

## Looking back on 2016

As we welcome 2017, we thank our customers for the strides they have made in conservation. Mandatory restrictions from the state were in effect from January to May and our customers worked hard to try to meet those high targets. In June, DWA passed the state's stress test, but asked customers to continue to save 10-13% compared to 2013. We continued to see our community step up to the challenge. Since 2013, our community has cut water use by about a quarter, even with several hundred new water accounts.

This year we also launched our eBilling service, which can be found at [www.myDWA.org](http://www.myDWA.org). About 10% of our customers have signed up to receive their bills via email. We see this number growing every day. The platform also allows customers to look at their historical patterns so they can make more informed decisions about water use.

Our crews were busy in 2016, the year with the highest number of pipeline leaks on record. We saw more than 700 leaks. We map the leaks on our pipes to determine which pipelines are the best candidates for replacement. We also work with the City to try to replace pipes ahead of repaving.

In addition to fixing leaks this year, DWA completed a new reservoir to help improve storage and reliability in the Little Tuscany neighborhood. We now have 24 reservoirs in our system with a capacity of 58 million gallons.

Sharing information about our water, our system and the agency is important. DWA launched a YouTube channel this past summer to showcase how-to videos, public service announcements and interviews on various topics. Find us on YouTube by searching "Desert Water Agency."

We are privileged to serve this vibrant community. Our employees and vendors were proud to contribute funds to establish our Customer Assistance program this year. DWA worked with United Way of the Desert to establish the fund, which gives customers with a demonstrated financial need a credit on a water bill. We also developed a variety of conservation coupons this year to help our customers save water and money.

Our team looks forward to working with our community to protect our most precious resource in 2017.

## City dog park unleashes desertscape with DWA grant

The revamped dog park behind City Hall is also less water intensive. The City removed 39% of the turf area with some help from Desert Water Agency. The edges of the park now showcase beautiful desert landscaping.



## New water rates in effect January 1

After an independent financial analysis and a public hearing, Desert Water Agency adopted new rates. Starting next month, the majority of customers will see their bill increase by less than \$4.00 per month.

The revenue that DWA collects from these new rates will help fund much needed pipeline replacement in locations throughout our service area. DWA is a not-for-profit agency and we can only charge our cost of service.

DWA staff will review the Agency's costs and revenues before implementing any of the other increases beyond January 2017. The Board of Directors will need to approve those changes at a public meeting.

If you have any questions, please visit [www.dwa.org/rates](http://www.dwa.org/rates) or call us at 760-323-4971.

## Customer assistance

The California Constitution prohibits public water agencies from subsidizing water rates, but DWA understands some customers need support in paying for their most vital utility.

Eligible DWA customers can receive a once a year credit on their bill. United Way of the Desert will manage the program, which is funded through DWA employees and vendors. Call 760-323-2731 for more information.

## Sign up to receive the latest news & updates via email

Contact Ashley Metzger at [Ashley@dwa.org](mailto:Ashley@dwa.org) or visit [www.dwa.org](http://www.dwa.org).

## Conservation corner

### Rebates & incentives

Desert Water Agency still has rebates available to help you save water!

Sign up today for a **FREE** smart irrigation controller. Thanks to funding from Sentinel Energy Center, DWA offers the devices and install at no cost to our customers. This device monitors the weather and adjusts your watering times accordingly. To date, DWA has installed about 2,250 controllers.

Limited funding is still available if you have grass that you're looking to remove. Funding is for front yards or areas that are visible from a public street.

DWA also has several conservation coupons on our website including one for recycled water car washes.

Visit [www.dwa.org/rebates](http://www.dwa.org/rebates) for more information.

### Stopping water waste

Desert Water Agency issued about 450 penalties in 2016. If you see water waste, there are several ways you can let us know.

- By phone: 760-323-4971
- By email: [desertwater@dwa.org](mailto:desertwater@dwa.org)
- DWA water waste smartphone app
- Online at [www.dwa.org/waterwaste](http://www.dwa.org/waterwaste)

For reports please include date, time and location of the incident. Photos are also welcome. It is best if you can show the source of the water, rather than water running down the street.

Make sure that you're also following the watering schedule and rules that are currently in place. Penalties range from \$50-\$500 per incident. For more information, please visit [www.dwa.org/restrictions](http://www.dwa.org/restrictions).

### Want to know more about what we're doing?

The public is always welcome at our board meetings on the first and third Tuesday of every month, beginning at 8 a.m., at DWA Operations Center, 1200 S. Gene Autry Trail, Palm Springs. To see an up-to-date schedule of all our meetings, please visit our website: [www.dwa.org/calendar](http://www.dwa.org/calendar).

## Investing in pipeline

DWA's system is made up of about 392 miles of pipeline, but currently has about 80 miles in need of replacement. This was a major cost driver for the agency, and made rate increases unavoidable. We will now be able to generate the funds necessary to help keep our water system healthy.

Our team has identified the areas in most critical need of replacement and developed a schedule to start replacements. Most of the work will be done in summer months to avoid traffic. We are coordinating with the City of Palm Springs to help reduce project cost and inconvenience for our community.

From 2017 until at least 2031, DWA plans to install about 2.75 miles of new pipe a year.

This year, the following areas have been prioritized: Linda Vista, Pasatiempo, Paseo El Mirador (Via Donna to Linda Vista and Via Miraleste to Ave Caballeros), Camino Norte (Stevens to Via Monte Vista and Via Monte Vista to Vine), Broadmoor (Waverly to Brentwood), Via Monte Vista (Las Palmas to Vine and Camino Norte to Stevens), Stevens Rd (Via Monte Vista to Rose).

## Efficient landscapes

Did you know that in the Coachella Valley about 70-80% of water is used outdoors? That means that it is especially important to make sure that your yard uses water wisely. Switching out thirsty plants for those that are drought tolerant is a great first step. If you're not sure which plants to use, DWA is selling copies of *Lush & Efficient* (picture below, left) at our offices for \$10. An electronic version is also available online at [www.cvwd.org](http://www.cvwd.org).

Another important component of any landscape is the irrigation system. The easiest thing that you can do to make your yard more efficient is correcting your system pressure. If your pressure is too low, the water will not get to the areas needed. If the pressure is too high, you will likely see runoff due to misting. The ideal pressure for your system is 40 to 60 pounds per square inch (psi). You can use a pressure gauge at the spigot closest to your irrigated area (pictured below, right) to determine your pressure. Pressure regulators are a fairly inexpensive way to protect your system and increase your efficiency.

Whether you have drip irrigation, spray heads or rotors, you should set up your system to avoid water waste. This means making sure that heads are placed appropriately and do not water non-landscape area. Once your system is properly configured, you should still check it about once a month to make sure that it is in good working order. If you live in an area with high winds, you may want to consider using rotator nozzles (pictured below, center). They put down bigger drops of water that are not carried away as easily by wind.



### Board of Directors

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### Contact information

For more information, please contact: DWA Outreach & Conservation Manager Ashley Metzger at 760-323-4971 ext. 184, or [Ashley@dwa.org](mailto:Ashley@dwa.org). For more information on DWA's conservation programs, please visit: [www.dwa.org/conservation](http://www.dwa.org/conservation).