has been named Staff Accountant/Office Supervisor, succeeding Eileen Marcotte, who retired earlier this year. Mae has worked in the business office for several years, most recently as Associate Accountant. In her new position, Mae has responsibility for our business services. Please join us in wishing Mae well.



39 Ayer Road • PO Box 2406
Littleton, MA 01460
978-486-3104 • Fax: 978-486-8549

Office hours:
Monday - Thursday 6:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Business Office closed Fridays
email the editor at kgoddard@lelwd.com

Message from the General Manager, continued.

outdoor water uses, LWD, in association with the Clean Lakes Committee, has embarked on a program to promote the installation of rain barrels, rain gardens, vegetative swales and other Low Impact Development methods to control and recharge clean rainwater.

We expect to promote other methods including the use of drought tolerant lawns and the addition of shade trees to help contribute to a reduced carbon footprint and lower outdoor water use.

With your help, we hope mandatory outdoor water restrictions will not be required this coming summer.

Please visit our web site www.lelwd.com for more information on methods and programs available for you to help with this effort.

Best regards,

Savas C. Danos
General Manager

Rain barrels available

In conjunction with the Clean Lakes Committee, LWD is offering rain barrels to all residents at a discounted price of \$45 each. These 55 gallon barrels are an inexpensive and efficient way to capture storm water runoff and use it for watering lawns and gardens. To install, simply connect your gutter downspout to the barrel and the runoff from your roof will be collected, which saves the water for other uses and helps stem nonpoint sources of pollution.



Detailed installation instructions are available on our web page, www.lelwd.com. Follow the link embedded in the item on rain barrels on the home page.

For more information or to request a barrel, please contact Savas directly at 978-486-3104.

Watts & Drops

Newsletter of the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments

Kevin Goddard, Editor

Summer 2008

A Message from the General Manager

In 2007, Littleton Water Department (LWD) received our latest Water Management Act Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP). This permit requires all water departments to begin a program to decrease residential consumption to less than 65 gallons per day (gpd) per person within 5 years, among other newly-imposed conservation measures.

Outdoor watering is the most significant water use that jeopardizes a community's ability to meet this per capital residential standard. Last year, because of the drought and a temporary decrease in yield at one of our production wells, LWD implemented a mandatory odd-even outdoor water conservation program. Odd numbered homes and businesses were allowed to water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and even numbered homes and businesses were allowed to water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, with no outdoor watering on Mondays. This mandatory program was very successful, as we had a high level of compliance within the community, for which we are very thankful.

Along with these water restrictions, LWD undertook a vigorous leak detection program and an aggressive program to replace aging water meters. The water restriction, leak detection and meter modernization programs all helped our utility meet the 65 gpd per person standard for 2007, however continued conservation by residents is necessary for future compliance.

As DEP mandates become more stringent and reduction in the carbon footprint becomes a way of life in our society, water conservation will become an increasingly important contributing factor. Along with a request for continued voluntary controls of

Continued on page 4

LWD urges voluntary odd/even water conservation to prevent mandatory restrictions on use

As we start the summer, the Water Department is urging customers to implement water conservation measures in an effort to avoid mandatory water restrictions. The Department is asking for 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**. We are also requesting no watering on Mondays, and no watering between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The town's water consumption in past summers has surged to an average of nearly 2 million gallons per day, an amount close to the system's capacity. And while the department hopes to avoid serious limitations on water use over the remainder of the summer, even a short heat wave can quickly stress the town's water system.

If water use is not curtailed, the department is prepared to implement mandatory restrictions on water use, which can range from an odd/even day schedule, only during certain hours, to a more restrictive weekend-only schedule, or in the severest case, a complete ban on all outdoor watering.

Remember that daytime watering is costly and largely ineffective. While we understand that people are trying to maintain their landscapes, this objective can still be met with much less water during the early morning or evening hours. Only one inch of water per week is sufficient to maintain a healthy lawn, so we ask that customers use common sense when using water outdoors.

In the bathroom

About 75% of the water you consume each day is used in your bathroom. Here are some ways you can save hundreds of gallons of water every day:



- ◆ Look for and fix leaky faucets, pipes, showerheads, plumbing fixtures, and toilets. Even tiny drips from your faucet can waste about 100 gallons of water a day.

- ◆ Never use your toilet as a trash can. You waste gallons of water with each extra flush.

- ◆ Turn off the faucet while you brush your teeth or shave. You can save four to ten gallons of water a day.

- ◆ Take shorter showers. You can conserve five to ten gallons of water a minute.



- ◆ Install low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators. Low-flow showerheads can save 20 to 40 gallons of water during one 10-minute shower. A low-flow aerator can reduce faucet flow by about 25%.

- ◆ Fill your bathtub only half way. You can save up to 25 gallons per bath.



Purchase water saving devices

To help you save water, our office sells both flip aerators and low-flow showerheads at below our cost. Flip aerators attach to your faucet and allow you to open or close the flow without turning your faucet off. By keeping the water temperature constant, this is a must-have for anyone who does dishes by hand. At \$2 each, the aerators are an inexpensive way to save water and energy.



The 2 gallons per minute adjustable spray of this showerhead delivers a broad, rain-like spray or a focused, pulsating spray. It has a plastic head with a chrome finish and a chrome-plated brass collar. At only \$4, this showerhead is an excellent value.



Contrary to our consumptive habits, water is not an unlimited resource. Conservation should be practiced year-round. As the state takes a closer look at withdrawal permits, we need to strike a better balance between winter and summer use. By incorporating the following tips into your daily routine, you will save hundreds of gallons of water per day.



Outdoors

Water your lawn and garden only when needed.

Don't follow a fixed schedule. Water grass and plants only when they show signs of wilting. To find out if your lawn needs watering, step on the grass, then move back. If the grass stays flat, it's time to water. In most cases, lawns need to be watered only once a week.



Water your lawn and garden during the cooler parts of the day.

Heat and wind rob your lawn and garden of water before it can be used. Watering before nine o'clock in the morning also helps to prevent fungus growth.

Deep soak your lawn and garden.

Water long enough for the moisture to soak down to the roots. In this way, grass and plants will develop a deeper root system, which requires less water and is more disease-resistant. A light sprinkling, on the other hand, can quickly evaporate and encourage a shallow root system.

Let the water sink in slowly.



Never water faster than the soil can absorb it. Excess water will form puddles or run off into the gutter.

Don't leave your garden hose unattended.

A garden hose can pour out more than 600 gallons of water in just a few hours.



Use a garden hose with a shut-off nozzle.

Hoses without a nozzle can waste 10 gallons or more per minute.

Be sensible when using your lawn sprinkler.

Position your sprinkler so water lands on the lawn and garden, not on paved areas. Don't leave your sprinkler running all day. Use a kitchen timer to remind you to shut it off.



Put a timer on your underground lawn irrigation system.

Learn how to shut it off in case of rain and do not use it every day.

Check for and fix any leaks in outdoor hoses, pipes, faucets, and connections.

Outdoor leaks are often not as visible as leaks inside the home. But they can waste just as much water.



Car washing.

Use a bucket to wash. Keep a nozzle on your hose. Do not let water run when not in use.

In the kitchen

Each time you turn on the dishwasher, garbage disposal, or kitchen faucet, you could be wasting several gallons of water. You can save a considerable amount of water in the kitchen if you:

- ◆ Run your dishwasher only when full. Automatic dishwashers consume the most water in the kitchen, about 12 to 17 gallons per load. Select dishwashing cycles that use the least number of washes and rinses.



- ◆ Avoid unnecessary washing and rinsing before loading the dishwasher. Most dishwashers don't need prewashed dishes. Just scrape them clean and let the machine do the washing.

- ◆ Wash fruits and vegetables in a basin or stoppered sink - not under running water.

- ◆ Thaw frozen food in your refrigerator, not under running water.

- ◆ Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running water from the tap until it gets cold.



In the laundry

Each time you do your laundry, you could be wasting up to 30 gallons of water. Here are some water-saving tips:



- ◆ Run your washing machine only when full. Washing machines use 30 to 60 gallons per load. Don't run half loads. For smaller loads, adjust the water-setting level carefully or wait until you have enough laundry for a full load.

- ◆ Presoak heavily soiled items before placing them in the washing machine to avoid washing twice.

- ◆ Use a minimum amount of detergent to avoid rinsing more than necessary.

- ◆ Hand-wash and rinse in a stoppered sink or washtub.

- ◆ Look for and fix leaky faucets, hoses and pipes.