



Las Campanas Water Cooperative

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

2020 | WINTER

Las Campanas Winter Newsletter

President's Letter | January 2020 | Ken Kirk, President

“Living in a Water Stressed Environment.”

Our capable staff and hard-working and committed Board accomplished a great deal last year. With your support, we rebranded the Co-op, implemented the “Eye On Water” program and updated our Bylaws. Even more important, we reviewed our cost of service analysis, took a hard look at our reserves policy, and developed a three-year capital improvement program that focuses on what requires our immediate attention. With the assistance of Black and Veatch, we also renegotiated a long-term, ten- year contract with Jacobs Engineering that will allow us to address our water and sewer needs proactively, guided by a systematic and cost-effective infrastructure asset management and renewal program. And towards the end of the year, we initiated the development of a long-range strategic plan, which we plan to share with you over the course of the next couple of months.

Our work last year facilitated the development of our 2020 budget, which the Board has ratified. It also underscored the need for us to review and modify our rate structure for the future. Taking into account our aging infrastructure, enormous growth which we expect will continue, inflation and the fact that we have not increased our rates for the last five years, the need to raise our rates is critical to achieving our long-term water sustainability goals. It also helped us to determine that reserves in the amount of \$5 million is appropriate for the size and needs of our utility, especially considering that our assets are valued at over \$20 million and we are going to need our reserves down the road to replace assets that become obsolete and ensure the long-term viability of our infrastructure.

As of July 1, 2020, we are proposing to raise our water rates 10% and our sewer rates 15%. The water rates have not been increased in five (5) years and we decreased our sewer rates two (2) years ago by 25%. The Co-op may have to recommend similar type increases for 2021, 2022, and 2023. We plan to discuss this possibility in more depth at our April quarterly meeting.

As you know, the Co-op provides a vital service to our community and it is imperative that we increase our infrastructure investment now to ensure a sustainable water future. Living in a water stressed environment as we do, it is extremely important for us to think about the value of water and what it would mean to live without this precious resource, even for one day. Looked at from this perspective, I would hope that you would agree that our proposed rate increases are justifiable and make sense!

Ken Kirk
Board President



OPERATIONS UPDATE

Stephen Raab, Committee Chair

New Year, New Decade, New Objectives

2020 Operations Goals & Objectives:

The Water Co-op and the Operations Committee move forward with a commitment to continuous improvement utilizing a risk-based approach to managing the operational aspects of the utility. For 2020 the Operations Committee has identified an aggressive list of goals & objectives which are supported by the Water Co-op's Board of Directors. The major goals & objectives for 2020 are as follows:

- **Continue with installation of the AMR Implementation System** – The Eye On Water app that allows every customer the ability to view water usage and, most importantly, determine if they have a leak. The majority of our community is now using the app which has identified a number of potentially significant leaks and has allowed our community to better understand and manage their water usage.
- **Replacement of the Aging Pond Liner** – Plans for the replacement of the pond liner were submitted to the New Mexico Environmental Department in 2019 and the liner will be replaced in Q2 2020. A functioning pond liner is a regulatory requirement and the aging pond liner is in need of replacement.
- **Sewer Line Cleaning Project** – A long-term project to clean and inspect the Las Campanas sewer lines begins in 2020. The long-term plan is to clean and inspect 10% of the lines every year for the next ten years. The project is necessary based on the age of our infrastructure and goal to provide uninterrupted service to our community.

- **Capital Improvement Program ("CIP")** – The Operations Committee will develop a three-year conditional assessment program which will be a risk-based effort to allocate capital for operational improvement in years 2020, 2021 & 2022. The CIP will be revised every year to maintain a refined three-year plan each and every year.
- **Implementation of the Asset Management Project** – The Water Co-op will roll-out a multi-faceted asset management program which will help the utility to meet the challenges of providing service to the community over the coming years by allowing for a more refined approach to managing the business to better address challenges such as changes in our population and continued economic development, the potential for extreme weather events (droughts) to name a few.

Support for the Sustainability and the Eye On Water Programs:

The Operations Committee will continue to support the "Eye On Water" program by providing direct support to the Communications Committee's effort to promote and expand the program across the community. Thanks to the Water Co-op staff and our communication efforts the program is exceeding all of our expectations and accomplished the 2019 goal of a 75% sign-up rate (75% of the households install and utilize the app).

Support of Long-Term Strategic Planning:

The Operations Committee will support the newly created Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee. This committee will focus on a number of key areas such as customer & community engagement, overall organizational enhancements, product issues such as sustainability and our supply/demand management strategy and responsible financial management.



COMMUNICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Barbara Shoemaker, Committee Chair

Survey, Strategy, & Eye On Water

Member Services Survey

The Member Services Survey was sent out to all Co-op Members in Mid-January as part of the Board's commitment to soliciting input from our members as we finalize 2020 goals and metrics. The results will be summarized and then shared with the Board of Directors, Co-op Staff, and our Members in March. Results will also be posted to the website. We will incorporate suggestions and questions into our communications and operations in the months ahead. Your participation and thoughtful comments are most appreciated.

Strategic Plan

The Co-op Strategic Plan is nearing completion under the leadership of Steven Miller, Committee Chair for Strategic Planning, and once finalized will be shared with the Membership at the April meeting. The planning process addresses Co-op long-term sustainability in 5 key areas:

- Building and sustaining community engagement
- Optimizing flexible and sustainable water and sewer operations
- Organizational sustainability to support all Co-op activities (Staffing, Board, Contractors)
- Financial stability and sustainability (Reserve, Asset Management, Rate Structure)
- Water security over the long term

Eye On Water

Eye On Water implementation reached 75% within the first 8 months of rollout. Co-op members who have not signed up to participate will be contacted individually to offer assistance. We have many "happy ending stories" that have saved homeowners a good deal of water and expense.

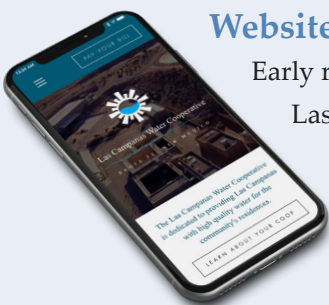
"I have a vacation home in Las Campanas, and it is often vacant. Last year, I had a large water leak—over 1,200 gallons per hour. Thankfully, through Eye On Water, I was notified by email of the leak, and was able to have the water shut off very quickly. If it wasn't for Eye On Water, I can't imagine how much water would have been lost. I am very thankful for Eye On Water, and definitely recommend signing up for the service."

Please note: Some homeowners in Estates I and II have requested that we work with the County to extend Eye On Water to their residences. While the City offers Eye On Water, the County has not yet chosen to do so. We encourage Estates I and II residents to contact the County directly as the Las Campanas Water Co-op is not able to tie in to the County billing and monitoring systems to provide this service.

Upcoming Landscaping Classes

As part of our continued efforts to encourage sustainable landscaping practices we have invited Tracy Neal to offer two classes (the same class each time) for our members focused on plant selection for Las Campanas. The classes are scheduled for March 11 and April 15th from 1-3pm at the Aldea Community Center. We will notify the community and request sign-ups beginning in February.

Website



Early results from our Member Services survey show that over 53% of our Members do not use the Las Campanas Water Co-op Website to access information. We encourage you to visit the website for current updates, alerts, and general information about the Co-op's activities as the website is updated regularly and provides easy access to all information. If you can't find the information you need please don't hesitate to call or email. Contact information for Staff and the Board of Directors is provided on the website at <http://www.lcwatersewer.coop>.



COMMUNICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY



EyeOnWater

Eye On Water

With 75% of our Co-op members signed up for Eye On Water, we continue to hear from residents who have had success in catching leaks before losing thousands of gallons of water. Eye On Water offers each resident instant notification of leaks no matter where you may be. Please don't wait until you have a leak to consider signing up for Eye On Water. Heather Roybal will be happy to assist you. There are also instructions on the website under "Sustainable Resources".

Here's an example of how Eye On Water is helping us all save water and expense:

My wife and I have been very pleased with the "Eye On Water" app and notification system recently installed by the Las Campanas Water Cooperative. It turned out that a person who comes every two weeks to help clean the house had accidentally jammed the toilet handle in the bathroom in our guest bedroom. We rarely enter that room when it is not occupied, which is most of the time. A quick search of the house revealed the problem in the guest bedroom, which I repaired right away. In this instance, the Eye On Water application was genuine lifesaver. Without it, we would have wasted thousands of gallons of water.



COMMUNICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Developing Good Indoor Water Usage Habits

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While two-thirds of our Las Campanas water usage is for outside irrigation, there are still many ways to cut back on indoor water usage by developing some new habits that are not particularly cumbersome but can add up to many gallons of saved water over a year.

There are a number of easy ways to save water, and they all start with YOU. You can monitor your success by comparing your water usage month over month with the Eye On Water app.

In The Kitchen

- When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- Never run the dishwasher without a full load. This practice will save water, energy, detergent, and money.
- Designate one glass for your drinking water each day or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
- Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.
- If your dishwasher is new, cut back on rinsing. Newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.

In The Bathroom

- Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save 25 gallons a month.
- Turn off the water while you wash your hair to save up to 150 gallons a month.



- When remodeling a bathroom, install a new low-volume flush toilet that uses only 1.6 gallons per flush.
- Test toilets for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring or a dye tablet to the water in the tank, but do not flush the toilet. Watch to see if the coloring appears in the bowl within a few minutes. If it does, the toilet has a silent leak that needs to be repaired.
- Use a toilet tank displacement device such as a toilet dam or bag or by filling a plastic bottle with stones or water, recapped, and placed in the toilet tank. These devices reduce the volume of water in the tank but will still provide enough for flushing. Displacement devices are not recommended with new low-volume flush toilets.
- Place water-saving aerators on all of your faucets.

Plumbing and Appliances

- Check water requirements of various models and brands when considering purchasing any new appliances. Some use less water than others.
- Be sure the water heater thermostat is not set too high. Extremely hot settings waste water and energy because the water often has to be cooled with cold water before it can be used.



Las Campanas Water Cooperative

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

2020 WINTER | CONSERVATION BULLETIN

Working with sun and shade in the garden

As the flower and garden catalogs come rolling in and we start to think about new additions to the garden, one thing to consider is how light in our area affects plants differently than it does in many places where these catalogs are written. At our high altitude, ultraviolet radiation is 30% stronger than at sea level.

Factor in the frequency of clear skies and you can see that plants (and gardeners) get a lot more sunlight here than they do in lower, cloudier areas. What this means is that many plants can grow well here with more shade than they get in those areas. This is not an absolute rule, but you'll often find that when non-native plants are recommended for "part shade to full sun" in catalogs, they grow better here in part shade. The shade cast by buildings and yard walls creates partly shaded microclimates around them, giving us places to experiment with such plants. Areas next to north facing walls are in shade earlier in the fall and later in the spring than other areas, but even they receive some direct sunlight in "high summer" (late June, July, and early August). Keep in mind that many shade tolerant plants are native to woodland areas that receive more precipitation than we get here, so they won't be as drought tolerant as some of our sun-adapted natives. Modifying the soil with compost and mulches to create more moisture holding humus can help reduce the amount of irrigation they require.

Putting plants that grow best in "full sun" (which typically means 5-6 hours of direct sunlight here) into areas that are too shady can lead to less than optimal health. These plants tend to be misshapen, thin and rangy or leaning out towards the sun. They usually don't flower as well as the same

plants grown in more sunlight. These effects can tell you when a plant is getting too much shade. It's useful to research the conditions that plants you want to use grow in naturally; this will tell you something about their sun and shade requirements.



Another factor that comes into play when deciding where to place plants is the heat reflected off hard surfaces like walls and stone-covered patios. East facing walls reflect heat on plants next to them in the morning, but then cool off as they are shaded in the afternoon. West facing walls, on the other hand, are cool in the morning but reflect hot afternoon sun, creating less favorable conditions for many plants that grow well in part shade.

Matching plants to the spaces that best meet their requirements for light and tolerances for heat helps produce the healthiest garden. The attached document lists many of the plants that grow well here with some shade. Consider these when you're looking for additions to such areas.