



# Waterlines

NOVEMBER 2019

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF MEDFORD WATER COMMISSION

Happy Birthday

**The Commission turns 97 this year!**

Medford Water Commission was established through a change in the city charter on November 7, 1922.

In 1925, the sale of \$975,000 in bonds was approved to develop the pristine Big Butte Springs water supply and build a pipeline to town (a current value of over \$95 million from an estimated 1925 population of 12,000 people).

This commitment by Medford citizens, incurring and paying off a large debt to build a safe and sufficient water supply, continues to benefit our residents today.

We maintain that forward-thinking to ensure facilities are in place before they become necessary, while striving to delay costly infrastructure and sustaining water supplies whenever possible.



## We're here for you:

(541) 774-2430  
customerservice@medfordwater.org

medfordwater.org

200 South Ivy Street, Room 177  
Medford, OR 97501

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday

### Socialize with us!

facebook.com/MedfordWater

twitter.com/MedfordWater

## FOREST MANAGEMENT REDUCES FIRE RISK

Living in southwest Oregon is a privilege, but with our mild, dry summers comes increased fire risk. As we have all experienced, wildfires are burning more frequently and are often larger and more intense, resulting in longer fire seasons.

Climate changes such as higher temperatures and drought lead to greater fire risk; other factors include increased fuel build-up (an overgrowth of shrubs and young trees) due to decades of fire exclusion, and building more homes in fire-prone rural areas.

Since approximately 70% of our surface water source, the Upper Rogue River Watershed, and over 90% of the Big Butte Springs Watershed are forested, large, high-intensity wildfires could have a drastic impact on our water supplies.

After smoke from fires all over the West inundated Oregon in 2018, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order establishing the Council on Wildfire Response (Council). The Council made more than 50 recommendations to the State Legislature on ways to improve the State's firefighting capacity, preparedness, and response.

Medford Water Commission participated in the Council's Fire Suppression Committee, and practices many of the Council's recommendations, such as minimizing fire risk by mechanically removing fuel loads, especially near roads and around structures, and thinning our forests to establish healthy, fire-resistant timber stands.

Recent forest projects include 105 acres along Butte Falls Highway in 2018 and another 100-acre area on the west side of Willow Lake, where we are currently

thinning dense stands of Douglas fir and White fir to prevent disease and mortality from over-competition. We selectively harvest trees; we don't clear-cut our forests unless they are badly affected by insects or disease.



Photos from a recent commercial thinning project along Butte Falls Highway; top photo, before thinning, bottom photo, after thinning.

In fact, this method of selective thinning reduces the incidence of disease and insect infestation, even in drought years. It creates and maintains healthy forests by establishing stands of diverse tree species and ages, protects water quality, and keeps our watersheds healthy.

We believe that these practices can be replicated in our region to provide a cost-effective (revenue generating) solution to the fire crisis, and they reinforce our organization's mission: to safeguard public health by providing a reliable, high-quality water supply at the best value.

## NEED A HELPING HAND?

*At one point or another, we could all use a little help.*

The Commission provides annual grants to The Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul and ACCESS for water bill payment assistance to qualifying low-income families.

If you are having difficulty paying your water bill, give any one of these agencies a call, they may be able to help you. Applicant screening and disbursement of funds are handled by each agency.

We encourage you to take advantage of this program to help avoid any shutoffs or late fees.

**ACCESS: (541) 779-6691**

**St. Vincent de Paul: (541) 772-3828**

**The Salvation Army: (541) 772-8149**



## KEEPING YOUR ACCOUNT UP-TO-DATE IS AS EASY AS PUMPKIN PIE

*Do we have your current contact information?*

Maybe we talked to you last month, or perhaps the last time you called was when you still had that landline...you know, the one you got rid of 5 years ago?

Either way, we want to make sure your information is correct. We know life gets busy and it's difficult to remember who to call when changes happen, but keeping your information up to date ensures we have a way to reach you if there is an emergency or if you have a leak, and also helps keep your account secure.

If any of the following applies to you, it's time for an account review:

- Do you have a new phone number?
- Do you need to add or remove someone from your account?
- Have you changed employers or retired?
- Has your name changed?
- Do you have a new mailing address or email address?

Give us a call at (541) 774-2430 during regular business hours or email us at [customerservice@medfordwater.org](mailto:customerservice@medfordwater.org) and we'll be happy to review and update your information.

*Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family!*

## TIME FOR SPRINKLERS TO HIBERNATE

With colder temperatures upon us, irrigation should no longer be necessary. Now is the time to turn off your sprinkler timers and water to the system for the winter.

Medford Water Commission offers "Winterizing Your Sprinkler System", an overall guide to preparing your system for the cold weather ahead. Visit our website and click on the Conservation tab at the top of the page, or call us at (541) 774-2435 to have a copy mailed to you.

If you see sprinklers running during the winter months, call us with the address and we will contact the property owner regarding the situation.

Water frozen on lawns and sidewalks can lead to dangerous slip-and-fall accidents and wastes our precious water supplies.

While taking the recommended winterizing steps may not provide complete protection from freezing, they are worthwhile precautions to lessen the potential for damage.

### Medford Water Commission

Established in 1922 and governed by the Board of Water Commissioners.

#### Commissioners

John Dailey • Daniel Bunn

Rick Whitlock • Greg Jones • Jason Anderson

#### General Manager

Brad Taylor

### Serving Partner Cities:

Medford, Central Point, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Phoenix, Talent and Ashland\*

#### Also serving:

White City area and the Elk City and Charlotte Ann Water Districts

\*Emergency intertie only

