

## ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS

Low-income customers may be able to offset their sewer bills through the department's Sewer Outreach Subsidy (SOS) Program. The SOS program has a tiered-rate structure based on federal poverty guidelines. Depending on income and household size, low-income customers may qualify for a partial discount (25%, 50%, or 75%) on their monthly sewer fees.

Participants must meet the following guidelines to qualify for this program:

- Be a residential sewer customer
- Have a water/ sewer bill in your name
- Meet income guidelines

Those who meet the federal poverty guidelines are encouraged to apply for the SOS Program. PCRWRD has contracted with the Pima County Community Action Agency (PCCAA) to administer this program.

You will need to schedule an appointment with PCCAA to determine your eligibility to participate in the SOS Program. Please call PCCAA at (520) 724-3794 to schedule an appointment. Once you call, a recording will prompt you to leave your name and phone number. Please provide the information requested; a PCCAA representative will contact you to set up an appointment time. If you qualify for a discount, that discount will be valid for one year. Requalification for the program is required annually.

For more information about this program, please visit our website at: [http://www.pima.gov/www/fees/low\\_income.htm](http://www.pima.gov/www/fees/low_income.htm)

If you have any questions about your sewer bill, please contact our Customer Service section at 724-6609, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. You may also email us at [wastewatercs@pima.gov](mailto:wastewatercs@pima.gov).



## Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department Now Produces A+ Quality Reclaimed Water

You may recall that the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD) recently completed the Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP). The ROMP consisted of multiple projects that have allowed us to comply with regulatory requirements mandated by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. The mandate required that PCRWRD improve the quality of the effluent (treated wastewater) we release into the Santa Cruz River. Approximately 60 million gallons a day of effluent is discharged into the river.

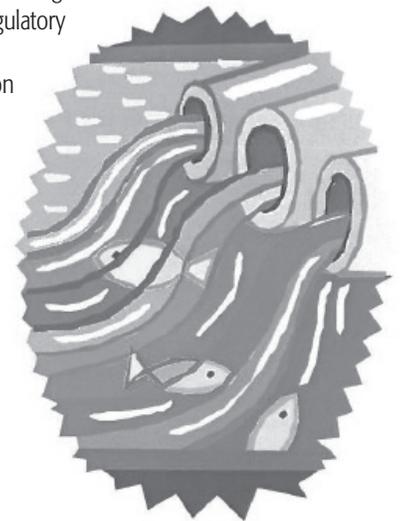
PCRWRD invested \$605 million in the ROMP projects needed to meet the new state and federal environmental requirements. With the completion of those projects, we now have state-of-the-art infrastructure that produces exceptionally high-quality effluent.

The effluent we now produce can be used for a multitude of purposes, including but not limited to:

- filling of man-made lakes or ponds where fishing and boating are allowed
- toilet flushing
- fire suppression
- irrigation of food crops, and
- residential and public landscaping

The cleaner effluent that is now discharged into the Santa Cruz River has resulted in a number of beneficial changes:

- The water in the Santa Cruz River near our discharge points is much clearer; fish and other wildlife in the river are visible as is the bottom of the riverbed.
- The improvement in water quality has increased the number of fish and fish species in the river.
- The percolation of the effluent into the aquifer is much improved.



## CURRENT DROUGHT STATUS

As we enter the winter months, the cool weather is such a welcome relief from the hotter temperatures of summer and fall. As the days cool and the nights become longer, we can forget that we are still in a drought. In fact, Pima County is in its 15th year of drought. A drought is defined as a period of time in which drier than normal weather conditions exist. Droughts are not unique to deserts. They are cyclical and can impact different parts of the planet at any given time. A region can be impacted by droughts several times within a century and are not new to Arizona. Drought statistics from the last 82 years appear below:

- Statewide drought, 1932-1936 (4 years)
- Statewide drought, 1942-1964, (22 years)
- Statewide drought, 1974-1977, (3 years)
- Statewide drought, 1999-present, (ongoing)

It is important to remember that although we experienced several monsoon storms this past summer, and we expect more precipitation this winter, the drought is not over. The Arizona Department of Water Resources will continue to assess drought conditions and will make the determination when this drought has ended.

There are four stages of drought. Pima County originally declared the county to be in a drought (Stage 1) in 2007. We remain in Stage 1. Since that first declaration, voluntary water reduction measures have been in place. Stage 1 protocols ask area residents to practice water conservation on a daily basis. Another focus of Stage 1 is on water conservation in restaurants, hotels and motels. Restaurants are asked to serve water only when it is requested, and hotel and motels are urged to practice a number of water saving measures including (but not limited to) allowing their guests to forgo daily sheet and towel changes.

Because of the community's proactive approach to water conservation, it is recommended that the Drought Stage 1 declaration remain in place. However, if drought conditions persist or worsen, the Pima County Board of Supervisors may, in collaboration with other jurisdictions, evaluate whether a higher drought stage with more stringent conservation protocols is warranted.

For more information about drought in our state, check out the Arizona Department of Water Resources drought web page: <http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/StatewidePlanning/Drought/DroughtStatus2.htm>



### **Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department Contact Information**

General Information <i>(during regular business hours)</i> .....	520-724-6500
Roach Control Hotline <i>(Automated line, please provide requested information)</i> .....	520-724-3401
Billing Section .....	520-724-6609
Sewer Emergencies .....	520-724-3400
To Report Odors .....	520-724-3400
Sewer Outreach Subsidy <i>(Low-income bill assistance)</i> .....	520-724-3794
Sewer Connection Information .....	520-724-6602
To Report Vandalism .....	911

You can also access this information and more from our website, <http://webcms.pima.gov/government/wastewaterreclamation>

### **PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
**Chuck Huckelberry**