



# ON TAP

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TUD NEWSLETTER

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## IS YOUR HOME WINTER READY?

The weather is unpredictable in the Sierra foothills, especially in the winter months; however, the coldest temperatures typically occur in the months of January and February. Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD or District) would like to remind you of some simple precautionary steps that will help you protect your home and property from cold winter conditions and prevent your pipes from freezing.

### Insulate Exposed Pipes, Faucets and Pipes Prone to Freezing:

Outside pipes and faucets, and pipes in unheated garages and crawl spaces are most vulnerable to freezing weather. To prevent pipes from freezing, wrap them with insulating material. Cover them with plastic and secure with tape, string, or wire. Also, remember to disconnect garden hoses.

### Locate Your Main Shut-Off Valve:

Don't wait for an emergency. Find your main water shut-



off valve now! It is commonly located next to the meter, in the garage, or outdoors by the foundation. If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding by turning off your main water shut-off valve.

**If you suspect a water main is broken, immediately contact TUD's 24-hour Customer Service at (209) 532-5536 so broken pipes can be repaired as soon as possible.** Visit the TUD website for more information on how to protect your home in the winter. <https://tudwater.com/customer-service/winterize/>.

## 2020 Water & Sewer Rate Adjustments

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### How are the rates changing?

A residential water customer with a 1-inch or smaller meter will see a \$4 increase in the monthly base rate, and a \$0.20 increase in the quantity charge. A residential sewer customer will see a \$2 increase in the monthly base rate. The billing statements issued after January 1, 2020 will reflect water and sewer rate increases. Please visit the TUD website to learn how these water and sewer projects are improving water reliability and efficiency, and to view the new raw water, treated water and sewer rates at <https://tudwater.com/customer-service/rates/>.

The District recently mailed out a postcard to all its customers notifying them of water and sewer rate adjustments effective January 1, 2020. The District is carrying out a comprehensive capital improvement plan (CIP) to upgrade aging water and sewer infrastructure and ensure water reliability. In 2015, the TUD Board of Directors approved a 5-year CIP to invest nearly \$20 million in critical infrastructure improvement projects. The CIP plan is supported by a 5-year rate plan with incremental increases. In the 2020-21 fiscal budget year, TUD plans to undertake \$5.7 million in water projects and \$2.7 million in sewer projects to improve reliability and support operations in both systems. To view a list of CIP projects, visit the TUD website, <https://tudwater.com/about-us/capital-improvement-plan-and-rates/>. The objective of TUD's rates is to be fair and equitable, to adequately cover costs with operating, repairing, and maintaining the system, and to maintain affordable water service in compliance with state requirements. TUD operates a large, complex series of water and wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, lift station, pressurized distribution and collection systems scattered across the county at various elevations and is the largest power user in Tuolumne County. TUD is successfully managing and upgrading this system inherited from predecessor water and wastewater agencies thanks to your support. Together, we can continue to ensure a well-run, locally-owned, and reliable water and wastewater system.

## The TUD Board of Directors – 2020

TUD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors, elected at large. The Board of Directors establishes policies for the operation of the District. The Board members vote for the President and Vice President of the Board each December prior to the start of the New Year. At the Board meeting held on December 10th, the Board elected Bob Rucker as President and Jeff Kerns as Vice President for 2020. The public is encouraged and invited to attend the regularly scheduled District Board meetings occurring at 2pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. If you are unable to attend the Board meetings, the meeting's Agenda and Video can be viewed at the District's website at <https://tudwater.com/board-of-directors/meeting-agenda-minutes-video/>



## General Manager's Corner

BY EDWIN R. PATTISON, GENERAL MANAGER

For many cities and utilities across this great nation, a mile of pipeline may enjoy 1,000+ customers, whereas in rural areas like Tuolumne County, we may be fortunate to approach 100 customers per mile of pipeline. Given this poor economy of scale, hilly topography, and a poorly designed, aging system that the District inherited, it takes passion, hard work, and creativity to carry out the mission of TUD. Hands down, the TUD lives up to this challenge each and every day! Based on numerous discussions held in 2019, the TUD team has identified over one-hundred capital improvement projects necessary to maintain and improve service. The team recognizes the challenge of balancing the need for replacement given the constraints of cost. As a result, the updated Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) represents an incremental, step-wise, balanced strategy toward achieving infrastructure replacement and fair rates to cover the cost of operations and

maintenance and capital replacement. TUD does well in large part by leveraging ratepayer dollars with state and federal grants to replace infrastructure, which is no easy feat. No stone is left un-turned in TUD's search for maximizing grant dollars to fund infrastructure replacement. We recognize the needs and demographics of our community and strive to keep a working balance between the priorities of high-quality service, infrastructure replacement, and grants in a manner that best keeps cost down!

In addition to the District's focus on CIP projects is the long-term plans identified in the Strategic Plan to build water supply reliability. Many are not aware that the TUD water system is vulnerable to annual water supply fluctuations due to small storage reservoirs in our watershed currently owned by the PG&E. As a result, Tuolumne County is highly reliant on a good snowpack like we received last winter. Because reservoir volumes are small at Pinecrest Lake and Lyons Reservoir, both lakes will continue to spill well into the hot summer months. Spilling water represents missed opportunities to capture and boost Tuolumne County's water supply! What are we doing about this important issue? For starters, TUD hosted a water supply tour in June with nearly forty (40) attendees from state experts, legislators, and local and regional partners to raise awareness of TUD's vulnerable water supplies and to highlight the fire – water nexus, an extremely important topic for this community.

TUD is striving to build water supply resiliency (reliability), along with assisting its partners with fire resiliency

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

by integrating systems, diversifying the water supply portfolio, consolidating water treatment plants, building efficient, reliable systems, and consolidating aging, failing water storage tanks. Right now, TUD is looking at investing \$25 million dollars over twenty-five (25) water projects: sixteen (16) water supply projects (\$4 million); three (3) water treatment projects (\$1 million); seven (7) water storage projects (\$4 million); eleven (11) water distribution projects (\$16 million) and investing \$10 million in twenty-three wastewater projects over the next five-years. These CIP projects do not include strategic project initiatives, such as regional water treatment plant consolidation, consolidation of water storage tanks, diversifying water supply sources and interconnecting systems. In addition, TUD is evaluating acquisition of water storage, conveyance, and hydropower facilities to ensure reliability of its water conveyance systems. All told, TUD is looking into investing hundreds of millions of dollars into building water supply resiliency into the next century. Projects of this size and scale are larger than Tuolumne County, and as such, TUD is looking to strengthen partnerships with its neighboring agencies, tribes, regional agencies, and state and federal partners. Education and collaboration through these partnerships will help us achieve our near-term infrastructure improvements, but also our long-term facility improvements to build water supply resiliency in Tuolumne County. As we approach 2020, I feel optimistic that as a community we can work together to improve the future of water reliability for Tuolumne County.



On Tap is published to keep Tuolumne Utilities District customers informed about issues and upcoming events.

If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please mail them to Lisa Westbrook, at 18885 Nugget Blvd., Sonora, CA 95370 or email at [lwesbrook@tudwater.com](mailto:lwesbrook@tudwater.com). For more information about TUD, go to [www.tudwater.com](http://www.tudwater.com)