

# COMPTON WATER ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 825  
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www.comptonwater@gmail.com

## COMPTON WATER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

February 10, 2013

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

CWA would like to thank everyone for their interest in the Water Association and for voting for the future Board Members, 136 Members voted! These Board Members will serve a two year term and their names and offices are listed at the end of this Newsletter. The vote count:

	<u>NO votes</u>	<u>YES votes</u>	<u>ABSTAIN votes</u>
Roger Jones	8	127	1
John Henderson	5	130	1
John Berry	6	129	1
Sandy Irwin	10	123	3
Mitch Jones	11	124	1
Garland Matlock	110	24	2

### **METER ACCESS:**

Every Member has a CWA meter placed on or near their property which is read monthly and on occasion needs maintenance. We want to thank everyone for keeping the meter free and clear of obstacles so we can do our job. Some of the things we have encountered are fences, cars parked over meters, dog waste piled on and around the meter, barking dogs chained over the meter; tree limbs and most recently shrubbery and berry bushes overgrown around the meter box. All of these obstacles can interfere with the Meter Reader or Water Operator from gaining access to the line or meter. They are instructed to clear the area with either a weed eater, machete or vegetation spray (which is able to be purchased and applied without a license requirement). Again, we appreciate everything you can do to keep these areas clean and clear; the responsibility of doing so does lie with the Member or is undertaken by CWA. As a side note, CWA isn't going to take a machete to trim your bushes; the idea is to quickly clear the area so they can get their job done without continually having torn clothing and scratches. CWA has a 10' easement around the meter box and on each side of the water line to the meter box that needs to stay clean and clear of all obstacles, animals, bushes and encumbrances.

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) and YOU:**

CWA has recently received a letter from a collective group of Members (*Wanda Roudabush, Sherry Strange, Thomas Sarmiento and Mary Decker*) with a list of 9 'documentation/information' items they would like copies of from a prior 5 year period.

We have never been faced with such a request using the FOIA; we are certainly very willing to supply information to any member's request, if it is within our means to do so. However, as stated we have never been faced with this before so we are seeking legal counsel on the matter as some of the items might infringe on your privacy, in addition we don't have access to many of the requested documents prior to March 2010. Requesting information in this manner will add additional labor, copying and legal costs to our budget; many of these items are in storage and will need to be sorted, copied and returned to storage. We are sorry for the additional costs to

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CWA from this request; we are small and have part time staff to carry this out but it seems the FOIA is clear on such requests. We want to again, invite you to our monthly meetings where most of this information is reported and as always, this Board desires complete transparency to its Members, we have nothing to conceal and welcome your questions, comments and concerns. To keep costs down, one copy of the allowable information will be provided for this group of Members, which can be picked up at the February 12, 2013 meeting.

As indicated in our prior Newsletter to you, our water Members, we have been able to pay off debt, become solvent, complete delinquent tax returns; we have been scrutinized by all governing bodies which oversee rural utility companies as well as pass State Financial Audits for 2010, 2011 and will pass the upcoming Audit for 2012. As always, we are able to supply you with clean and safe drinking water and our water loss from leaks stays under control. In addition, we are in the application and bid process for a grant to begin repairs on the Fire Tower Road water tank and it looks promising – we will keep you informed!

A 'Freedom of Information Handbook' can be downloaded free of charge at: <http://www.arkansaspress.org/publications/38-foi-handbook> or you may also write: Arkansas Press Association, 411 South Victory, Little Rock, AR 72201 or call 1-800-569-8762 for a copy. CWA does have copies available at our meetings; we hope this is informative and helpful to you.

## **HOW CAN YOU HELP US?**

We can always use your help in looking for water leaks!! If you notice water coming from locations where you don't normally see it, like wet spot's or very green areas we would sincerely appreciate a phone call and we will gladly check it out. Many of you have saved CWA a lot of money by locating those leaks early! Thank you AGAIN in advance – we really appreciate it!

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

### ***When I mail my bill on the 12<sup>th</sup> why do I get a late charge?***

With all of the recent changes in USPS it can take 3 to 7 days for it to arrive in Compton, depending on where and when you mail it. To avoid a late fee, we suggest mailing your bill several days prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> to ensure it has a post mark prior to the 15<sup>th</sup>. We DO READ EVERY POST MARK on each envelope and do our best to be ensure you won't receive a late fee if post marked prior to the 15<sup>th</sup>. Remember the late fee is 10% of your monthly bill.

### ***When can I expect my check to clear?***

You can expect it will take from 5 to 15 days for your check to clear because of our need to batch several customers together to make a large deposit. We now offer direct deposit.

### ***Direct Deposit to pay my water bill?? I didn't know you offered that?***

Yes, we do! And it's a wonderful, convenient service for you. The deposit is processed around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and the fee is \$1.00 (which just covers the cost to CWA). We still send

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you the blue bill the first of the month as usual and it states 'Paid by Auto Draft' on it so you will know what your bill and usage are. Several of our Members are paying their water bill this way - Give it a try – it's easy!!!

## ***Is my water usage estimated?***

No. We have a Meter Reader who reads the meters between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of each month. The only RARE occasion we might estimate a reading would be if there is an obstruction getting to the meter.

## ***Why is it a good idea to write my check in BLUE or BLACK ink when I really love PINK, PURPLE, RED or GREEN?***

Because, sometimes check readers don't read those delightful beautiful colors of pink, purple, red and green very well and if the check reader can't read it then it takes even longer for it to clear your bank OR it gets returned 'unreadable'.

## ***Does the Meter Reader have a responsibility to find water leaks at my house?***

No, he doesn't. When reading meters between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, he does alert CWA (and you if possible) should he see evidence of a leak or a spinning meter. CWA highly recommends that you check your meter a couple of times a month; turn all running water off in your home and read your meter; check the little triangle to see if its spinning and if it is then you have something in your home or on your property leaking. A hot water heater, toilet, dripping faucet or frost free can cost you a lot of money each month if it goes unchecked.

**Next meeting date: February 12, 2013 7:00 at Compton Community Building.**

Compton Water Assn. Inc.  
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Mitch Jones, President  
John D. Henderson, Vice President  
John Berry, Treasurer, Director of Operations  
Roger Jones, Board Member  
Sandy Irwin, Board Member  
Bobby H., Water Operator  
Tom G., Meter Reader  
Veronica O., Bookkeeper