



INSIDE



Now's the time to brush up on your hurricane knowledge and prepare a plan



A new, more detailed customer bill is in store for FGUA Pasco. The improved document has more of the information you've been asking for.



We are hard at work for you, improving your water utility and responding to your needs. Check out the latest updates.

fguaNEWS

SPRING 2010 — Pasco County Systems

updates & information from your water and wastewater utility

www.fgua.com

Hurricanes 101

Hurricanes are nature's most severe storms. While hurricane season runs from June 1–November 30, the most active part of the season is August–October. Knowing the serious warnings associated with hurricanes helps you to plan ahead for the safety and security of your property, your family, and your pets.

A **hurricane watch** is issued when a hurricane poses a threat to coastal areas, generally within 36 hours. Everyone in the area should listen for further advisories and be prepared to act promptly if a hurricane warning or evacuation order is issued.

A **hurricane warning** is issued when hurricane winds of 74 mph or higher, or a combination of dangerously high water and very rough seas are expected in a specific coastal area within 24 hours. When a hurricane warning is issued, all precautions should be completed immediately. If the hurricane's path is unusual or erratic, the warning may be issued only a few hours before the beginning of hurricane conditions.

Stay informed of storm warnings by listening to NOAA Weather Radio. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazard information 24 hours a day. A battery- or crank-powered radio is an essential part of any storm survival kit. Always be prepared to take action and consider any hurricane or tornado warnings or watches to be serious and make plans to protect your family and property immediately.

Returning Home After Evacuation

If you had to leave your home, return only when local authorities tell you it is safe to do so, and return with caution. Structural damage, household dangers, and utility hazards may be present when you arrive.

When you first return home, check the outside of your home for structural damage, then check inside. Always sniff for gas leaks and if you detect the odor or hear hissing gas, leave the property immediately and call the fire department using a cellular telephone or a neighbor's phone. Always be aware, too, of rodents and wild animals that may have taken up shelter in or around your home.

If you see sparks or frayed/damaged electrical wires in your house, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the fuse box or circuit breaker. Be careful not to stand in water—even a puddle—to touch your circuit breaker. If you need help checking your electricity or repairing it, call a professional electrician for help.

If you have been told by The FGUA or other authorities that sewer lines were damaged (or if you suspect so yourself), avoid using sinks, showers, or toilets and contact The FGUA immediately. If water pipes are damaged, turn off the water at the main valve and call a plumber for assistance.

If the disaster was widespread, the water utility service may have been damaged or disrupted by the storm, or it may be operating with less pressure than usual. Therefore, listen to local television or radio stations for instructions about the safety of the water supply and whether you have to take special precautions such as Boil Water Notices before using the water. If you are unsure about the safety of the water, call your local FGUA service center and ask for or listen to emergency advisories.

The FGUA is committed to keeping your water supply safe during a catastrophic event. We issue Boil Water Notices to each household and business in the event extra precautions are needed, and we carefully inspect and test the water infrastructure and supply before we allow you to return to normal consumption. You can always call our customer service centers to get information before, during, or after a natural disaster. At the end of a Boil Water period, you will be notified officially by The FGUA that it is ok to return to normal water use.

It is important to get the right information at the right time during and after a hurricane, so listen carefully to your radio for weather warnings and information, and take proper steps to protect yourself, your family, and your pets when returning home.

After the Storm

In the event of a water emergency, make sure you know how to protect yourself and your family. There are five different instances in which you may be required to boil your water for safety.

MICROBIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION: Occurs when water samples show the presence of harmful bacteria.

ZERO OR NEGATIVE PRESSURE: Occurs when we experience equipment failure or power outages, forcing the water to stop flowing.

LOW WATER PRESSURE: Usually results from cracked or damaged pipes that could potentially allow contamination to enter the public water or excess capacity issues.

WATER MAIN BREAKS/INTERRUPTIONS: Boil Water Notices must be issued in these cases because there is a possibility of contamination due to a loss of water pressure.

WELL FLOODING: This occurs when the water supply well overflows, causing easy access for harmful bacteria.

To protect your family against potentially harmful bacteria in these rare situations, simply bring all water used for cooking or drinking to a rolling boil for one minute. These 60 seconds are enough time to effectively kill any active bacteria and make the water safe for cooking and drinking. As an alternative, you may use bottled water.

Your health is our greatest concern. If your residence or business is ever under a Boil Water Notice, you will be notified with a door hanger or through your local media outlets.

Adapted from "Hurricane 101," by Chris Floyd, American Red Cross and "Picking Up the Pieces After a Disaster," by American Red Cross Disaster Services. www.redcross.org

FGUA AT YOUR SERVICE

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Say 'Hello' to Your New FGUA Bill

Customers in the FGUA Pasco Utility Systems may have recently noticed significant changes to their billing statements. The new billing statements occurred as part of the FGUA's effort to improve customers' service and billing experience.

The new billing statements now list the beginning and ending dates for the dates where services were rendered, as well as the number of days in the billing cycle. The bills also include a water use history chart, so customers may start to monitor their consumption beginning with their January 2010 statements. A message center is now displayed on the bill, including any special

messages concerning existing bills and service notices.

The FGUA is aware of billing issues resulting from the transition to new accounting software and statements, including bills being calculated from meter readings captured from last year, usage not being shown from meter readings on calculated bills, and meter readings being omitted from statements. The FGUA is working diligently to resolve these outstanding billing issues. Customers are encouraged to contact the FGUA Office at (727) 372-0115 with any concerns on the content or appearance of their bills.

Additionally, the FGUA anticipates providing online access to customer account and billing statements later this year and will advise customers once this option is available.

FGUA Acquires Consolidated, Lindrick Utility Systems

Over the past several months, the Florida Governmental Utility Authority (FGUA) has added two more utility service systems to its family of systems in the state.

The FGUA assumed ownership and management of the Consolidated Utility System on December 23, 2009. The Consolidated System includes the Colonial Manor, Dixie Groves, Holiday, Pasco and Virginia City Utilities. Consolidated customers began receiving billing statements from the FGUA in January.

On March 10, 2010, the Florida Governmental Utility Authority (FGUA) assumed ownership and management of the Lindrick Utility System. Lindrick is now the third system in the FGUA Pasco Utility System and the fifth of the family of utility systems in Florida. Lindrick customers began to receive their bills from the FGUA in April.

Water and wastewater plant operations, meter reading, and customer service are being provided to the Consolidated and Lindrick Systems by the FGUA's contract operator, U.S. Water Services/Wade Trim. U.S. Water Services/Wade Trim has extensive operations and maintenance experience throughout Florida and the United States.

The FGUA has several planned water and wastewater improvements for the Lindrick System, including replacing water mains to increase water pressure, converting to chloramines to facilitate a system interconnection with the City of New Port Richey and increase system reliability, repairing and replacing leaking sewer mains to prevent saltwater intrusion into the system, restore sewer lift stations and an odor control system at the master lift station near Gulf Harbors Civic Center.

The FGUA will establish citizen advisory committees for both systems to address customer service issues, major development projects, capital improvement efforts, environmental, operational and other issues related to FGUA activities in the area. Matthew Rihs is the Community Service Representative in the local office and monitors responsiveness, addresses customer concerns and provides community outreach. He is available to meet and work with local homeowners' associations. Contact him at (727) 372-0115 x330.

UPDATES AND TIMELY INFORMATION

Water Distribution System Maintenance and Safeguards

The FGUA completed **system-wide flushing** of the FGUA Seven Springs system in February. Routine flushing is part of our prudent utility practices to ensure the highest quality water is being delivered to its customers. Line flushing provides a temporary increase in velocity through the pipes which scours potential build-up, increases circulation and removes stagnant water. We will continue to monitor system lines and flush in sections of the line as necessary to maintain water quality and service. // The FGUA is currently working with Pasco County and regulatory agencies to complete the **design and permitting of interconnections** with Pasco County Utilities. The construction is scheduled to be complete in spring 2011.

Upgrades for Mitchell Water Treatment Plant and More

Design has begun on the **Mitchell Water Treatment Plant upgrade**. A permit for site upgrades will be submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) based upon the Preliminary Design Report in March or April 2010. We conducted a pre-application meeting with the FDEP in March to review the proposed improvements and facilitate the permitting process. Public comments from adjacent homeowners and schools next to the property will be included in the design process. // Recently a 12-inch pipe was installed along the north side of Mitchell Blvd at Wellbuilt Blvd as part of the **ongoing distribution looping project**. Three additional pipe loops have been constructed and will be placed in service after FDEP clearance. These locations include Mitchell Blvd and Davenport Dr; Pemberton Rd and Perrine Ranch Rd; and Middlesex Dr and Cheltnam Ct. These looping projects will eliminate dead ends in the distribution system, increase circulation of the potable water and increase service reliability.

Water Conservation Takes Center Stage

This spring, the FGUA and Pasco County Utilities jointly launched their **Inaugural Water Conservation Poster Contests**. Working with Pasco County Utilities and the Pasco County Superintendent of Public Schools, information on the poster contest was delivered to Pasco County elementary students in Public Schools and Charter schools in the FGUA Pasco Utility System. Winners were announced and awards provided during their local school announcements. // The FGUA **Pasco Moisture Conservation Program** continues. Pasco Utility System customers may receive free equipment to monitor and reduce lawn consumption during the ongoing drought. The sensors may be obtained by visiting the FGUA Pasco Utility System Office in New Port Richey.

Berm Breach Under Control

On the evening of February 25, 2010, the **FGUA reclaimed water retention pond** located at the FGUA Seven Springs Waste Water Treatment Plant breached as a result of increased pressure and rainfall. The breach occurred on the eastern side of the berm. The breach caused reclaimed water (treated water that is typically used for watering lawns or golf courses) to flow to nearby county drainage areas and wetlands and caused some localized flooding of streets near the retention pond. We completed a temporary repair to the berm. Engineers have evaluated the berm, indicating the berm is structurally sound, are working on a permanent repair to the berm and we are making every effort to ensure that such an event does not occur again. In addition, we worked with customers affected by the breach to clean up debris and repair damage caused by the event.

Fee Changes and Capital Improvement Funds

The Pasco County Board of County Commissioners approved the new **bulk water agreement** for all FGUA connection points at their first meeting in March. With the agreement finalized, this will allow the FGUA to execute the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) settlement agreement, reducing pumping below limits set by SWFWMD through purchasing water from the County. // The FGUA held a **public meeting on adjustments to miscellaneous fees and rates for the FGUA Seven Springs and Aloha Gardens System** on Thursday, April 8 at 6:00 p.m. at the West Pasco Government Center at 7530 Little Road in New Port Richey. These changes to miscellaneous fees are intended to cover costs generated by individual customers. These fees avoid specific costs from being charged to all customers through general rates and would not impact the majority of customers. // The FGUA is **applying for funding through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) State Revolving Fund (SRF) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding** provided through federal stimulus money. The grants or loans awarded through these programs may reduce the need for higher rate increases for capital improvement projects to the FGUA Seven Springs and Aloha Gardens Utility Systems. A public hearing was conducted on April 15 at 10 a.m. at the Historic Dade City Courthouse at 37918 Meridian Boulevard as part of its regular FGUA Board meeting to discuss the Water Facilities and business plans for the Seven Springs Water System and capital improvements as required by the SRF application and inform customers concerning the FGUA application for the USDA grant. The applications were also explained at a public meeting on April 8 at 6:00 p.m. at the West Pasco Government Center at 7530 Little Road in New Port Richey.