



From the Tap...

Fairfax Water turns 50 This Year!

We thought it would be interesting to share some of the history with you. This is the first in a series of four articles.

The Early Years: 1957–1967

Prior to the creation in 1957 of the Fairfax County Water Authority (now known as Fairfax Water), Fairfax County was supplied water through many small, mostly private water systems, and a limited number of public systems. There was no standardization between systems and each system maintained its own rate schedule and level of service.

In order to improve service reliability, establish equitable rates, and provide effective fire protection throughout Fairfax County, the Board of Supervisors created Fairfax Water in September 1957

for the purpose of “acquiring, constructing, operating and maintaining an integrated water system for supplying and distributing water.”

Under the Virginia Water and Waste Authority Act, the Fairfax Water Board is empowered to set water rates and issue revenue bonds to operate the water system.

One of Fairfax Water’s first tasks was to hire an Engineer-Director to oversee day-to-day operations. James J. Corbalis Jr. was selected to head the organization. He had 17 years of professional engineering experience, including serv-

ing as Fairfax County Sanitary Engineer.

The acquisition of water systems began in 1959 with the purchase of the Annandale Water Company. Over the next eight years, Fairfax Water would acquire an additional 17 systems and began to build a comprehensive water-supply system.

By the end of 1967, Fairfax Water had 832 miles of mains, 3,354 fire hydrants, and 54,000 metered accounts serving more than 425,000 people. Revenues were \$2.7 million in 1967 and full-time employees numbered 143.

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Fairfax Water Receives 2006 Honor Award

The Community Appearance Alliance of Northern Virginia presented Fairfax Water with a 2006 Honor Award for distinguished contribution to community appearance for the Frederick P. Griffith, Jr. Water Treatment Plant and Visitor Education Center in Laurel Hill Virginia.

The award was for “Constructing a state-of-the-art water treatment plant in an architectural manner that reflects some of the 90 year old prison structures that previously existed there, but in a modern and harmonious contextual style.”

Fairfax Water is grateful for this recognition.

Annual Water-Main Flushing Program

Each spring, April through June, Fairfax Water flushes its water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time. The flushing clears sediment from the mains and provides for routine maintenance

of the more than 22,000 fire hydrants in the Fairfax County service area.

Flushing of fire hydrants normally occurs at night between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Flushing may result in

some discoloration and the presence of sediment in your water. These conditions are not harmful and should be of short duration.

We appreciate your patience during this program.



Rate Increase Effective April 1, 2007– Rates Remain Lowest in Region

Fairfax Water revised its Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges, to be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2007.

The revisions include increases in the Water Usage (Commodity) Charge from \$1.50 to \$1.55 per 1,000 gallons. Increases in the local facilities charge, service connections charge, service charge turn-on/off charges, returned check, and the account charge have also been enacted.

The proposed increase in the Water Usage (Commodity) Charge (from \$1.50 to \$1.55 per 1,000 gallons) will mean an increase of \$1.20 per quarter, or \$4.80 per year, for an average customer's water bill. Even with these revisions, Fairfax Water rates will remain the lowest in the region.



Water-Saving Tip #61:
Next time you add or replace a flower or shrub, choose a low-water-use plant for year-round landscape color and save up to 550 gallons each year.



For more information and other water-saving tips, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com

Chlorine Taste and Odor

During the annual flushing program, you may notice a slight chlorine taste and odor in your drinking water. It is the result of a routine change in the form of chlorine used in the treatment process.

Chlorine is added as a disinfectant during the treatment process. Normally, chlorine is chemically bound to ammonia to help stabilize the available chlorine. This bound chlorine is also known as combined chlorine or chloramines.

During the annual water main flushing program, Fairfax Water uses free, or unbound, chlorine which has more odor than combined chlorine. Free chlorine is a stronger disinfectant than combined chlorine. It is not harmful and is used to ensure that the

more than 3,200 miles of water mains that deliver your drinking water are free of harmful bacteria.

If you are especially sensitive to the taste and odor of chlorine, keep an open container of drinking water in your refrigerator. This will enable the chlorine to dissipate, thus reducing the chlorine taste. Remember, drinking water has a shelf life! Change the water in your refrigerated container weekly.



Editor's Note

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, let us hear from you.

E-mail us at jbailey@fairfaxwater.org or write us at the address below. If you have questions regarding water service, please call Customer Service at (703) 698-5800.

For all other departments, call (703) 698-5600; After-hours emergency, call (703) 698-5613, TTY (703) 698-7025.

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