

# Conservation News

*Environmental News and Information from the City of Melbourne Utilities Department*

## Utility rate adjustments effective in October

*Contributed by Mike Moore, Public Information Officer*

The first of five yearly utility rate adjustments to meet increasing costs and allow continuing improvements to Melbourne's water production and wastewater treatment systems will become effective on Oct. 1.

Water rates for Melbourne's customers will increase by 11.09% and wastewater rates for Melbourne residents will increase by 9.83% on that date. Rates for wastewater service provided by Brevard County and Palm Bay are not set by the City of Melbourne.

The City has also successfully sold \$28 million in bonds to refinance utility system debt at a lower interest rate. The refinancing of 30-year bonds generated an extra \$4.7 million to fund immediate improvements to the system while reducing the annual cost of long-term debt payments.

City Manager Henry J. Hill said the rate adjustments were recently approved by City Council after public hearings. The new utility rates were recommended by a consulting firm as being required to adequately fund the utility system.

"This series of annual rate increases is necessary to provide for operating costs of the water and wastewater system. The rates also will fund more than \$65 million in capital improve-



*Accounts Clerk Ann Brubaker assists customer with utility bill. The utility billing office is located at Melbourne City Hall, 900 East Strawnbridge Avenue.*

ments needed over the next five years," said Hill.

Much of the improvement work is required by evolving environmental and health regulations set by state and federal agencies.

"Even with the rate adjustments, we still have one of the lowest utility rates in the area," Hill noted. "The rate adjustments are a necessary response to several

factors that influence our ability to pay the cost of providing these basic services," Hill said.

"While costs continue to increase, the revenue coming in to pay for the system has been less than anticipated in the last two years." Hill cited a dramatic decline in the amount of interest being earned by City funds, the cost of capital projects, and reduced consumption by customers. The Palm Bay, Titusville and Cocoa utility

systems are all in the process of raising rates for similar reasons.

### **Increases Effective October 1**

A 5% increase in both water and sewer rates was recently approved to begin on Oct. 1 of this year. Annual rate increases of 5% in utility rates over the next four years were also approved by the City Council.

The final Oct. 1 rate increases were calculated by first applying rate changes that were approved in 1998 to also go into effect this year. In 1998 a series of rate adjustments were approved by City Council including increases of 5.8% in water rates and 4.6% in wastewater rates effective in 2002. After those adjustments were in place, the 5% increase authorized this year was applied.

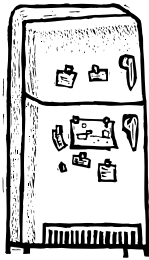
For a residential customer who lives in Melbourne and uses 5,000 gallons of water in a month, the utility bill under the new rate structure will be \$44.60. For a customer using 7,000 gallons the bill will be \$58.40.



The City of  
Melbourne

City of Melbourne  
Utilities Administration/  
Environmental Community  
Outreach Division  
2881 Harper Road  
Melbourne, FL 32904  
Phone: (321) 674-5761  
Fax: (321) 674-5765  
E-Mail: [utilitiesconserve@melbourneflorida.org](mailto:utilitiesconserve@melbourneflorida.org)  
Web: [www.melbourneflorida.org](http://www.melbourneflorida.org)

## Call before placing appliances curbside



Due to a change in collection procedures, the City of Melbourne Recycling and Sanitation Management Department is asking residents to call for a special pick-up before placing appliances containing refrigerants or other type of "white goods" at the curb. Types of appliances would include refrigerators, freezers, air conditioning units, washers, dryers, dishwashers, etc.

These items will still be collected on your regularly scheduled household trash days, and other normal rules still apply, such as removing doors from refrigerators and freezers.

In the City of Melbourne, please call 953-6302. Outside of Melbourne, please call 723-4455.

## Sidewalk watering poses safety hazard

A potential tragedy in the making is lurking in scores of homeowners' yards, yet most have probably never given it a second thought. The problem is the overspray that often times occurs when irrigating the grassy area between the sidewalk and the street.

Many people have their irrigation systems set on automatic timers to turn on in the morning and be completed by 10 a.m. The morning, however, is when many children are riding their bikes, scooters, roller blades and skateboards to school. To steer clear of the water, they have been seen darting down the nearest driveways and into the street and oncoming traffic.

To avoid what could be a very terrible situation, if the water from your irrigation system is hitting the sidewalk in front of your property, please consider changing your watering hours. By running your irrigation system in the late evening hours or very early in the morning, so it is complete by 7 a.m., you could avoid any accidents that might occur as a result of overspraying.

Whichever times you choose, please remember to stay within the year-around watering restrictions, which allow irrigation only between the hours of 4 p.m. to 10 a.m.

## Hazardous & electronics roundup scheduled

Brevard County is holding a round-up of all your household chemical products and old electronic equipment.

Please take the time to sort through your garage, shed, storage areas and under bathroom and kitchen sinks. Gather up unwanted and leftover household chemical products, and bring them to the round-up. Chemicals must be in non-leaking, labeled containers. Electronics being accepted include computers, laptops, printers, scanners and TVs. Only five electronic pieces per household will be accepted.

The roundups will be held from 9 a.m. to

3 p.m. at the following locations:

- ◆ Oct. 19 — Hoover Middle School, 2000 Hawk Haven Drive, Indialantic
- ◆ Oct. 26 — Palm Bay High School, 101 Pirate Lake, Palm Bay

This service is free to residents of Brevard County. Businesses must contact U.S. Liquids directly by calling (800) 624-5302, ext. 231, for participation and disposal cost information.

For more information on the round-up, please call Brevard County Solid Waste Administration at 633-2042.

## Beachside spray bad for hydrants; City urging residents to redirect spray

Two years ago, the City of Melbourne made significant repairs and improvements to more than 1,000 beachside fire hydrants. The project included replacing existing bottom bolts with stainless steel bolts. The bolt replacements were necessary because of deterioration caused by their exposure to an extremely corrosive environment due to the salty ocean air. In addition, residential irrigation systems using wells have higher levels of salt than mainland wells. When these systems spray the hydrants on a regular



basis, further corrosion occurs.

Some of the two-year old bolts are now starting to show signs of corrosion. Their integrity could be maintained for a longer period,

however, if homeowner's would re-direct their irrigation spray away from the hydrants.

## City earns FWPCOA web site honor; new feature now linked to site

The City of Melbourne has been honored as a runner up for the 2002 Florida Water & Pollution Control Operators Association (FWPCOA) Outstanding Web Site Award. This is the first year that the association has provided this award, recognizing the growing importance of the Internet and its use as a tool in providing service to our customers.

As one of the top ten sites in Florida, Melbourne has received a certificate designating Melbourne's site as a "Quality Web Site," and authorization to place their logo on our site in recognition of the designation.

Please visit Melbourne's site at [www.melbourneflorida.org/watercon](http://www.melbourneflorida.org/watercon).



A new link, located at the bottom of the utilities home page, has recently been added that directs visitors to the H2OUSE ([www.h2ouse.org](http://www.h2ouse.org)). Developed by the California Urban Water Conservation

Council, this interactive web site allows visitors to take a tour of a virtual house. From there, you can investigate water-saving opportunities in each location of the house and it will show you both the facts and provide specific advice. There is another area, called "Take Action," where you can go directly to specific water-using

devices in your home. It gives such information as advice on purchasing and installing a new toilet to scheduling your automatic irrigation system, and much more.