

QUICK FACTS

About TMWA:

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 330,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

About this series:

Water Topics in Our Community is a series of papers designed to provide the citizens of the Truckee Meadows information about key water topics in this region.

To access all of the papers, go to www.tmwa.com/topics.

About TMWA's

Board of Directors:

The TMWA Board welcomes you to attend and comment at any board meeting. Meeting schedules are posted at www.tmwa.com/meetings.

To send a question to the Board, visit us online at www.tmwa.com/comment.

Questions or feedback?

We'd like to hear from you. Please call our new Community Communications line with any remaining questions you have on this topic or other water topics. The number is **(775) 834-8290**.

METERING WATER SERVICES IN THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS

Progress toward converting water services in the Truckee Meadows from flat-rate to metered-rate billing began in the 1980s after a law banning water meters was finally amended by the Nevada Legislature. All businesses were required to be metered starting in 1983. In addition, all newly constructed residences have been equipped and billed at the metered rate since July 1, 1988. A retrofit program to install meters on remaining flat-rate services began in 1995 at no cost to existing customers.

How many TMWA services have a meter installed?

TMWA has more than 90,000 services that are eligible for meters; more than 99 percent of those services have a meter installed. The last single-family residential flat-rate services were retrofitted with a meter in 2009. Less than 450 multi-unit complexes (including duplexes and condominiums) remain to be retrofitted. The retrofit of these remaining services will occur over the next few years, as some of these are especially difficult installations and as monies are available through our developer-funded retrofit account to pay the cost of these retrofits.

Who pays for all of the retrofit meters?

Developers. A program to retrofit older homes with water meters was initiated in 1995, funded by developer fees. Therefore, existing customers were not charged for the retrofit of meters. For each new home built, developers pay about \$900 to the retrofit program.

What are the reasons to have a fully metered water system?

Installing and using water meters is beneficial for all customers and users of the Truckee River water supplies for several reasons:

- **Better system management:** A water company is especially difficult to manage with a mixed metered and flat-rate system; water meters help manage the production of water more efficiently and effectively. Meters provide more accurate information on how our community uses water, which enables us to better manage and forecast the needs of our customers.
- **Managing water use and cost:** Many customers, both business and residential, desire to use water efficiently and want to have some control over monthly water bills. Meters measure water use and provide a tool to our customers for managing costs.
- **Fair rates for all customers:** Most people recognize the fairness of a "pay-for-what-you-use" system. With flat rates, the cost of service is averaged for all customers within the flat-rate customer group, requiring those who use less water to subsidize those who use more. For example, in 2010, the lowest annual use of a single customer in the ¾" flat-rate service class was 23,000 gallons; the highest was 10,262,000 gallons, but both paid the same monthly bill of only \$86.30.
- **Detecting leaks:** Meters detect water flowing that can be caused by a leak. We consistently experience flat-rate customers who have significant leaks of 100,000 gallons per month and more.

These customers didn't know it until a meter was installed on the property. That can add up to millions of gallons per year of water waste that goes undetected.

- **Truckee River Settlement Issues:** Conversion to a fully metered system is one of TMWA's commitments in exchange for increased drought storage in federally owned/operated reservoirs which include Prosser, Boca and Stampede Reservoirs. This storage is essential for the community water supply in drought years. This commitment was formalized in the 1989 Truckee River Preliminary Settlement Agreement, also known as the Negotiated Settlement. The resulting water meter retrofit program is a requirement of the Truckee River Operating Agreement, also part of the Negotiated Settlement.

If the community conserves water as a result of metering all TMWA services, is it used for growth - to build more houses or businesses?

No. Some people mistakenly believe that when customers conserve water, the water saved is used for growth. However, unused water is actually retained for our drought reserves and stored in upstream reservoirs or remains in the river for the benefit of other users. TMWA does not re-commit water that is conserved through meters or any other conservation practice. New development must acquire additional water resources before they can get water service.



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