

PRESS RELEASE

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CONSUMER NOTICE

Waukesha Increases Rebate for High-Efficiency Toilets to \$100

Incentive is Part of Increased Water Conservation Efforts

Rebates for high-efficiency toilets will increase to \$100, effective July 1, 2012 as part of the Waukesha Water Utility's newly approved plan to increase water conservation efforts.

Toilet flushing accounts for approximately 30 percent of indoor water use for residential customers, according to the Utility. "The rebate is designed to provide a conservation incentive and to educate the public. It is easy to save on their water bills and reduce their water use simply by replacing an old water-guzzling toilet with a high-efficiency model," said Nancy Quirk, Technical Services Manager.

The first fifty Waukesha Water Utility customers who replace a high-volume (3.5 gallon or more per flush) toilet with a High-Efficiency WaterSense Toilet, that uses 1.28 gallons per flush, will receive the \$100 rebate. Toilets must be purchased on or after July 1, 2012 and customers must meet the qualifications listed on the Utility's website at www.ci.waukesha.wi.us/waterhome.

Rebate applications are available on the Utility's website or at the Utility office at 115 Delafield Street in Waukesha. Rebates will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

Water conservation is an essential part of the City of Waukesha's future water supply strategy. "Residential customers who took advantage of the city's previous \$25 toilet rebate are estimated to be saving an average of 9,000 to 11,000 gallons of water per year, depending on the household size. To date, we have issued 87 of them," Quirk said.

"Stakeholder input from our new conservation plan indicated a need to increase our rebate to \$100 for an effective program. We are initially making fifty \$100 rebates available in 2012 to evaluate the rebates' effectiveness, both in water savings and customer responsiveness. We will then determine whether to expand the number of rebates in 2013, based on those results," she said.

Waukesha's toilet rebate program was the first in Wisconsin. Waukesha was also the first to enact a daytime sprinkling ban, and water rates that increase with use, to encourage conservation. It has also worked to educate the public about the importance and benefits of water conservation through education and outreach programs.

The toilet rebate increase is one of the many recommendations from its updated water conservation plan that was approved by the Waukesha Water Utility Commission in May, 2012.

The Utility's goal is to achieve 365 million gallons of measurable water savings by 2050, or an estimated 10 percent of the total water that would have been used if not for conservation.

The updated conservation plan calls for additional rebates or grants, additional reductions in excessive or inefficient outdoor irrigation, continued use of conservation pricing to reward customers with low water use, and increased collaboration with stakeholders and customers.

Waukesha is also seeking a new water supply because continued use of its groundwater resources is environmentally unsustainable. "Conservation is part of the answer, but it will not eliminate our need for a new water supply," according to Daniel Duchniak, the Utility's General Manager.

The current deep aquifer supply has already declined 500 to 600 feet, due in part to a shale layer that limits the recharge of the deep aquifer from rain and snowmelt. In addition, the levels of contaminants in its wells are increasing and it is under a court order to be in full compliance with federal radium standards within the next six years.

The Utility is seeking permission to switch to Great Lakes water. Duchniak said using Great Lakes water is the most effective water efficiency measure of all. "With Great Lakes water, we can recycle the water by returning it to the source after use and treatment. That is not possible with groundwater," he said.

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