

# On Tap



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Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD)



## Winter Operations

Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) is preparing for the upcoming winter season. Although many businesses may slow down for the winter months, our staff remains busy with various projects in preparation for the winter weather conditions.

One of those critical projects is maintaining the 74 mile historic ditch system. Our Water Distribution team will continue to do maintenance and overall improvements including spraying concrete in the ditch system to help with erosion. This process reduces water loss and improves overall water quality as the water channels its way to one of our 14 water treatment plants in order to deliver to you high quality drinking water.

While repairs and improvements are being done on the ditch system, many agriculture or raw water customers will experience water interruptions through December. For a complete ditch outage schedule visit the TUD website at [www.tudwater.com](http://www.tudwater.com).

## Save the Environment and Your Pipes!

With the holidays approaching, many Tuolumne County residents will be busy cooking in their kitchens. To avoid potential plumbing and sewer disasters, TUD would like to remind residents to avoid pouring fats or cooking oils down the drain because liquid fats solidify in the pipes and create clogs. Sewer blockages can cause backups into homes resulting in an unpleasant mess that can cost hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars to clean up.

\*Listed below are tips to help you avoid a plumbing emergency this holiday season and ensure proper disposal of waste fats, oil and grease:

- Avoid pouring fats or vegetable cooking oils down the drain because liquid fats solidify in the pipes and create clogs.
- After grease has cooled, scrape the grease into a container with a tight fitting lid, solidify in the refrigerator before putting it in the trash.
- Never put hard to grind items in your garbage disposal, including poultry skins, egg shells, carrots, celery, pumpkin pulp, banana peels or pasta.

# Freezing Pipes

One of the challenges many Sierra foothill communities face in winter months are cold temperatures which could cause pipes to freeze. Now is the time to prepare for those pending cold weather conditions.

## Insulate Exposed Pipes, Faucets and Pipes Prone to Freezing:

Outside faucets, pipes and pipes in unheated garages and crawl spaces are most vulnerable to freezing weather. To prevent pipes from freezing, wrap them with insulating material. Cover them with plastic and secure with tape, string, or wire. Also, remember to disconnect garden hoses.

## Locate Your Main Shut-Off Valve:

**Don't wait for an emergency.** Find your main water shut-off valve now! If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding by turning off your main water shut-off valve. It is commonly located next to the meter, in the garage, or by the foundation where your water supply enters your house.

Test the valves by turning the handle to be sure it is working properly and identify it with a tag.

If a main shut-off valve does not exist, it is worth having one installed now by your plumber.

## If you suspect a water emergency or see a water main in the street is

**broken, immediately contact TUD's 24-hour Customer Service at (209) 532-5536 so it can be repaired as soon as possible.** Visit the TUD website at [www.tudwater.com](http://www.tudwater.com) for more tips on how to protect your home in the winter.



# Staff Spotlight - Inside TUD

**Rich Pitcher**, *Collections Foreman* (Wastewater Department)

Rich started his TUD career in 2005 as a Utility Worker in the Wastewater Department. Over the years, Rich has done a variety of important tasks including locating utility lines before sewer projects begin, using camera/video equipment to locate sewer plugs, operating the wastewater flush truck and many other daily tasks needed to keep the sewer lines clear in the District. Did you know, TUD's wastewater collection system treats an average of 1.4 million gallons of sewage daily.

Rich was promoted in October 2011 to Collections Foreman. His new responsibilities include making sure the collection system is operating efficiently and effectively. Wastewater comes from indoor use of water, like washing dishes, toilets, laundry, etc. The drains from these fixtures are connected to a collection system that transports the wastewater to the District's Regional Wastewater Treatment plant located in Sonora. Rich leads a crew of five staff members who operate the collections system.

## What Challenges do You Face as Collections Foreman?

The biggest issue facing the collection system is age of the infrastructure. Many of the sewer pipes are over 70 years old. Sonora is the biggest area of the system that we serve



and there is a lot of maintenance to be done. Along with the aging pipes, there are always challenges with roots that penetrate the pipes that could potentially rupture the system.

## What Can Our Customers Do to Help?

Grease is definitely a problem that interferes with the collection system. If customers can really think about the best way to dispose of grease and oil and not put it down the drain, that would really help. We spend a lot of time responding to sewer plugs and many times it stems from grease or oil getting poured down the drain. Cutting back on these types of calls would save the District and you money in the long run.

**Personal:** Rich is married, has one daughter and lives in the Twain Harte area. In his spare time he enjoys camping, fishing, hiking, biking, coaching soccer and softball.



## California Friendly

### Featured Plant

*Mariposa Lilies* are native to our foothill area, thriving in clay and serpentine soil, grassy fields and along road cuts and embankments in the Jamestown and Columbia areas. They are found from the western edges of Tuolumne County up into higher elevations. Flowering in a variety of colors from creamy white to yellow to pale pink, the blossoms have beautiful magenta, burgundy, or yellow spots in their “throats.” Extremely drought-resistant, they will rot if given summer water.

### Mariposa Lilies

<b>Size:</b>	Flower borne on stem up to 24” tall
<b>Color:</b>	White, yellow, pale pink with yellow/purple throat
<b>Water:</b>	None
<b>Exposure:</b>	Full sun

Chosen as this month’s featured plant in honor of bulb-planting season, Mariposa Lilies grow from a bulb and are considered perennial herbs. They have a reputation for being “picky” (challenging to grow), but many species are in cultivation according to the website: [www.efloras.org](http://www.efloras.org) Calochortus bulbs of all types can be ordered from Las Pilitas Nursery, a central- and Southern-California nursery specializing in California native plants.

## The Value of Water – A Month at a Time



**TUD tap water \$43.35**



**Avg. cost for cable service \$65.00**

## Gardening Tips from Rebecca Miller-Cripps

of the University of California Cooperative Extension Natural Resources Program

**Gardening Tips:** November and December is the time to plant bulbs.

This is the time of year to dig and divide over-crowded irises. It’s also the time to plant spring-flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths. In addition to all the beautiful-flowering bulbs appearing in nurseries and garden centers, why not try planting California native bulbs such as soap plant, fairy lanterns or Mariposa lilies? They tolerate clay and serpentine soils, and thrive in hot, dry conditions. In fact, they will rot if given summer water. Expand your native garden with these species that have been used by Native Americans for hundreds of years as a source of food and other living necessities.





## General Manager's Corner

by Peter J. Kampa, [pkampa@tudwater.com](mailto:pkampa@tudwater.com)

### TUD's Strategic Plan

With all of the critical issues facing TUD over the next decade, I am constantly asked the question: How do

you stay focused? The District's Strategic Plan keeps me and our management team focused on achieving the Vision Statement adopted by the Board in the 2008 Strategic Plan. The Vision, which drives our everyday activities, is very forward thinking and calls for: stable water supplies for current and future customers, investments in high quality employees and long term infrastructure which will assist us in managing long term costs to protect the future affordability of our services. The Vision also requires that District management focus on enhanced customer service and providing more information to our customers on the importance and cost of the services we provide.

We are now in the process of updating the Strategic Plan and revisiting the Vision of the District. Due to the number of long term, high cost projects and issues to be dealt with by TUD in the coming decades, the Board has chosen to set a 20 year Vision. The first Board meetings on this vision again reiterated that in 2032, we see TUD as having contributed resources toward a vibrant and sustainable community, is financially stable, has achieved a cost-efficiency balance, has a stable water supply, complies with state regulations, considered and leveraged partnerships, and improved understanding by our customers of what we do and the value of our services. The revised Strategic Plan, to be finalized in the coming months, will set forth goals and objectives for the first five years, which are intended to accomplish this Vision.

### Projects Completed 2012

Many beneficial projects have been completed this past year by our TUD staff. In this issue, I will highlight three of these important

projects. The District was awarded grant funding in 2012 to construct a treated water pipeline in the Sawmill Flat area near Columbia. The project provides clean, reliable drinking water to customers that were using untreated ditch water in their homes. Kathie Turgeon, a Sawmill Flat resident, played an instrumental part in approaching TUD to bring treated water to this area. At the project's groundbreaking ceremony, Turgeon stated, "We are so thankful that this project has finally taken off and I can't wait to be able to use water straight from my tap." This project was completed in September 2012.

The Upper Zone 2 tank, a new 600,000 gallon water tank located in the Twain Harte-Sugar Pine area was completed in October 2012. This larger storage tank will ultimately replace four smaller water tanks, all of which were in very poor condition, saving District customers over \$150,000 over the next ten years. The new tank also provides an additional 131,000 gallons in water storage.

TUD continues to be a leader in wastewater recycling by putting treated wastewater to use irrigating agriculture lands in Tuolumne County. This recycled water provides a valuable resource to support agriculture in the community and reduces overall costs to sewer customers. This year TUD expanded the use of recycled water to additional agricultural lands. Due to drought and extensive use of recycled water, the amount of stored recycled water is the lowest it has been in the last 25 years. This is another example of forward thinking and planning that is good for our community and the environment.

TUD looks forward to the future as we approach 2013. We welcome the coming year with renewed vision and direction so that we can continue to provide our community with reliable, high quality water and wastewater services.

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