

# Entranosa Water News

August 31, 2006

**Annual Meeting.** Our annual packet will go out soon via first class mail. The meeting will be held on October 5<sup>th</sup> at the Masonic Lodge on Old 66, about ½ mile east of the intersection of SR217 and Old 66, on the south side of the road. We have four candidates for two offices – each candidate has strengths that you should consider when you cast your ballot. Ballots will be counted at the meeting this year. In addition to talking about the system and what we're doing, we'll focus the discussion on our organizational form and the merits and demerits of continuing to be a mutual domestic, or converting back to a cooperative. Please plan to attend.

**Water Consumption in August.** August was WET. The experts have concluded that a portion of the state is no longer in a condition of drought – our area is on the cusp, but it sure is damp out there. The average residential use for August was 6,900. The usage in August of last year was approximately 10,400 gallons, and 8,970 gallons in August of '04.

**Organizational Form.** We've mentioned, in previous newsletters – and in the first paragraph of this newsletter - that the legislature (this past session) had chosen to declare mutual domestics to be political subdivisions or local public bodies, which creates some conflicting language in our organizational documents and processes. We've attempted to determine all of the benefits and detriments to this action – there are pro's and con's. We've found several impacts, to include our cost of infrastructure will rise because of the requirements of the Little Davis Bacon Act, our overhead costs for personnel will rise to adhere to new administrative requirements, we wouldn't have to pay gross receipts tax for material that we purchase, and we could charge a flat 5% gross receipts tax for our billings. We'll cover this in more depth at the annual meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup> – please plan to attend.

**Rain Barrels.** There are reports that the monsoon is starting to dissipate, but then, there were reports three months ago that we'd be in a serious drought for the next ten years too. Regardless – rain barrels make sense – the County of Santa Fe requires them for new construction, the County of Bernalillo is considering a similar requirement. We have a model that is guaranteed to not crack or be damaged by freezing temperatures. If you'd like to get a rain barrel – we can help you obtain one that you'll like.

**Membership Fee.** The board of directors, after a review of the data, recently raised the membership fee from \$5,000 to \$6,000, and it will go into effect on 1 October, this year

**Call Before You Dig – It IS the Law**

**New Mexico One Call**

**260-1990**

## Septic Management Program

### Entranosa Bylaws

**Article IV, Membership, Section 3** – "...and further provided that after October 5, 2000, all new memberships and transfer memberships shall either include wastewater service or be located in a subdivision or community where wastewater services are provided."

In the early 1990's, the Association added 'wastewater' to its' name to reflect that wastewater was the greatest single threat to our water resource, and we should be involved in efforts to protect it. In 1995, the Association completed a study of groundwater in the east mountain area and it concluded – in part - that septic tanks were a significant contributor to plumes of groundwater contamination (mostly nitrates) in the community. The study cited lot size, soil conditions, tank construction, and septic tank maintenance as a contributor to that contamination. As a result of the study, and after a great deal of discussion within the board of directors and after several surveys of the membership, the Association created a voluntary septic management program in 1999. That program was successful and well received. The following year, the board received – and eventually endorsed – a proposed change to the bylaws to require wastewater service (later defined as the septic management program) as a condition of membership (the language in Article IV, Section 3, above). This action may have been precipitated by a June '99 newspaper article dealing with nitrate contamination near Melody Ranch which cited septic tanks as the source. Coincident to the proposed bylaw change in 2000, Bernalillo County implemented a new wastewater ordinance that required individual management plans for septic tanks in the County, and placed responsibility for septic maintenance on property owners. Last year (2005), the State of New Mexico revised their liquid waste regulations that generally mirrored the Bernalillo County requirements. Our septic management program meets the requirements of both the Bernalillo County ordinance and the state regulations.

Prior to endorsing the bylaw change six years ago, the board held several heated discussions on the issue. The arguments in opposition to the bylaw change centered around the fact that Entranosa was not a government entity (at the time) and it should not place itself in a position to interfere with how private individuals maintained their private property. The arguments in favor of the bylaw change focused on studies and emerging evidence that the primary – and at the time, the only – well field we had was in a highly transmissive, water bearing strata in a rapidly growing area, and we had the obligation to take steps to protect that source; that we were a 'water' AND a 'wastewater' organization and it was **not** inappropriate to offer the membership the opportunity to vote and decide for themselves if they wanted to connect water and wastewater services.

The bylaw passed and we currently have over 1100 members enrolled in the program. It continues to grow monthly as new memberships are purchased and as memberships are transferred as the result of a sale. Some continue to voluntarily sign onto the program.