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Your Fairfax Water

This is the first in an ongoing series about Fairfax Water - its structure, services, planning and resources.

Leadership

Chartered by the Virginia State Corporation Commission as a public, non-profit water utility in 1957, Fairfax Water is governed by a ten-member Board of Directors composed of Fairfax County residents appointed by the elected Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. A general manager, supported by a senior staff of engineering and business professionals, manages 400 employees and the day-to-day operations of Fairfax Water. As an independent authority separate from county government, Fairfax Water is a financially self-supporting, non-profit organization with none of its earnings diverted to other governmental uses.

Commitment

Fairfax Water's commitment is to earn our customers' trust by providing water of exceptional quality and reliability.

Service

Fairfax Water is the largest water utility in Virginia and the 25th largest in the country, serving 1.5

million people, or one out of every five Virginians using public water.

Quality

The Virginia Department of Health regulates Fairfax Water according to regulations established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) based on the Safe Drinking Water Act passed by Congress. With the opening of the Frederick P. Griffith, Jr. Water Treatment Plant in 2006, Fairfax Water has two state-of-the-art treatment plants that use the latest technologies to treat water. Both the Griffith and the James J. Corbalis, Jr. Water Treatment Plant use a combination of ozone and activated carbon filters, one of the most effective treatments for minimizing disinfection by-products, pharmaceuticals, trace organics, taste and odor. By using these two treatments at both plants, the water in our system consistently surpasses federal standards.

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Important Information About Rates

On Thursday, December 11, 2008, Fairfax Water approved revisions to its Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges, to be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2009. Even with the increase, Fairfax Water's rates will remain the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. The rate increase was necessary due to a number of factors:

- The rate increase will safeguard Fairfax Water's AAA rating from the three top rating agencies. Fairfax Water's AAA rating translates into lower interest rates and lower overall costs.
- Fairfax Water has experienced significant cost increases for fuel, power, chemicals and construction material. Our past planning allowed us to absorb those increases for several years, but it is now necessary to factor those increases into our rate structure.
- Continuous improvements to our infrastructure are necessary to ensure the supply, quality, and reliability of your drinking water. Enhancements over the past several years generated capital expenditures of \$400 million, with another \$600 million anticipated over the next 10 years. Capital improvements included completion of the new Griffith treatment plant and an extensive expansion of the Corbalis treatment plant.
- Fairfax Water's most important resource is its workforce. Labor and labor-related costs make up 54 percent of our costs. As with many organizations, costs for health care and retirement benefits have increased significantly. We have an obligation to ensure that our benefits are sufficient to retain current employees and competitive enough to attract new employees with the specialized skills required by the water industry.



Editor's Note

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, please e-mail us at PR@fairfaxwater.org, call us at 703-698-5600, TTY 711 or write to the address below.

From the Tap Editor
Fairfax Water
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

Important Numbers

Fairfax Water Services

Questions about water service:
703-698-5800.

After-hours water emergencies:
703-698-5613

Questions about billing: 703-698-5800

All other Fairfax Water departments:
703-698-5600

Fairfax County Services

24-Hour trouble response center for sewer back-ups or sluggish flow in a sink, toilet, or tub: 703-323-1211

Sanitary sewer billing information:
703-324-5015

Sanitary sewer back-ups and line maintenance:
703-250-2003

Dig with C.A.R.E. – Miss Utility at 811 or 1-800-552-7001

Use TTY 711 (Virginia Relay) for all numbers unless otherwise stated.

Annual Water Main Flushing Program

Each spring, April through June, Fairfax Water flushes its water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short time. The flushing maintains the high quality of water in our distribution system and provides for routine maintenance of the more than 22,000 fire hydrants in the Fairfax County service area.

Flushing may result in some discoloration, the presence of sediment, and a more noticeable taste and odor of chlorine in your water. These conditions are not harmful and should be of short duration. Keeping an open container of drinking water in the refrigerator allows the chlorine to dissipate, which usually improves the taste of the water. We appreciate your patience during this program.



Your Fairfax Water (cont.)

Efficiency

Fairfax Water continues to have the lowest commodity rates in the Washington metropolitan region and we are one of only a handful of water utilities in the country to receive an AAA rating from the top three financial rating services. This AAA bond rating reflects a high level of confidence in Fairfax Water's financial management and equates to lower interest costs that result in savings passed on to our customers. For a comparison of rates in the region, visit our Web site at www.fairfaxwater.org and click on Customer Service. *Meet our Board of Directors in the summer issue of From the Tap appearing in bills from June through August.*

ONLY RAIN DOWN THE DRAIN

Did you know that the water that goes down the storm drain on your street flows right into your local stream? Polluted rain water is the nation's number one water quality problem. So what can you do to prevent water pollution? Properly dispose of used motor oil and household hazardous waste, such as paint, batteries and household cleaners. Do not pour them on your driveway or into the storm drain. Visit the Fairfax County Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-324-5068, TTY 711 to find information on safely disposing of hazardous waste. When you are sprucing up your yard this spring, avoid using excess fertilizer or pesticide, especially before rain is predicted. Wash your car at a commercial car wash or in a location where the soapy water will not run into the storm drain. Sweep up dirt, grass clippings and other yard waste instead of washing them down the driveway and into the gutter. Not only will this protect our streams, it also saves about 80 gallons of water. Always pick up pet waste from your yard, sidewalk or park area. Volunteer to help with Fairfax County's storm drain labeling program. The program labels storm drains with the "No Dumping" message to remind people about the dangers of dumping anything into a storm drain. For more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov and click on "Environment" or call 703-324-1423, TTY 711.



Water-Saving Tip #38

Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting shrubs and using rock or granite mulching as a ground cover.

For more information and other water-saving tips, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com

SPRING/SUMMER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Fairfax Water offices will be closed for the following holidays:

Memorial Day - Monday, May 25
Independence Day - Friday, July 3
Labor Day - Monday, September 7

To report an emergency outside of Fairfax Water's normal business hours, please call 703-698-5613, TTY 711.

