PIMA COUNTY

Preventative Maintenance Program

Decreases Sewer Overflows by 81%

A Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) is the back up of raw sewage into streets, buildings or the environment. In 1999, the total number of SSOs in Pima County was 248. In 2011, the number was 47 – with many of these 47 linked to vandalism. This substantial decrease is the result of a rigorous preventative maintenance program performed by the Conveyance Division of the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD).

Crews from the Conveyance Division are dispatched daily according to a computerized program that schedules preventative maintenance according to the history of the reach of the sewer system. With more than 3,500 miles of sewer lines to maintain, a computer program issues work orders to ensure that "problem areas" are serviced as often as needed. When known conditions, such as intrusion of tree roots or the build up of grit and grease are taken care of in advance, the number of SSOs is reduced. Crews use specialized trucks and equipment to cut through roots and grease, remove debris, and flush sewer lines.

In 2002, PCRWRD launched the Save Our Sewers Campaign, a public education program about the harm that is caused when cooking oils and grease are poured down drains, with the potential for sewer blockages and SSOs. Residents are encouraged to discard used cooking grease in household trash or to take used grease to collection sites, where it is recycled into biodiesel.

For additional information on the Save Our Sewers Campaign and grease collection sites, please visit **http://www.pima.gov/wwm/programs/sos/**.

CITY OF TUCSON

Keeping Tucson Clean and Litter-Free

Litter on medians and walkways is a problem in many communities, including Tucson. But, it's a problem that all of us can help to solve.

Some common items littering our community include:

- Cigarette butts. It is estimated that cigarette butts account for 25% of the litter found on U.S. streets. Contrary to popular belief, a cigarette butt is not biodegradable – it can take years for the filter to break down.
- Snack wrappers and fast food packaging. These items are garbage and should be put in a trash container.
- Plastic bottles and aluminum cans. These are recyclable and represent two of the highest revenue generating commodities in recycling markets.
- Plastic bags. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 380 billion plastic bags are used in the U.S. annually. These non-biodegradable, lightweight bags are easily caught in desert plants and fly across streets. Please recycle plastic bags at your grocery store or get in the habit of bringing reusable bags to the store.

How can you help? Never let trash escape from your car and properly dispose of trash from your car when you buy gas. If you drive a truck, don't throw trash in the bed that will fly out. Please make sure household garbage is bagged and tied and bins are sealed tightly so loose trash doesn't litter the landscape. Always remember to take your garbage with you upon leaving a park or other public space. And, if you smoke, don't toss those cigarette butts out the window or on the ground. If you want to do more, contact Tucson Clean and Beautiful, Inc. at **tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org** about volunteer opportunities for you to 'adopt' a street, park or wash.

Your utilities services statement includes fees for your water, wastewater, and environmental services.

The Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD) – For more information about the regional wastewater system, call (520) 740-6500 or visit pima.gov/wwm.

Environmental Services (ES) – Learn about how ES is protecting our groundwater and the environment at tucsonaz.gov/esd and (520) 791-3171.