



Rosamond Community Services District

Official Newsletter of Rosamond Community Services District - AUGUST 2023

A Focus on Service

At RCSD, community service is not just part of our name, it's our focus and goal. While California state laws set strict bounds on just what special districts, like RCSD, can do, we are always looking for ways to better serve our community.

Water and sewer services are at the heart of our efforts, they are the whole reason RCSD exists. We strive to serve our community by ensuring everyone has access to clean and healthy water. Part of this effort is keeping our rates as low as possible.

The recent end of the pandemic era moratorium on utility shut offs created a tricky problem for RCSD. On one hand, we love our community and want to help those in need. On the other hand, every gallon of water used by RCSD customers has a real cost attached to it. This cost covers not just the water itself, but the pipes it runs through, the tanks it is stored in, the electricity used to move it, and modern treatment processes that ensure it is safe and healthy to drink. If one customer does not pay for the cost of the water they use, the other customers must pick up the tab.

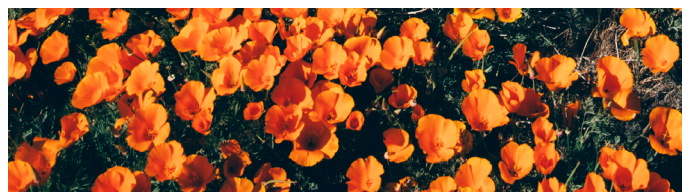
Many RCSD customers stopped paying their water bills in full during the pandemic, some incurring huge delinquent balances. This left RCSD in a difficult position once the pandemic ended. We wanted to help those in our community who had delinquent accounts while also protecting our customers who kept their accounts in good standing from rate increases to cover the cost of the delinquent accounts.

The RCSD team took the approach of wanting to help those with delinquent accounts rather than persecuting them. While every customer is held responsible for the cost of the water that passes through their meter, we could be compassionate in how we collected the outstanding balances.

This effort began with months of discussion about the late fees and service shut offs resuming in public meetings, newsletters, emails, and our social media accounts. We didn't want anyone to be caught off-guard when the late fees and service shut offs resumed. During this time we pleaded with our customers who had delinquent accounts to contact us for help. The RCSD team has several tools they can use to help delinquent accounts, including payment arrangements.

While many customers with delinquent accounts reached out to the team to make arrangements to pay their bills, many did not. Our customer service team took it upon themselves to reach out with emails and phone calls to every delinquent account that had not yet responded.

The standard penalties for delinquent accounts resumed in May 2023. That month, 735 accounts were charged late fees, 213 received service shut off letters, and 159 were served with door hanger notices that their service would be shut off if no action was taken. One month later, about \$20,000



Reset those Sprinklers

How much water your plants, trees, and lawn needs changes throughout the year. As the triple-digit heat of summer fades into the cool of autumn, it's time to adjust your sprinklers to shorter times. If the water runs out of your yard and over the sidewalk, you're watering too long. Reset your sprinklers to shorter times so your plants can still get the water they need and none is being wasted. You can also look at resetting how you water, like setting up drip lines to make sure the water flows only where it is needed and nowhere else.

of delinquent balances were collected and mailed service shut off notices were down to 102. Two months later, in July, only 35 accounts were served door hanger notices that their service would be shut off if no action was taken.

During these last few months, our customer service team has worked with many customers, helping them get their accounts back in good standing. RCSD took a compassionate approach to help the large number of delinquent accounts in our community and it paid off. This is evidenced in the steep decline in door hanger notices and the amount of outstanding balances that have been collected. Thank you to all of our customers who worked with us to get their accounts back into good standing.

Another way we serve our community is how our rates work. As a municipal agency, we cannot make a profit. Our rates are carefully balanced upon operating and financial forecasts to ensure they will cover the cost of producing, treating, and transporting water, transporting and treating sewer,

administrative costs, and creating healthy financial reserves. Unfortunately, in our world of inflation, this mean rates must be adjusted to keep RCSD in good financial health. While some similar agencies make occasional large adjustments, RCSD opts for annual small adjustments that contribute to the big-picture financial health for the district.

Another way we serve our community is by helping keep Rosamond beautiful. RCSD facilitates graffiti removal in public spaces of Rosamond. Did you know you can reach out to RCSD to report graffiti and our team will work on removing it? We've recently had a member of our community comment on just how easy it is to report graffiti and how quickly the RCSD team takes care of it. Our team does their best, but there are times we can't act on graffiti reports, depending on the surface and if the wall is privately owned.

We are looking for other ways to serve our community, even though our official authority is limited to water, sewer, and graffiti. Last month we worked with the Red Cross to bring blood drives back to RCSD. Our team has also been working on getting the derelict property on Diamond Street taken care of, and possibly leasing out our 20th Street property to a local small business.

As a special district, RCSD is limited in what we are allowed to do. However, we're always looking for the best ways to serve our community with the limited authority we have. It's all part of being a good member of the Rosamond community.





Do you need help paying your water bill?

CAPK Energy can reduce your utility costs

Water expenses continue to rise.

If you're falling behind on your payments or need assistance with your current bill, CAPK's Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) may be able to help you reduce your water or wastewater bills.

How does the water assistance program work?

The CAPK Energy team will help you complete an application, submit all required documentation and will establish your eligibility level. Households that qualify for assistance could reduce their water or wastewater charges by up to \$15,000.

Make an appointment today to see if you qualify for water utility assistance

To find out if you qualify for assistance with your water bills, call **2-1-1** or visit energy.capk.org/water-utility-assistance/.

There's no cost to see if you qualify, and any assistance you receive doesn't have to be paid back.

