

Waterline News

September/October 2007

\$200 rebate for high-efficiency washing machines

Most always the washing machine is the second largest source of indoor residential water demand in the home. Machines purchased in the 1980's - 1990's use 50 or more gallons of water per wash cycle. New high-efficiency washing machines can reduce water use and energy consumption up to 50 percent. They require less detergent and are easier on the fabrics. The new, front-load machine uses 15-25 gallons of water per load and is said to be the most efficient. If you average five loads of laundry a week, you could save as much as 6,500 gallons of water a year. Over 10 years, which is often the life expectancy of appliances, you could save more than 65,000 gallons.

According to Amy Vickers, author of Water Use and Conservation, most high-efficiency washers have a faster spin speed than conventional machines, resulting in improved moisture extraction and drier clothes at the end of the wash cycle. This is a feature that shortens drying time and also saves energy.

Effective October 1, 2007 Volusia County Utilities is offering a \$200 rebate to our customers who replace their old machines with a new high-efficiency machine. Contact Becky Adkins at (386) 943-7027, ext. 2611, for a list of machines that qualify under this rebate program.

Glen Abbey Water Treatment

Volusia County Utilities soon will make upgrades to the Glen Abbey Water Treatment Plant, which provides water to approximately 7,100 customers in the Orange City/DeBary area. Upgrades include two - 125-horsepower, 2,000 gallon-per-minute high-service distribution pumps that will enable us meet peak water demands better, which usually occur during the early morning. Upgrades also include a 600-kilowatt, diesel-powered backup electric generator and electrical improvements that will enable us to maintain operation of the water treatment plant and all wells during power outages. The cost to make these upgrades is \$897,006.

Leaks

Experience shows 90 percent of the leaks in residential plumbing systems are at the toilet tank. Malfunctioning water softeners and humidifiers also can be a culprit for an unusually high water bill. We encourage you to check for a leak.

Waterwise plant of the month



*Jerusalem thorn
Parkinsonia aculeate*

The Jerusalem thorn is a small, fast-growing tree, reaching 25 feet. It is used widely as an ornamental, because it has a short trunk and a graceful, spreading, sometimes weeping, crown measuring up to 20 feet wide. Bees produce fragrant honey from the flowers.

The slim branches and twigs have green bark, but produce large spines up to one inch long. Small leaves appear shortly after a rain, then fold up at night. Usually within a few days the tiny leaves drop off, leaving the midribs to flutter like streamers in the wind. Eventually these fall off and accumulate like pine needles beneath the tree. A spectacular display of clustered pea-like flowers in spring makes the whole tree look like a giant yellow bouquet. It grows well on sandy or gravelly soils, is tolerant of alkaline and chalky soils, likes full sun, and is drought tolerant and thrives in heat. The Jerusalem thorn produces two kinds of seeds within the same pod and this is how they propagate.



Stormwater maintenance program

A major component of the Stormwater Utility is the stormwater maintenance program. The proper care and upkeep of all the pipes, inlets, ditches and streets are vital to keeping pollutants out of our lakes, rivers and streams, as well as reducing the impacts of flooding.

Typical maintenance equipment includes:

- Street sweeper – sweeping up dirt, leaves and trash from streets remove pollutants before they enter water bodies. The county has high-tech sweepers that use air pressure, conveyer belts and rotating brooms to remove very small particles.
- Vacuum truck – A large holding tank on a flat-bed truck that uses water pressure to dislodge sediment from pipes and inlets, then “sucks” it out into the holding tank. Sediment contains many stormwater pollutants, such as metals from cars and nutrients from yards.
- Spyder tractor – This is an all terrain excavator that can enter ditches and canals up to 8-feet deep. It can dig out sediments and cut back overgrown vegetation.
- Aquatic vegetation spraying – Specially trained technicians apply environmentally friendly chemicals that will kill retention pond algae and other undesirable vegetation without harming “good” vegetation or fish.



A spyder cleaning ditches



Vac truck cleaning pipes

Do you need to re-evaluate your position on water conservation?

A recent editorial in the Daytona News-Journal brought attention to some important facts explaining why we should be conserving water.

In the last twelve month period we have received 39.10 inches of rain. The normal expected rainfall is 53.16 inches. It will take up to seven years for that rain to reach the deep storage that is the Floridan Aquifer; which hydrologists call the “sole source” water supply for Volusia and Flagler counties.

Floridians use over 9 billion gallons of freshwater per day. Ninety percent of that comes from the aquifer. If we use more than what the rainfall provides, we are depleting our sole source. We have been depleting the aquifer for several years due to the droughts and overuse.

As we draw water from the aquifer we shrink the flow of springs, lower lake and stream levels, and harm plants and animals that depend on the water to sustain them.

If we should over tax our fresh ground water supply, we will have to move to treating and drinking river and/or sea water as alternative supplies. Both sources are extremely expensive to produce by the gallon and both have environmental issues to overcome.

You can do your part. Abide by the irrigation schedule set by your county council, landscape with drought-tolerant plants, purchase water-efficient appliances, wash clothes and dishes only when you have full loads, take shorter showers, and retrofit water-guzzling toilets with efficient 1.6 gpf ones.

Volusia County continues to offer water-saving rebates for toilets, rain barrels and washing machines. Contact us at 943-7027, ext. 2611, if you are interested in saving water.

A message to our young readers

Volusia County Utilities encourages our youth to observe, read, study and pass on to others the valuable information pertaining to water conservation, treatment and disposal. We offer tours at some of our facilities. It's an opportunity to see first hand how our treatment plants operate to provide your homes with water and sewer service. We also encourage some who are not sure what avenue to take for a profession to look at becoming a treatment plant operator. There is a high demand for them across the United States.

Looking for a subject for the science fair? How about one on water conservation or treatment? Our office would be happy to provide assistance where needed. Contact our office at (386) 943-7027.



Street Sweeper

