



the PIPELINE



Message From General Manager Dennis D. LaMoreaux

The last six months have been challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with you, we at Palmdale Water District are living very different lives today than we were in February. The differences range from the inconvenience of wearing face coverings to closing businesses and losing jobs. We have continued to serve you through it all. You can count on having clean, safe water delivered to your homes, water mains kept repaired and working, and people to call if there's a problem. The work has been possible because most of our customers have continued paying their water bills. Although the office lobby remains closed for bill payments, you have been using the website, automated telephone service, drop-box, calls to the Customer Care representatives, and paying at 7-Eleven or Family Dollar stores.

It is expected that some of you are unable to make payments due to financial difficulties caused by the pandemic. Water service shutoffs are temporarily suspended, so there is no need to worry about losing water service if the bill is not fully paid. However, any outstanding amount will have to be paid

eventually. It is important to minimize your water bill to avoid larger bills in the future. If you are behind on your bill, we encourage you to contact our Customer Care Department at 661-947-4111. Our reps will be able to answer questions and provide information to help keep you from falling too far behind. The District's Water-Use Efficiency staff can also suggest ways to use water more efficiently, including conducting a virtual water survey with you. Water surveys look at how water is being used inside and outside your home. The staff will then be able to see what rebate programs can help and offer ideas to reduce the water bill. A virtual water survey can be scheduled by calling 661-947-4111 ext. 5002.

The District is only as strong as its customers. Though it has been a challenge, we have done well so far, and I am cautiously optimistic as we all face an unknown duration of COVID-19 in our lives. Thank you to the majority who have stayed current with your water bills. Together, we will keep the water flowing and available to everyone.

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CALENDAR

Holiday Closure

Thanksgiving
Thursday, Nov. 26

Board Meetings

Mondays @ 6 p.m.
Via Teleconference Until Further Notice
Info available on Board Agenda
September 14 & 28
October 12 & 26
November 9 & 23
December 14 & 28

Atención: Esta publicación está disponible en español en nuestro sitio web en palmdalewater.org. Para obtener una copia impresa en español, llame al 661-441-5944.

Attention: This publication is available in Spanish on our website at palmdalewater.org. For a hard copy in Spanish, call 661-441-5944.

Jim Stanton, IT Manager



When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the statewide Stay-at-Home order was issued in March, Information Technology (IT) Manager Jim Stanton went into high gear to ensure the 80-plus PWD employees had the equipment and skills to work remotely. He and his team scoured local electronic stores to buy laptops. They

scheduled one-on-one trainings so staff could continue working efficiently whether at their office desks or at home.

The task took one week.

“It was definitely a challenging time, but it could have been a lot worse” Jim said. “We were lucky that many already had equipment and some had remote work experience. We only had to acquire 10 laptops and one virtual appliance to handle external calls from remote work.”

He credits the PWD Board of Directors and GM Dennis D. LaMoreaux for having the vision 10 years ago to begin investing in IT infrastructure that has paid off during the pandemic.

Jim’s department is often called the “backbone of the District.” No one can do work without IT’s services and support. The team includes IT Specialist Bennett Yates, Geographic Information System (GIS) Coordinator Richard Heinonen and SCADA Instrumentation Technicians Erik Bouthillier and Salvador Zuniga.

“We are very lucky to have a dedicated group of IT professionals who knew how to turn the District’s vision into reality during this critical period,” said Assistant GM Adam Ly. “The one-week uptime shows the time and knowledge the group has invested in our technology.”

Jim has been at the helm of PWD’s IT Department since 2010. He spent two years as an Affiliated Computer Services contractor assigned to PWD before becoming a permanent employee. At Affiliated Computer, he also worked as a contractor for the city of Palmdale for 10 years. His earlier experiences include 20-plus years of IT and security work at Plant 42 and while serving in the U.S. Air Force.

He has seen how technology has evolved and brought new challenges, namely funding and cybersecurity. To stay relevant, there must be sufficient infrastructure funding for such things as computer upgrades. Cybersecurity is a constant concern.

“My number one priority is protecting the District from external/internal threats and data breaches,” Jim said. “We are being attacked as we speak. Ten years ago, we did not have to worry like we do now. It gives me gray hair.”

Although his job is often 24/7/365, Jim finds time to unwind with hobbies including bowling with his wife of 22 years, Debra. He also enjoys riding his motorcycle and has plans to renew his pilot’s license.

Drone Technology Improving Safety and Data at PWD



In the event of a major earthquake or other natural disaster that makes it too dangerous for staff to check for damages at various sites, PWD has a drone that can be strategically deployed to limit human risks.

“Buzz,” the drone, can be flown over large areas within minutes of emergencies to assess damages quickly and safely. Its ability to capture high-resolution video and images will allow staff to better prepare strategies for rescues and repairs.

“Drones allow us to work safer and more efficiently,” IT Manager Jim Stanton said. “We use Buzz to survey and assess before sending personnel out to inspect those areas. The drone gives us a bird’s-eye view of targeted areas.”

The flight team is currently using drones to assist with leak detection at the Palmdale Ditch, document project construction, and emergency response. The team plans to use it soon for tank and dam inspections to reduce risks to inspectors who have to physically climb on the tanks and dams for assessments. The drone will be deployed first, and if staff deems it necessary, inspectors will conduct a thorough in-person inspection.

Recently, the IT Department used Buzz to create 3D models of the Littlerock Dam to document progress of the construction of the grade-control structure. The drone pilots took hundreds of thousands of images and stitched them into 2D and 3D models.

PWD’s flight team consists of Buzz, a DJI Phantom 4 Pro professional drone, the DJI Spark, or “Sparky,” Jim, GIS Coordinator Richard Heinonen and IT Specialist Bennet Yates. All three drone pilots are able to conduct flights but must do so in pairs. The District’s drone program complies with the Federal Aviation Administration’s regulations.

Jim plans to add to the department’s inventory a drone that has enhanced sensors to map the depth of both Lake Palmdale and Littlerock Reservoir by flying over the bodies of water. The data captured during those flights will be analyzed to collect depth measurements based on the water’s temperature. In addition, enhanced imaging sensors like Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) will use lasers to measure distances to give staff a more accurate read for 2D and 3D models and maps.



Drone 3D image showing construction at the Littlerock Dam grade-control structure in 2019.

Q & A

with Customer Care Reps

The Customer Care Department helps hundreds of customers over the phone per week. Here are some frequently asked questions:

“Why is my bill so high this month?”

Customer Care Rep Evelyn Cazares:

During the summer, irrigation systems are a common source of high water use. We suggest adjusting irrigation controllers to 3-5 minutes per station every other day during the summer. It is best to water before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m. However, always be cautious of leaks in faucets, toilets, or other water valves around the house. These can be reasons for hikes in your bills.



“What’s the minimum I have to pay to avoid a disconnection?”

Customer Care Rep Ramon Rodriguez:

I advise customers to just chip away with any amount of payments, so they avoid getting too far behind.



“Does PWD offer any financial assistance for filling swimming pools?”

Customer Care Rep Trisha Guerrero:

It is best to fill up the first half of the pool during one billing period and the second half in the next billing period so that all the water usage does not go on one bill. We can help customers figure their billing periods. It is also best to empty and fill pools in the summer months when water allocations are higher.



Cleaning the Screens at the California Aqueduct

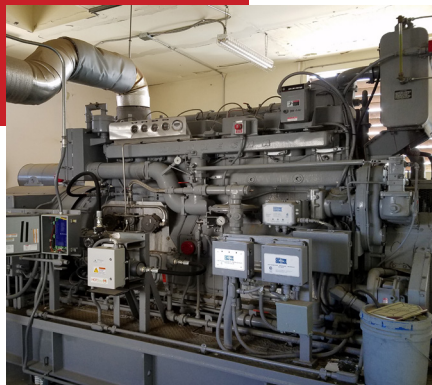
The traveling screen at the inlet to Lake Palmdale from the California Aqueduct was recently rebuilt and cleaned. The screen prevents debris from entering the lake. Depending on the time of year, it also is checked for algae buildup. Please remember that items thrown in the aqueduct could jam the screen and affect water flowing into the lake.



The traveling screen is lifted out of the aqueduct for repairs and cleaning.

Generators on Standby at Wells & Booster Stations

When blackout warnings are issued during fire season and extensive heat waves, PWD switches to backup power for operations during peak hours and has generators on standby for deployment to wells and booster stations. Even if the power goes out, our staff is working around the clock to ensure water is delivered to the Palmdale community.



Emergency generator located at a booster station.

Make an Appointment with a Customer Care Rep



Our lobby is open for appointments only on Mondays and Thursdays for customers needing help with various applications. An appointment can be made online at palmdalewater.org or by calling 661-947-4111. Make an appointment if you need assistance with:

New Service



Variance for Increased Water Use Allocation

Rate Assistance Program





CONTACT US!

CUSTOMER CARE: 661-947-4111
EMERGENCY LINE: 661-947-4114
FAX: 661-947-8604
WATER-USE EFFICIENCY: 661-947-4111 Ext. 5002

PAY YOUR BILL BY PHONE 24/7: 855-498-9969

PAY NEAR ME: PAY WITH CASH AT ANY 7-ELEVEN OR FAMILY DOLLAR LOCATION WITH YOUR PWD STATEMENT.

PAY ONLINE: PALMDALEWATER.ORG

TO REPORT WATER WASTE: 661-456-1099
OR EMAIL WASTE@PALMDALEWATER.ORG

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Mission Statement

Since 1918, the Palmdale Water District has provided high-quality water at a reasonable cost. We pride ourselves on great customer care; advocating for local water issues that help our residents; educating the community on water-use efficiency; and leading our region in researching and implementing emerging technologies that increase operational efficiency.



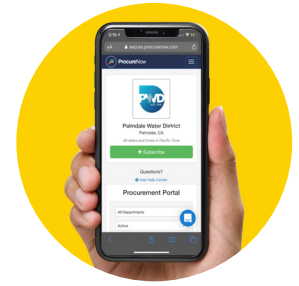
RATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RAP) APPS AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER

The RAP will reduce monthly service fees by 50% for qualifying households starting in January. Priority is provided to eligible seniors 62 & older, veterans of any age and low-income families. Funds are limited. Fill out an application today!



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A SMART IRRIGATION CONTROLLER

Follow PWD on Facebook @Palmdaleh2o by October 21 for a chance to win. Must be a PWD customer. Only new followers are eligible.



NEW ELECTRONIC BIDDING PORTAL FOR CONTRACTORS

Want to do business with PWD? PWD is committed to maintaining a fair and open purchasing process for both the District and its vendors. Visit our website at palmdalewater.org to view current requests for proposals.

