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News Release

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Sewer charges calculated during three winter months *Water consumption should be closely monitored*

MELISSA (November 9, 2020) Every year, Melissa residents have the opportunity to influence the monthly charge for sewer, or wastewater, service by monitoring and regulating their water use during December, January, and February.

This nearly 90-day period is known as winter quarter averaging, the annual process used to calculate residential sewer charges by taking the average household water utilization during those three months and using that as the basis for sewer charges for the following 12 months.

"Most municipal utility departments use some version of winter averaging to determine each home's monthly wastewater or sewer charges," says Chris Thatcher, Customer Relations Director. "The rationale is that most of the water that enters the home, measured through the water meter, is likely going through the sewer system because during these three months outdoor watering is either severely limited or eliminated altogether."

The calculation process is repeated every winter. Simply stated, the amount of water used in each residence during the months of December, January and February is recorded, and the average for those three months 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.

"At this point, there is no reliable way to accurately measure how much wastewater goes into the various drains, sinks, toilets, showers, or baths in a home," he said. "That presents a challenge when trying to determine how much to charge residences for sewer service. To address that, we use the average amount homeowners use during the three-month period."

Conducting this process during the winter is preferable to any other time of year since most of a home's water is used indoors and thus discharged into the sewer lines. And, while many households may not see a big change from year to year, 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 December to 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 16,000 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.