



Water on Request Only: That should be a way of dining out.

By: Kathy Turner Jones, General Manager

"While the residents of Montgomery County are not under water restrictions at the present time, it is important to do our part to encourage our residents and visitors to be aware of the importance of saving water," explained Kathy Turner Jones, General Manager.

The Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (District) is encouraging area restaurant owners and managers to participate in a "Water on Request Only" awareness campaign whereby restaurants would serve

campaign," said LSGCD Board of Director Billy Wood, "is to eliminate the unnecessary waste of water, and not to make people thirsty." "It's really an awareness-raising tool," he says. "If you have to ask for the water, it makes you think about water use."

Traditionally, a practice of such consisted of regulations or mandates applied or enforced by city officials or public utility districts and usually only during droughts - and then later lifted when rain began falling again. But this water awareness approach would become a permanent way of business for all restaurant and dining establishments in Montgomery County.

The District is hopeful that local cities and utility districts will take the lead and met with restaurant owners and managers to encourage their support and participation.

One area restaurant owner commented that, "at least 30 percent of the water served, customers never drank." A large portion of restaurant customers order pre-meal cocktails, which may eliminate the need for water too.

Preventive Medicine. The campaign is part of a larger water awareness and conservation effort - a form of preventive medicine.

In early April the District, for the first time, approved a \$250,000 water awareness public education campaign - "Water IQ: Know Your Water", to promote water awareness and conservation in Montgomery County. The District hired Envormedia Social Marketing to develop the awareness campaign that will include billboards, newspaper

print, and brochure mailers to help spread its message of saving water to the public. The company was successful in a similar campaign to reduce the amount of water produced in North Texas, despite a 20 percent growth in population. The campaign is expected to begin in late April.

Water IQ is designed to educate utility cus-

tomers and businesses about their water sources and provides simple tips on how to be more efficient with water. The campaign is intended to reduce peak day consumption, to raise awareness of water as a finite source, to educate consumers about issues related to water supply and planning in the county, and to establish a benchmark for measuring results.

The campaign provides quick, easy everyday tips to save water, like limiting shower times and turning off faucets while brushing teeth. In addition to the advertising message, the campaign will include a community survey to gauge if residents know the source of their water. It also will include a measurement of the effect on water use. For more information on "Water IQ: Know Your Water" please visit their website at: <http://www.wateriq.org>

Montgomery County, which relies solely on underground aquifers for its water supply, is currently permitted to withdraw more water annually than can be recharged by the aquifer. The aquifer replenished about 64,000 acre feet a year through rainfall and runoff; currently, Montgomery County permit holders are authorized to produce 78,000 acre feet annually.

The District in December 2006 adopted a Groundwater Regulatory Plan (GRP) which essentially puts all permitted groundwater users on notice that they must reduce their groundwater usage to approximately 70 percent of their permitted amount by 2015 and is requiring "large volume groundwater users" to submit "Water Resources Assessment Plans" (WRAP) to the District by early 2009 on how they plan to meet that goal.

Lower Your Water Use. Raise Your Water IQ.

"For every glass of water provided a restaurant guest, it takes two more glasses of water to wash that glass..."



water to customers only on request.

For every glass of water provided a guest, it takes two more glasses of water to wash that glass. Restaurants can save almost a quart of water by just asking if a guest would like a glass of water. Many times, guests will order another beverage and never touch the water.

"The point of the 'Water on Request Only'

Water IQ: Know Your Water.

Do you know where your water comes from? Nearly three out of four Texans don't. It's important to know because water - and having enough of it - is a critical issue for the state of Texas.

You can do it! Visit www.wateriq.org/tips.php for more water saving tips.

For more information please contact the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District (936.494.3436), or visit our website, www.lonestargcd.org. ♦