



fguaNEWS

FALL 2011 — Pasco County Systems

updates & information from your water and wastewater utility

www.fgua.com

How Your FGUA System Rates Come About

One of the duties of the Florida Governmental Utility Authority (FGUA) Board is to make sure the FGUA rates are sufficient to pay all FGUA operating costs and repay the debts incurred for the bonds that are sold to finance the purchase of the utility and large capital projects. The FGUA is a not for profit entity, and each system must generate its own revenue.

Like many other utilities, the FGUA uses an independent rate consultant to analyze the revenues and required coverage obligations for the utility. The report suggests any rate increases necessary for the current year, and projects rates necessary for future years. The report is shared with the host county government and FGUA Board as well as publically in an open rate hearing (if a rate change is required).

Rate hearings are typically held on a week-night, in a local library, community center, or other large room with public access. The hearing is advertised in a legal ad in the daily newspaper, online at www.fgua.com and on customer bills in the weeks before the hearing.

Each FGUA system operates individually and customers are only responsible for the debt in their system.

At the public hearing, the rate consultant and FGUA financial staff gives a presentation on the costs incurred by the utility, and the amount of revenue available to meet bond obligations. Rates for the FGUA are compared to local utilities and other utilities in Florida. Members of the public are encouraged to ask questions and make suggestions at the hearing. This meeting takes place prior to the Board making a decision on the rate implementation. This is done so that all comments from the host government and the public can be shared with the Board.

A rate increase can be made for 1 year, or a multiple year time frame, such as 3 or 5 years,



based on the rate consultant's report. If a multiple year increase is passed, a new rate hearing is not required each year. Often the rate consultant will only suggest a small cost of living adjustment based on the United States Consumer Price Index (CPI). A CPI increase does not require a public hearing as long as it is not higher than 2.5%.

Rate increases are usually adopted at the September Board meeting and go into effect on October 1, which is the first day of the fiscal year. Emergency rate increases can be adopted at other times of the year if revenue is not sufficient to pay the daily costs of running the utility. This is rare, but has occurred in FGUA systems.

Each FGUA system operates individually and customers from one system are not responsible for any debt in another system. That is why the rates for each system are studied, calculated and passed independently. In order to keep the rates as low as possible, the FGUA Board approved new bonds issued for the Lehigh Acres, Golden Gate and Pasco systems in 2010. The bonds have lower interest rates than the previous line of credit. Large capital improvement projects and line expansion projects have been limited in each system to keep costs to a minimum and still maintain the systems at maximum efficiency.

Customers who would like more information on the FGUA rates can visit www.fgua.com or contact their local FGUA customer service office.

Better Water Becomes Reality for Seven Springs Customers

Seven Springs Customers' days of discolored water and low water pressure are finally a thing of the past as the FGUA completed its two and a half year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) effort on August 25. The FGUA started the improvements immediately following the acquisition of the system in February 2009 in response to customers' water quality and service concerns dating back over 15 years. The improvements remove hydrogen sulfide, the cause of black water and sulfur smells in the water, as well as improve water pressure and service to customers.

Improvements to the Mitchell Road Water Treatment Plant (WTP) include new pressure filters to remove color and turbidity from the water, a new backup emergency power generator, and improvements to the WTP building. Aesthetic and landscaping improvements to buffer the view of the WTP for the community were completed in September. Also, construction of water mains from the FGUA well sites to the WTP is complete and operational. In addition, interconnections to Pasco County Utilities, which provides water purchased from the County ensuring the FGUA does not exceed its permitted capacity of water drawn from its wells, are now operational.

During the completion and startup period of the new equipment, the FGUA provided an online fact sheet accessible on the home page of the FGUA website, advising customers of CIP activity and possible water turbidity and service concerns they may experience. Fortunately, the FGUA experienced minimal water quality and service issues during the startup activity. Customers still experiencing water quality concerns are encouraged to contact the FGUA Pasco Customer Service Office at (727) 372-0115.

In commemoration of the CIP completion, the FGUA will be holding a ceremonial ribbon cutting event at the Mitchell Road WTP at 7937 Mitchell Ranch Road on October 21st. For additional information on the event, please contact the FGUA Pasco Customer Service Office or visit the FGUA website at www.fgua.com and click on "latest news."



Rain, Rain, Come This Way

Everything looks greener after a good rain, but have you considered that the rain that runs over roofs, driveways, and sidewalks carry pollutants such as fertilizer, oil, pesticides, and pet waste? These pollutants will run into storm drains and eventually into the nearest stream or river. A small and simple rain garden can make a big difference and become the pride of your neighborhood. You will help improve the environment and the quality of water for yourself, your neighbors, and the native wildlife.

Rain gardens are natural or built depressions in the landscape that divert rain water to your landscape. A rain garden is a natural filtration system that filters out pollutants, sediments, and debris, essentially cleaning the runoff and recharging our aquifers. The best rain gardens are those which utilize Florida's native vegetation—a variety of grasses, hedges, ferns, shrubs, or even trees. Rain gardens also clean the water of nutrients and poisons that fill our lawns and gardens.

So how do you get started? Begin this winter by thinking about your landscape and identifying an area that may be suitable to convert into a rain garden. You can easily build one by using or digging a low area in your landscape at least 10 feet from the house or garage to avoid infiltration into the foundation.

Avoid any area above a septic system. The deepest portion of the rain garden will be at least 12 inches below the level of the surrounding land. If you have primarily sandy soil you can amend it with compost and topsoil.

Place plants with a higher water tolerance at the bottom as this will be where most water collects. Dig a shallow channel from your downspout to your rain garden and line it with river rock to help guide rain where you want it to go, or install a four-inch drain pipe to divert the water. If you take care in choosing plants, your rain garden will attract birds, butterflies, and bees, and will reduce pollution by up to 90%.

Adapted from an article in the City of Redding, CA Utility Newsletter with permission from and special thanks to Pam Clackler. Additional resources available at www.rainKC.com and www.raingardens.org.



UPDATES

Lindrick System Improvements:

The FGUA will be scheduling rehabilitation of existing wastewater lift stations throughout the Lindrick service area this fall. These rehabilitation projects will replace worn pumps, deteriorated piping and electrical components. The FGUA is finalizing the implementation plan for pipeline replacement and point repairs following its completion of a chloride study and collection survey. The study measured the chloride concentrations from saltwater that is infiltrating the system and work will commence on various projects that will reduce the inflow and infiltration that is impacting the system.

You Made a Difference!



Thank you for your generosity in the FGUA School Supply Drive. The FGUA, in coordination with Pasco County Schools, accepted pens, pencils, crayons, glue, subject dividers, and other supplies that will be delivered to local schools. Customers are encouraged to continue bringing donations this fall to the FGUA Customer Service Office at 6915 Perrine Ranch Road in New Port Richey.

FGUA AT YOUR SERVICE

Pasco County Office

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Low Flow the Way to Go

The FGUA has formally launched its inaugural **Low Flow Toilet Rebate Program**. The pilot program provides Aloha Gardens and Seven Springs customers account credits for successful replacement of conventional toilets with ultra-low flow (1.6 gallons per flush) or high efficiency toilet (1.2 gallons per flush or less). The toilet rebate program is co-operatively funded by the FGUA and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Customers must submit a rebate application and follow program requirements, including installation and inspection of old and new toilets, to receive



a rebate. Rebates are available to single-family customers, with a \$100 toilet rebate for the first toilet and a \$60 rebate for a second toilet. The FGUA also provides program participants with information on proper toilet maintenance practices, including toilet flapper replacement as well as other indoor water conservation methods. All Aloha Gardens and Seven Springs residential customers received a program brochure in September. **Toilet rebates are limited and are available on a first-come first serve basis.** Additional program information, the status of remaining available rebates and a downloadable application are available at www.fgua.com.

Customer Update Incentive Program

This summer, the FGUA continued its **Customer Incentive Program**, which rewards customers for updating their information. This allows the FGUA to continue providing timely customer announcements as well as prepare for transitioning from a paper-based to electronic notification system. Customers contacting the FGUA Pasco Utility System confirming or updating their information have been entered in monthly drawings for gift certificates provided by businesses in or near the FGUA service area. The following winners were recently chosen and received gift certificates generously donated from local program sponsors. **June 2011:** Cynthia Vargas, winner of a gift card to Trinity Seafood at 4036 Little Road in Trinity and a gift card to Fairway Pizza at 2337 Seven Springs Boulevard in New Port Richey. **July 2011:** May Lafond, winner of a gift card to Christo's Restaurant at 3136 Little Road in New Port Richey and another gift card donated by Fairway Pizza. Winners were notified by telephone. The FGUA will not and does not share, distribute or sell customer contact information to entities outside the FGUA. The FGUA thanks its participating businesses and customers updating their information during this program. The FGUA encourages its customers to continue contacting the FGUA Pasco Utility System Office with any account updates at (727) 372-0115.

FLORIDA GOVERNMENTAL UTILITY AUTHORITY Board Members Lea Ann Thomas, Chairperson (863-534-6031); Robert Knight, Vice Chair (352-527-7647); Michele L. Baker, Vice Chair (727-847-8115); Douglas L. Meurer (239-479-8779); Shane Parker (863-675-5220); Michael Crumpton, P.E. (863-491-7500) **Alternates** Pasco: Bruce E. Kennedy, P.E. (727-847-8115); **System Management** Robert E. Sheets, System Manager (850-681-3717); Robert Dickson, Capital Program Manager (877-552-3482); Jerry Connolly, Operations Manager (877-552-3482) **Contact** Faith Doyle, Clerk to the Board, FGUA Operations Office, Suite 2000, 280 Wekiva Springs Rd, Longwood FL 32779, 877-552-FGUA (3482) Toll Free, 407-629-6900. **System Office & Customer Service Centers** Golden Gate: 239-455-1583, Lehigh Acres: 239-368-1615, North Fort Myers: 239-543-1005, Pasco Systems: 727-372-0115 WWW.FGUA.COM
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