

# DONALA WATER & SANITATION DISTRICT

(719) 488-3603

[www.donalawater.org](http://www.donalawater.org)

AUGUST 2018

## CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

By the time you receive this newsletter, work will have commenced on one project, while two others are poised to start soon. The District has three distinct projects we are undertaking this summer and fall. The largest, and most visible, will be the water main replacement along Gleneagle drive. Pate Construction was awarded this project, which will consist of replacing the existing 12" asbestos/concrete water line along with new saddle taps and service lines to the existing curb stops. The project is scheduled to begin August 6th, and the middle of October is the targeted completion date. The contractor will start the project at Westchester and will move toward the east on Gleneagle. Our goal is to get to Mission Hills this year. Customers will experience temporary outages in water service while the contractor connects the new service lines to the curb stops. We will attempt to coordinate, with the progress of the project, and call residents the day prior to water curtailment. In most cases, the water will be out no more than ½ day.

The second project was awarded to Global Underground to install a 12" water main, from our Jessie Booster station, north to our water plant on Bermuda Dunes. This project is necessary to more effectively, and efficiently, move water between pressure zones in the District. Due to our desire to limit the disturbances to the rear property of many properties, the District selected an "underground bore" method to install this point. As there are no water taps, or other access points on this line, the depth of the bore will approach 60' or more, below the surface. This project will have begun by the time you read this. The total project has a timeline of 120 days.

The third project this season will be replacing approximately 22 saddle taps and service lines from the main in Desert Inn Way to the property line. We have experienced a higher than expected failure of the saddle taps in this area, due to the "aggressive" nature of the soil. This project has already begun and has a three-week construction schedule. As is our policy, we will contact the residents a day before the service line is scheduled to be replaced.

We will place weekly updates on the District's website on the various project schedules, but please be aware that the schedules are dictated by the conditions in the ground, material availability and weather.

**PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY IN THE CONSTRUCTION ZONES. WE WANT EVERYONE TO BE ABLE TO GO HOME AT THE END OF THE DAY.**

## CREDIT CARD CHARGES

As many Donala customers know, we do have a credit card process to pay your water and sewer bills. We do have a "charge" for using your credit card, which is 3% of the charge. We often are told that we are not legally authorized to charge this convenience fee and shouldn't charge it. Private businesses are not allowed to charge a convenience fee, but governmental agencies (which Donala is) are allowed to. Unfortunately, this is the only equitable way to allow for credit card payments. When a credit card is used, our credit card company charges the District, 3% of the amount. We, in turn, charge the customer that 3%. If this charge wasn't paid for by the customer, the District would be required to pay that charge, and we would have to spread the cost among all the customers of the District, including those who don't pay by credit card, which is the majority, something that we don't believe is fair.

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## PHONY DEMANDS FOR PAYMENT

Over the last few months, I have read about multiple attempts to coerce payment for alleged overdue water bills. The caller will identify themselves as a utility representative and tell the customer that they have an overdue bill and unless you pay immediately, your water will be immediately shut off. The caller will direct you to purchase a prepaid money card, or something similar, and will either call back or provide you with a number to call and once you provide the caller with the account information on the prepaid card, they immediately access and withdraw the funds. Reports are that these individuals are very convincing, and they will threaten you by telling you that they will be out in 45 minutes to shut your water off unless you pay immediately. In Donala, if you are late with payment by 60 days or more, we will act to recover payment, but not by threatening you with immediate disconnect. We will send you a certified letter, as well as a copy of that letter in your bill. If payment is not made when due, you will receive a phone call as a reminder and a blue tag will be hung on your door, if we are unable to reach you by phone. If you have difficulty in making a payment, we do offer a payment plan to assist. The District will stop water service for delinquent accounts, but not by calling and immediately demanding payment via prepaid money cards. If you suspect you may be a victim of a "scam" call, please contact the District immediately and we will verify the status of your account.

## DONALA GARDENS

If you have driven by the Gleneagle Shopping Center lately, I hope you have noticed the blooming roses at our Donala Gardens. There are many xeriscaping demonstration gardens in Colorado Springs, but none showcase plants that are uniquely adapted to our neighborhood's high, dry and windy climate like Donala Gardens, a multi-tiered display of tough, attractive, locally available plants that thrive in our community on limited water. Natives, as well as adapted plants and some Plant Select vegetation, are growing happily there in the compost-enriched soil, irrigated by drip irrigation. The Garden has matured as we had hoped, over the last 6 years the Garden has been open. The plants are identified with plaques to help you with your gardening choices. If you happen to see Julie McDonald working there, she is more than happy to explain which plants will work best for you.

## OOPS

In last month's newsletter, we discussed connecting your French drain system, or sump pump, to the sewer line at your house. In this article, I talked about how much rain we had received in the last 45 days and why you shouldn't connect rainwater collection systems to our sewer system. The advice was good, but the context was not. We do recycle newsletter articles, and in this one, we missed the rainy days reference. I always wonder how well read this newsletter is and I'm grateful to know that it is read. I'm also grateful for those that called us and asked what rain I was talking about, all done with humor. With that said, what did you think of the 10" of snow we got over the 4th of July? 😊

Your General Manager,

