



Customer Pipeline

Emerald Coast Utilities Authority

ECUA 1981-2011: Celebrating Thirty Years of Environmental Leadership

The 550 employees at ECUA share a special environment with our fellow citizens, taking its conservation and preservation seriously. For three decades, our professional staff has touched the lives of our community's 250,000-plus citizens, providing potable water, sanitation collection and wastewater treatment on a round-the-clock basis.

As we mark our thirtieth year, we will celebrate the environmental initiatives we have achieved to date, and those we look forward to implementing in the future. Throughout the next few months, we invite you join us as we review these initiatives in each issue, and walk down memory lane, all the while learning from the past and applying those lessons to our future, and our community's growing needs.

Next month: Down the Drain No More: ECUA's Cooking Oil Disposal Program provides an environmentally safe and clean manner to dispose of cooking grease at nine drop-off locations throughout our service area.

November 15: Sewer Averaging Begins

If you are an ECUA mainland residential wastewater customer, your annual sewer charges are based on the average number of gallons of water used in your household during the period known as "sewer averaging." Sewer averaging, or Winter Quarter Averaging as it is called in some communities, is usually conducted during the winter months when residential water consumption is at its lowest. The ECUA's sewer averaging period will begin with each residential customer's first meter reading on or after November 15 (including ECUA sewer customers whose water service is from the Peoples Water Company). The length of your sewer averaging period is 90 days.

Since the actual water consumption during this period will determine your sewer charge for the next twelve months, it is important to check all indoor and outdoor plumbing fixtures for leaks. Leaks waste water and will end up affecting your monthly water and sewer charges. Most leaks are easy to identify but sometimes, it takes a little creativity to track them down.

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You can confirm a suspected leak in your toilet's plumbing by putting several drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes, and if the colored water shows up in the bowl, there is a leak in the tank. Check the toilet's stopper ball for wear by flushing the toilet and rubbing the bottom of the stopper with your hand. If the rubber rubs off or crumbles, it is time to replace the stopper. Finally, **you need to oil, adjust or replace the flush handle if you have to jiggle it to stop the water from running after you flush.** The "stuck" handle may be causing the stopper to stay open, allowing water to flow into the bowl.

Pharmaceutical Take-Back Day:

Oct. 29, 10 am to 2 pm.

As of this printing, locations for this event were not finalized. Please tune in to local media or check our website at www.ecua.fl.gov for final drop-off locations.

Reduce Water Usage: Save, Save, Save

Some other ideas to keep in mind for reducing water usage during the sewer averaging period and throughout the year are:

- Water the lawn and garden only when necessary. In order to moderate some of the extreme peaks in usage, and to maintain a balanced system pressure and reduce the amount of wear on our pumping equipment, ECUA recommends that our customers irrigate between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m., which is our optimum off-peak time.
- Make sure that outside spigots are not forgotten in the "on" position.
- Cut down on the frequency of at-home car washing, or use a commercial car wash.
- Make sure you have a full load before running the washer or dishwasher.
- Don't let the water run while you brush your teeth or shave.

Hopefully, following some of these simple steps will help you save money and conserve water too!

Precautionary Boil Water Notices Protect Our Customers

You may have heard about or noticed a significant increase in the number of precautionary boil water notices issued by ECUA and other local water utilities in the recent past. Does this mean that the quality and safety of our water has declined? Does this mean that ECUA's water mains are breaking more so than in the past?

Absolutely not! Rather, changes in regulatory rules are now requiring that water utilities in Florida issue precautionary boil water notices whenever water service to an area has been turned off, if even for a short while, or to just one home. Typically, water service can be interrupted for any number of reasons, most commonly while repairs are made to a water main following a break, or in the course of scheduled maintenance and repair work. Following tropical storms or hurricanes when many uprooted trees cause hundreds of broken water and sewer lines, water service may be shut off system-wide and so, boil water notices are often issued, until mains can be repaired and system pressures are restored.



Why is the issuance of a boil water notice required? When breaks or changes occur in water lines, if the normal pressure in the line is lost, the possibility exists for contaminants to enter that line. The odds of this happening are extremely remote, but to be extra cautious, precautionary boil water notices are placed in effect while routine bacteriological sampling is conducted. Usually, two separate sets of samples are taken (again to be extra cautious), each needing 24 hours to be considered complete. When both sets of samples come back "clean", the precautionary boil water notice is lifted. These advisories only affect water that is intended for drinking or cooking. To properly disinfect water to use for drinking or cooking, simply bring it to a rolling boil for several minutes or use 3-6 drops of regular household bleach per gallon of water. Let it stand for 30 minutes in an open container before using.

It may seem that this is an added cost in manpower, time, and materials to the utilities, and certainly a little inconvenient to those water users affected. However, we believe that these types of safeguards are in place to protect our customers, and are therefore worth the added time and cost to the ECUA. For more information on precautionary boil water notices, customers may call ECUA Customer Service.



BAYOU MARCUS FACILITY EARNS 12th ANNUAL AWARD

The Peak Performance Awards program, sponsored by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), recognizes public wastewater treatment facilities for their outstanding compliance records on an annual basis.

ECUA's Bayou Marcus Water Reclamation Facility (BMWRF) received a Gold Peak Performance Award for the 2010 calendar year. The NACWA Gold Award recognizes wastewater treatment or water reclamation facilities that have operated with no National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit violations in a calendar year. This Gold Award for the 2010 calendar year serves to acknowledge the outstanding work at the BMWRF, making this the 12th award earned by the Bayou Marcus facility staff in thirteen years.

"The ECUA is an outstanding example of a utility working to provide quality services while maintaining a strong sense of environmental values," said Ken Kirk, NACWA's Executive Director. A formal presentation of the award to the ECUA Board was made at the ECUA's regular monthly meeting on Thursday, August 25.