

# Entranosa Water News

August 31, 2009

**August Consumption.** The average residential consumption was higher than normal for August but not unprecedented, and very similar to May, June and July – which is VERY unusual. The average residential usage in August was 9,011 gallons – last year it was 7,095 gallons and in 2007 it was 9,052 gallons. If you believe your billed usage is higher than what you've used – give us a call and we'll be pleased to check for a leak – but keep in mind that if you left the hose on overnight, you could easily have used 10,000 gallons.

**Drought Forecast, and Weather Conditions** The weather in August couldn't really make up its mind ... hot and dry, cool and rainy ... The US Drought Monitor from August 25<sup>th</sup> shows our area is 'normal', with an 'abnormally dry' condition about forty miles to the east. The prediction through November is 'normal' with drought worsening in the area around Roswell. Regardless of the current condition, *remember that we live in a highland desert* – **be aware** of how you use your water. Use what you need ... no more, and no less. The monsoon has seemingly returned – it has been an infrequent visitor this summer.

**Board Candidates, Annual Meeting and Errata.** The Association has five good candidates running for three positions on the board of directors this year, and if you are a member – you should have received your packet within the last week. There are a couple of errors in the document (for which we are embarrassed) - Page 2 of the packet says to vote for no more than two candidates – the ballot says to vote for no more than three – you can vote for up to three candidates; and the annual meeting will be held at the Mountain Valley Church on Thursday, 1 October, which is also the last day to submit ballots. PLEASE plan to attend.

**Contact information.** In a recent 'best practices' review, we discussed the need for an email through which we can quickly send out information in the event of a drinking water emergency. We can also use email to send out billings, efficiently and quickly (and we will have that capability early next year). Should you wish to provide your email address – send it to [loriharris@entranosawater.com](mailto:loriharris@entranosawater.com). We will not sell your email address to anyone, we won't spam you, and it will only be used for these stated purposes. Thank you.

**Water Haulers.** We've had an increase in authorized water haulers due to the prolonged dry periods this summer and some well drilling activity. For the most part – authorized haulers use fire hydrants on Mountain Valley and on Sedillo Hill near the gas station; all haulers have a 'permit' issued by us and every authorized hauler will be using a meter that is connected to the hydrant. While we have different styles of meters – they are 18" to 24" long, typically blue or red in color ... and an authorized hauler will NEVER just have a hose connected to the hydrant. We are grateful for all of you have called to tell us what you see – thank you – and keep calling.

**Holiday.** Labor Day will be observed on Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, and our office will be closed for business that day. We hope you have a pleasant and safe holiday.

**Call Before You Dig**

**New Mexico One Call**

**260-1990 or 811**

## Septic / Liquid Waste 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 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. In 2003, the Secretary of the Environment Department cited septic tanks as the single greatest source of contamination of ground water in the State. Four years ago (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 nine 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 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 1800 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. We have two state certified wastewater operators on staff, and three state and nationally certified septic inspectors.