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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 15, 2019

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Winter averaging of water use determines sewer rate *Fixing leaks, limiting outdoor watering beneficial*

MURPHY (October 15, 2019) The annual three-month period known as winter averaging is set to start. Winter averaging is used to calculate sewer charges, taking the average residential use of water during the months of November, January and February.

“Most, if not all, municipal utilities use some form of winter averaging to arrive at each household’s wastewater or sewer rates,” says Teresa Thompson, Manager of Customer Service. “The amount of water that goes through the meter during the winter months gives us a good indication of what goes into our sewer system.”

The calculation process is repeated every winter in exactly the same manner. Simply stated, the amount of water used in each residence during the months of November, January and February is recorded, and the average for those three months becomes the monthly charges for sewer service over the following 12 months.

“There is currently no accurate way to measure how much wastewater goes into the various drains, sinks, toilets, showers or baths in a home,” she said. “That makes it difficult to determine how much to charge for sewer service. So, we monitor the average amount homeowners use during the winter months.”

Averaging during the winter works best because the majority of a home’s water is used indoors and thus discharged into the sewer lines. That’s because most homeowners will curtail or eliminate outdoor irrigation during these months.

And, while many households may not see a big change from year to year, some homes may see a drop or rise in the wastewater charge because of what happens during the winter averaging period.

Leaks, runny toilets, washing less than full loads in the clothes or dish washer, washing cars at home, or any other unnecessary water use in the winter will not only drive the monthly cost of water up, but can also show up in the sewer charges during the following 12 months.

“From November to February residents should be mindful that their water usage has a direct effect on their sewer charges for the following year,” she said.

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ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 20,010, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income well above the state average. With more than 80 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a family-oriented community with a strong sense of place. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.