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News Release

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City urges residents to maintain all eyes on water use *'Take or Pay' provision works against cities*

MURPHY (May 20, 2022) While never in the habit of contradicting science, Murphy officials note that Isaac Newton's Third Law of Motion, which states that "everything that goes up must come down," does not always apply.

The City of Murphy, like every municipality that purchases water from the North Texas Municipal Water District, is subject to the "Take or Pay" provision, a non-negotiable clause in the contract that requires cities to pay for their annual water purchase at its highest historical level, whether customers use that amount of water or not.

That provision, called the cap, keeps cities and towns paying for the equivalent of their highest usage, until that usage is surpassed. Then, the new maximum supersedes the old one. Unfortunately, that level is never decreased.

"Our goal, of course, is to keep the cap from increasing," says City Manager Mike Castro, PhD. "There are no conditions under which we can lower the cap, but there are things we can do to ensure that it does not rise any further. Among these are conserving water, fixing water leaks, and using water wisely. All these, and other initiatives, help us keep our maximum from increasing. Remember, once it rises it never comes down, and Murphy residents are stuck with a higher bill."

Since the water utility in Murphy, like all others in the area, is self-sustaining, water costs are shared by every customer.

Even though the cost of water continues to escalate by as much as 10 percent a year, residents, businesses, and organizations can keep water costs in check by closely watching how much is used every month.

Also, it's important to note that a household's highest water use is outdoor watering, and while watering our lawns is important, using the manual on and off feature of automatic sprinkler systems is one way of ensuring that watering happens only when necessary. Maintaining that system in top shape is also necessary to avoid leaks, broken or misdirected sprinkler heads, and other water-wasting issues.

"We sometimes forget how much water we actually use until the utility bill arrives," said Castro. "For everyone's sake, the City is asking that water use, and water conservation, be constantly top of mind."

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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.