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News Release

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Water use during winter quarter affects sewer charges

MELISSA (October 18, 2021) Like the vast majority of water utility providers, the City of Melissa uses the 90-day period between Nov. 15 and Feb. 15 to calculate the cost of sewer or wastewater charges for the year.

That means that Melissa residents can directly influence their sewer or wastewater charges by monitoring and adjusting their water use during this period. The process is called Winter Quarter Averaging and takes the average household water utilization during that period and uses that as the basis for sewer charges for the following 12 months.

“Some version of winter averaging is used by most utilities to come up with each home’s monthly wastewater sewer charges,” says Chris Thatcher, Customer Relations Director. “The reason is that most of the water that enters the home, measured through the water meter, is likely going through the sewer system. During these 90 days, outdoor watering is usually limited or eliminated.”

The calculation process is repeated every winter. Simply stated, the amount of water used in each residence during the target period is averaged out, and that figure becomes the monthly charge for sewer service during the ensuing year.

The amount of water discharged into drains is measured in thousand-gallon increments, and a cost set by the water supplier, is applied to the total.

“The utility industry doesn’t have a reliable way to measure exactly how much wastewater goes into the various drains, sinks, toilets, showers, or baths in a home,” he said. “The challenge then is trying to determine how much to charge residences for sewer service. To address that, we use the average amount homeowners use during the winter period.”

Many households may not see a big change from year to year in their sewer charges, but some homes may see a drop or rise in the wastewater charge because of what happens during the averaging period.

Outdoor irrigation, leaky faucets, runny toilets, washing less than full loads in the clothes or dish washer, washing cars at home, or any other unnecessary water use in the winter will not only drive the monthly cost of water up, but can also show up in the sewer charges during the following 12 months.

“From mid-November to mid-February residents should be mindful that their water use has a direct effect on their sewer charges for the following year,” said Thatcher.

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ABOUT THE CITY OF MELISSA – The City of Melissa is a fast-growing progressive suburb with a small-town feel, located 35 miles north of downtown Dallas in the dynamic growth area of northeast Collin County. Melissa sits on 21 square miles, is home to over 19,000 people, and is easily accessible by way of three intersecting highways. Melissa has ample inventory of the highly-sought-after undeveloped frontage available on US 75 and SH 121, primed to serve the commercial needs of a booming Collin County. Melissa is a home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government.