



# WATER REPORT

February 2004

*Fast, Accurate — and It Can Detect Leaks, Too*

## District Moves into the Future with Automated Meter Reading

Timely, accurate information on water usage is important both for billing and as a tool for water conservation. The Marina Coast Water District has begun installing an automated meter reading (AMR) system that will allow the meter reader to capture readings without opening the meter box. The water use recorded by the meter is automatically saved on the reading device and then transferred to the District's computer. Less time spent reading meters means more time for your meter reader to investigate customer questions, search for leaks and solve individual meter problems.

The meter reader now reads over 4,500 water meters each month. In the next few years, the number of meters is projected to increase by several thousand. With the AMR system, the meter reader will be able to cover the existing meters and the newly installed meters each month.

The AMR installation will start with new construction and certain selected areas on the former Fort Ord. As the District gathers experience with the system, it will be expanded.

Customers are reminded that it is important to ensure access to the meter box. Vegetation and structures should not be allowed to hinder access to the meter box and the meter reader's ability to check the meter periodically for problems.



*Martin Rosales has been the District's meter reader for two years. In addition to reading over 4,500 meters each month, Martin also attends to customer queries in the field, installs meters and checks for meter leaks. To help speed his rounds, Martin utilizes his bike on certain routes.*

## MCWD/MPUSD Water Education Series for Teachers Continues

The Marina Coast Water District and the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District are continuing the joint program to bring water conservation education to the classroom through a series of workshops designed to assist teachers in presenting water science education to students.

The first workshop of this school year was held on October 30, 2003, at Olson Elementary School. Sixteen teachers attended an informative workshop featuring presentations by the Water

Education Foundation and the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency. In addition, a water education library has been placed in each elementary school in the District's service area to provide readily accessible teaching resources.

Three additional workshops are planned for this school year that will provide help with curriculum as well as resources and materials for elementary and middle school teachers.

## *Claim Your Rebate Plus Save Thousands of Gallons of Water in 2004*

**Ultra Low Flow Toilet Rebates — \$50.** Toilets are the single largest indoor user of water. Changing to the 1.6-gallon toilet will decrease the water used for each flush by 54 percent. The District is offering a \$50 rebate for each ultra low flow toilet (1.6 gallon per flush) installed in place of a 3.5 gallon toilet. Just keep your receipt, fill out the rebate form and schedule an inspection. More information and forms are available on our web site, [mcwd.org](http://mcwd.org). To schedule an inspection or answer questions call us at 384-6131.

**High Efficiency Clothes Washer Rebates — \$50.** The newest high-efficiency clothes washers can save over 5,000 gallons of water per year and reduce electrical costs by leaving less water in the clothes for the dryer to eliminate. Qualifying clothes washers can be found at the [energystar.com](http://energystar.com) web site. For a comparison of efficient washers, visit the Consortium for Energy Efficiency web site, [cce1.org](http://cce1.org). If you have any questions or want to schedule the inspection for the rebate, call us at 384-6131.

**District Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at the MCWD offices, 11 Reservation Rd. (Marina State Beach). The public is encouraged to attend.**

## General Manager's Corner



Over the past few months, redevelopment activity on the former Fort Ord has increased. New homes are being completed and families are beginning to occupy the new Seaside Highlands community. Demolition work began in the old Hayes Park area to make way for the first phase of the Army's Residential Communities Initiative which will ultimately see more than 1,500 new

homes constructed for our military families. And, significant planning is underway for four new, large projects: Marina Heights, a new residential community of 1,050 homes in Marina; East Garrison, the first phase of a new Monterey County residential community of 1,400 homes; the UCMBEST Central North and West Campuses commercial/light industrial project; and the University Villages project in Marina that may include more than 1,000 homes and commercial/industrial activities.

As construction proceeds, planning for these large projects unfolds, and as other projects are identified by Seaside, Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, CSUMB, and others, more details will be known. What is certain now, however, is that water supply remains a key issue for all the Ord Community land use jurisdictions.

The District continues preparation of the draft environmental impact report for the Urban Water Augmentation Project for the Ord Community. This project will evaluate water supply alternatives to provide an additional 2,400 acre feet of water each year to the former Fort Ord. When combined with the existing 6,600 acre feet/year of groundwater from the Salinas Basin, a total of 9,000 acre feet/year will be available to support the redevelopment effort.

We anticipate that FORA will soon begin discussing how to allocate the additional 2,400 acre feet/year among the land use jurisdictions in support of the many planned projects. The District will continue to supply water as allocated by FORA, and work with the land use jurisdictions to ensure that aggressive water conservation measures are included in all plans and projects. Ord Community redevelopment will only be realized through the careful management and conservation of our limited water resources.

— Mike Armstrong

## Save Big with These Winter Watering Tips

The winter months give us an opportunity to conserve — and save significantly on water bills. The most important place to start a conservation program is right outside your home. You can make several changes, today, that will greatly reduce the need for outdoor watering: choose plants well adapted to our climate, improve the soil (mulch saves water and retards weed growth), water efficiently and take advantage of good irrigation techniques. When you do water, don't overdo it. In Marina, we all live on sand, which absorbs excess water quickly. Water does nothing for our plants once it goes below the root zone. Check your system regularly and reduce the amount of water used until it is just sufficient to keep the landscape in good condition.



*The Lewis family (Joy, Lesley and Jesse) and Mr. Mitchell Jordan, seen with District employee, Paula Carina, were recipients of the kindness and generosity of the MCWD employees and customers.*

## Project Community Cheer a Success, Thanks to You

MCWD thanks our customers and employees for such a great job in supporting the family and senior we adopted for Christmas. Because of your generosity, we were able to brighten the season for some people that needed a little help. The items given were an outpouring of goodwill and much appreciated. Thanks to all.

## Switching from Sodium to Potassium Water Softeners Can Help a Lot

If you have a self-regenerating water softener, it adds sodium chloride salt (40 pounds each month for an average family of four) to the wastewater that leaves your home. The salt cannot be removed by the county recycling facility. Please consider switching from sodium chloride to potassium chloride, which is easier on the environment. See the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency web site ([mrwpc.org](http://mrwpc.org)) for more information on where you can obtain potassium chloride (top of newsletter page). You can also use an exchange service that will remove the sodium chloride for proper disposal.

**Mission Statement:** *Serving ratepayers with premier water, conservation, wastewater and customer services at a reasonable cost*

**Vision Statement:** *Marina Coast Water District will be the leading purveyor of innovative water and wastewater services on the Central Coast*

### Board of Directors

*Charles H. Scholl, President; Ron Russo, Vice President; David Brown; Thomas Moore; and Kenneth K. Nishi*

*Water Report is published quarterly for the customers of the Marina Coast Water District. MCWD is governed by an elected board of directors, which holds public monthly meetings.*

Address all comments and inquiries to:  
Marina Coast Water District, 11 Reservation Road,  
Marina, CA 93933-2099 or call (831) 384-6131  
MCWD Web Site: <http://www.mcwd.org>

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