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## **East Valley Water District Changes Disconnect Notice System**

**Highland, Calif., (August 27, 2012)** – The East Valley Water District Board of Directors voted unanimously to change the way customers are notified when a connection has been scheduled for shut off due to nonpayment. The vote, which came at the August 22 regular meeting, enabled the District to deliver shut off notices through its billing company, Infosend, and Federal Express Overnight rather than hand delivering each notice individually. As a result of this system change, the charge for disconnect notices will increase from \$5 to \$20.

In order to ensure that customers have the opportunity to pay their past due balance East Valley Water District, like all water districts in California, must attempt to make contact with nonpaying customers at least 48 hours before disconnecting water or sewer services. Currently, four full-time employees are responsible for hand delivering the notices of disconnection, also known as “pink tags”, to roughly 125 locations each day. Customers that receive these notices are charged \$5 to cover a portion of the cost incurred by the District.

“This change is about two issues: efficiency and fairness,” said John Mura, General Manager of East Valley Water District. “Devoting four employees to serving disconnect notices is just not the best use of District resources. This manpower could be used for preventative maintenance, water audits, conservation, and other programs that benefit all customers.” Also, according to Mura, because the \$5 charge does not cover the total cost associated with notice delivery, customers that pay their bills on time are subsidizing the cost of these notices.

“Our goal is to treat each customer fairly,” Mura said. “That means charging them exactly what it costs to provide their services. The new system will pass the exact costs of notice deliveries on to the account holders who are late with payments. This is as fair as it gets.”

In 2010, the Board of Directors adopted a \$5 Disconnect Noticing Fee to recover a portion of the District costs for providing that service. Since that time the daily number of pink tags has increased substantially creating the need to reassess this process. As a result, a new noticing system has been selected to allow Federal Express real-time tracking and delivery, freeing up District personnel for other projects and services. The District cost for this 48 hour guaranteed delivery service is \$20 per notice, and is in turn being directly passed through to the customers receiving disconnect notices. East Valley Water District is a 100% rate based agency that is required to ensure all fees are established based on actual costs incurred for providing specific services.

Before the system takes effect, an extensive outreach campaign is planned to ensure that the community is aware of the policy changes and potential impacts.

EVWD provides water and sewer collection services to about 70,000 people in the cities of Highland and San Bernardino. For more information about EVWD, call (909) 889-9501 or visit [www.eastvalley.org](http://www.eastvalley.org).

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*East Valley Water District was formed in 1954 to provide domestic water service to the unincorporated and agricultural-based communities of Highland and East Highlands. Today EVWD provides water and sewer collection services to about 70,000 people in western San Bernardino County. EVWD operates under the direction of a 5-member elected Board. The Mission of East Valley Water District is to provide its customers with a safe and reliable water supply that is delivered at a fair and cost-effective price. More information is available at [www.eastvalley.org](http://www.eastvalley.org).*