Search PE.com Search WEB SEARCH by YAHOO!

Newsletters
SHARE

Comments 1| Recommend 0

Eastern, Western water districts adding incentives to conserve

TO STORY
Download story podcast

10:00 PM PDT on Wednesday, October 14, 2009

By JANET ZIMMERMAN
The Press-Enterprise

Western Municipal Water District in Riverside is dedicating almost $500,000 to a rebate program to boost conservation and reduce water use by 5 percent over five years.

The incentives are available to residential and commercial customers in the district's service area, which includes parts of Riverside, Jurupa, Norco, Corona, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta and Temecula.

"With this funding we're going to hit our targets and then some," said Tim Barr, Western's water use efficiency manager.

The money will be added to rebates offered by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the wholesaler for most Inland agencies.

Metropolitan's regional program, known as SoCal Water$mart, was temporarily halted this spring because demand was so overwhelming that funding was exhausted. A scaled-back version of the program was reintroduced last month, with most rebates halved to stretch available funding. That program ends May 31, or when money runs out.

Eastern Municipal Water District, which serves areas from Moreno Valley to Temecula, has set aside $400,000 to augment Metropolitan's residential and commercial rebates for high-efficiency toilets and washers, rotating nozzles and "smart" irrigation controllers. Riverside Public Utilities has set aside $295,000 to add to Metropolitan's and Western's rebates for those water-saving devices.

Western's efforts are specifically targeted to get the most bang for the buck, Barr said.

The incentives for residential customers served directly by Western are: $150 each for high-efficiency toilets or clothes washers, which is added to Metropolitan's $50 rebate; $120 for weather-based irrigation controllers, in addition to Metropolitan's $80 rebate; and 30 cents per square foot for synthetic turf.

Western also is offering free landscape evaluations, including a look at irrigation programming, mulch and whether areas can be converted to drip irrigation. If applicable, homeowners who get an evaluation will receive up to 20 free, high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles, worth $4 each retail, and installation.

Residential customers not served directly by Western -- customers of districts that receive wholesale water from the agency -- are eligible for rebates of $50 each for high-efficiency toilets and washers, $40 for each smart controller and 30 cents per square foot for artificial turf.

Western also is offering commercial, industrial and institutional rebates of $200 for high-efficiency urinals and matching Metropolitan's rebate of 30 cents per square foot for synthetic grass.

The $463,884 program is expected to save almost 300 billion gallons of water, the equivalent of indoor water used by 3,342 families of four for a year, Barr said. That is about one-fifth of the district's target goal over five years.

Western also will begin surveying customers next month to determine how many still have nonconserving toilets, he said.

Reach Janet Zimmerman at 951- 368-9586 or jzimmerman@PE.com

Information on rebates

SoCal Water$mart, www.socalwatersmart.com; 888-376-3314

Western Municipal Water District, www.wmwd.com; 951-789-5000

Eastern Municipal Water District, www.emwd.org; 951-928-3777