

September, 2014

A MONTHLY MESSAGE  
FROM



**MAYOR  
TODD GOTTEL**



## Water! Frequently Asked Questions

Rowlett is definitely *On the Move*, and along with celebrating the wonderful growth and economic development opportunities coming our way, I often find myself having to clarify information on complex issues that has somehow been miscommunicated in the community, leading to confusion on the part of our citizens. We are an extremely open and transparent organization, so in an effort to ensure everyone in Rowlett understands these issues, and why the City Council makes the decisions we do, I am going to do a short monthly newsletter addressing one or two topics.

This month I would like to provide some information about water. North Texas is experiencing the most severe drought in recent memory and the City is currently in Stage 3 water restrictions. We have been for over a year now. Recently, many citizens were concerned when they observed the City conducting hydrant flushing to maintain the chlorine levels in our water system, so I've provided an in-depth explanation on page three of this newsletter. The good news is that, effective September 1, 2014, to ensure water quality is maintained throughout the water distribution systems, North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) has temporarily eased Stage 3 restrictions to allow landscape watering once a week with sprinklers or irrigation systems through the end of October 2014.

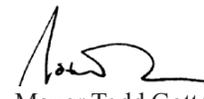
The combination of periodic summer rain events and reduced water usage facilitated the NTMWD's

ability to move to once per week watering for this two month period. While water quality remains the top priority, water conservation and the wise use of water is still critical to maintain current available supplies until the drought eases. Although Lavon Lake is currently down over 12 feet, the once-per-week watering allowance should only decrease it by less than two feet, therefore would still not require initiation of Stage 4 water restrictions.

This is truly a great time to live in Rowlett! Last year we were named the *Number One Best Small City in America to Move To* and more recently, we've been named the *Tenth Safest City in Texas*. The City also received the *Texas Comptroller's Office Leadership Circle Award* for the third consecutive year, earning an upgrade to the Platinum level, which is the highest honor bestowed. What a great testament to the strong financial leadership provided by your City Council and staff!

I would like to thank you for your tremendous conservation efforts this summer. You have demonstrated that informed customers will do the right things to conserve!

Regards,



Mayor Todd Gittel

**Rowlett Fire Station 2 displays Maltese Crosses honoring first responders who gave their lives on September 11, 2001. This display was created by Matthew Paul Hilley of Boy Scout Troop 1188 for his Eagle Scout project.**



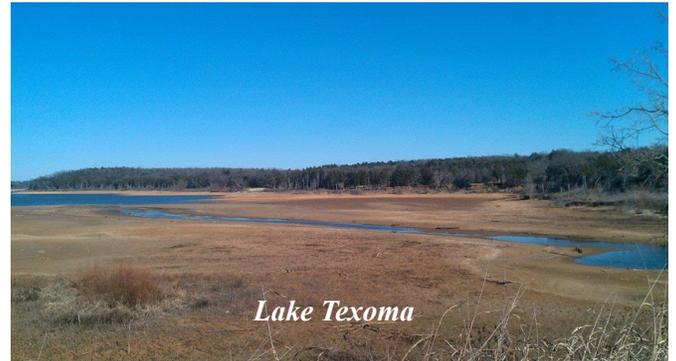
# 1. Where does the City of Rowlett water supply come from?

The City of Rowlett is a customer City of the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD). The two main sources of water for the district are Lavon Lake and Lake Texoma, both of which are experiencing severe drought conditions. Contrary

to popular belief, the City *does not* get water from Lake Ray Hubbard, which is owned by the City of Dallas and serves as a source of water for their citizens.



Lavon Lake



Lake Texoma

# 2. What are Stage 3 water restrictions?

The goal of Stage 3 is a 10 percent reduction in water use and increased awareness in ongoing water conservation efforts. These restrictions include:

- Limit landscape watering with sprinklers or irrigation system to once every fourteen days (*temporarily effective September 1-October 31, 2014, every seven days*) corresponding with the last number of your address (see chart below). No watering between 10am and 6pm.

| SEPTEMBER 2014 |             |         |             |         |             |         | OCTOBER 2014 |             |         |             |         |             |         |
|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|--------------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| SUN            | MON         | TUE     | WED         | THU     | FRI         | SAT     | SUN          | MON         | TUE     | WED         | THU     | FRI         | SAT     |
|                | 1<br>3 & 4  | 2<br>1  | 3<br>6 & 7  | 4<br>2  | 5<br>8 & 9  | 6<br>5  |              |             |         | 1<br>6 & 7  | 2<br>2  | 3<br>8 & 9  | 4<br>5  |
| 7<br>0         | 8<br>3 & 4  | 9<br>1  | 10<br>6 & 7 | 11<br>2 | 12<br>8 & 9 | 13<br>5 | 5<br>0       | 6<br>3 & 4  | 7<br>1  | 8<br>6 & 7  | 9<br>2  | 10<br>8 & 9 | 11<br>5 |
| 14<br>0        | 15<br>3 & 4 | 16<br>1 | 17<br>6 & 7 | 18<br>2 | 19<br>8 & 9 | 20<br>5 | 12<br>0      | 13<br>3 & 4 | 14<br>1 | 15<br>6 & 7 | 16<br>2 | 17<br>8 & 9 | 18<br>5 |
| 21<br>0        | 22<br>3 & 4 | 23<br>1 | 24<br>6 & 7 | 25<br>2 | 26<br>8 & 9 | 27<br>5 | 19<br>0      | 20<br>3 & 4 | 21<br>1 | 22<br>6 & 7 | 23<br>2 | 24<br>8 & 9 | 25<br>5 |
| 28<br>0        | 29<br>3 & 4 | 30<br>1 |             |         |             |         | 26<br>0      | 27<br>3 & 4 | 28<br>1 | 29<br>6 & 7 | 30<br>2 | 31<br>8 & 9 |         |

- Foundations, new landscaping, new plantings (first year) of shrubs and trees may be watered for up to two hours on any day by a hand-held hose, a soaker hose or a dedicated zone using a drip irrigation system.
- No hydroseeding, hydromulching, overseeding and sprigging.
- Existing swimming pools may not be drained and refilled except to replace normal water loss.
- Halt non-essential City government water use including street cleaning, vehicle washing, operation of ornamental fountains, etc.
- Prohibit washing or rinsing of vehicles by hose except with a hose end cutoff nozzle.
- Public athletic fields used for competition may be watered twice per week.
- Registered and properly functioning ET/Smart irrigation systems and drip/bubbler irrigation systems may irrigate without restrictions.

*We are certainly celebrating that the combinations of periodic summer rain events and reduced water usage has facilitated the NTMWD's ability to move to once per week watering for the two month period of September and October.*

## 4. Why does the City purchase more water than the community can possibly use while under Stage 3 water restrictions?

By its contract with the NTMWD, the City of Rowlett is annually required to buy 3.2 billion gallons. With the Stage 3 restrictions in place, the City only sells about 80 percent of that. In FY2014, Rowlett is expected to lose about \$1.9 million in water revenues, which is being covered by a like reduction in our capital projects. For FY2014, the system will run out of money for improvements.

As a result, a temporary \$6.97 monthly surcharge for water rates has been included in the FY2015 budget in anticipation that Stage 3 water restrictions from NTMWD will remain in place. This surcharge will remain in place until such time as the restrictions are lifted.

## 5. If we are under such severe water restrictions, why does the City open up fire hydrants and let so much water go to waste?

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality requires that water providers, such as the City of Rowlett, maintain chlorine residuals in transmission and distribution systems to assure water quality so that the treated water supply is safe for use. Annually, chlorine residuals are depleted by increases in temperature during summer months. During the summer of 2014, we have reduced our water usage so well that chlorine residuals have been even further depleted by the decreased demands.

To maintain water quality, the City of Rowlett, along with other NTMWD Member and Customer Cities, performs flushing of hydrants to remove the water that has decreased chlorine residuals. Often I am asked why the City does not just give citizens an extra day or two to irrigate their landscapes to alleviate this issue, so I would love to provide you this information on [suggested alternative methods](#) of flushing this water.

It is not efficient or cost effective for staff to utilize these alternative methods to ensure adequate chlorine residual. In addition, neither of these methods would displace the water fast enough to increase the residuals. Flushing is the appropriate (effective & efficient) method for increasing the chlorine residuals.

Having said that, we are sure excited to say that to improve the circulation and increase the water flow within the water systems, allowance of once per week watering with sprinkler or irrigation systems will assist in maintaining the required chlorine residuals!

### Collect and Transport Water

*For use at a different location as opposed to allowing it to run into the storm water drainage system. A typical large tanker truck has a carrying capacity of 9,100 gallons. In order to transport the amount water being flushed, a tremendous amount of tankers would be necessary. To put this in perspective, it would require 22 large tanker trucks to transport one million gallons of water per every 10 hours versus displacing the same amount of water in 2 hours through flushing.*

### Allow Extra Watering Days

*While this would displace the water through the system, it would not move enough water fast enough to raise the chlorine level to an acceptable level. To ensure the residuals are adequate within the system the displacement of water should occur as quickly as possible. A sprinkler head in a residential irrigation system flows approximately one gallon per hour. The average residence contains 15 irrigation zones with five heads in each zone. It would take 1,000 residences with an irrigation system to run for ten consecutive hours to displace 750,000 gallons. This is the equivalent to flushing a fire hydrant for less than two hours.*



**[Watch a video explaining hydrant flushing and why we perform it!](#)**



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