



Town Bulletin #6
February 2011

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The Continuing Saga of
Setting Water Rates

Why do Star Valley Ranch Water Fees appear “So Expensive”?

1. Most water service districts or towns have been paying fees for a long time, *it is “pay now”, we have gone to long thinking “pay later”.*
2. We, as Association members, never directly paid for water, *compared to nothing they may seem high.*
3. The Association never had the extra funds to invest in major repairs, maintenance or investments in the water infrastructure. We have already invested about \$8,000,000.00 to date. Although our grants have ranged from 50% to 90%, we must repay the loan portion of the project. *Paying for everything at once may appear as high rates.*
4. If you compare our rates to what they could have been without the grants, *they would be three times higher.*
5. Relative to other Towns who have been paying as you go, *our rates may NOT seem so high.*
6. The Town’s water system requires several significant and costly improvements to make the system adequate and safe, *thus raising the cost.*
7. Facts are;
 - a. The Town is maintaining over 34 miles of pipes servicing approximately 1000 taps.
 - b. The Town has homes and residents on every part of the system.
 - c. Therefore, the entire system must be improved and maintained.

Considering the improvement costs to the system, our rates are very inexpensive.

What Should We Expect?

- 1. Base Fees: These fees should cover the fixed costs of the system. Those that are needed to ensure you have water when you need it regardless of whether you use any water or not. Most of our costs fall in this category. We will see significantly higher base fees over the next couple of years.

- 2. Use Fees: These fees should cover the variable costs associated with the operation of the system. This part of the billing has the most unknowns. This rate is based on the anticipated gallons used. We have very little actual data at this time. Our plans are to a charge for each gallon of water used based on a constant fixed rate per gallon. Our meters are calibrated to measure to the fraction of a gallon and read out to the nearest 10 gallons. We anticipated this fee to increase over the next few years but should have less of an increase than the base fees.

- 3. System Development Fees (connection fees) will continue to rise over time. The System Development Fee that property owners pay when they request a new water connection is essentially their investment in the system. They are buying into a system to equate to the investment that those of us with water connections have already been paying.

The Mayor and Council have been working to keep the water fees down as low as possible without compromising the water grants we are requesting or have already received. Numerous hours and investigations into water rates have been and will continue to be invested by your Mayor and Council.

We continue to solicit good sound input for our consideration in setting these fees. If you are interested in water rate structures and rate setting? Try the following website:
http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/pdf/dw/publications/ontap/magazine/OTSPSU10_features/Conservation_Rates.pdf

We plan to have our first reading of the fee ordinance in our February Town Hall Meeting.

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This is the 6th edition of the Town Bulletin.

We need some feedback on your acceptance of the method of communication of current events to you.

Please let us know

Is this method of communication beneficial to you?

Has the content been meaningful to you, so far?

Please let us know

Star Valley Ranch Town Council

2010 Objectives and Accomplishments

1. Census
2. Community Wellness & Involvement
3. Communications
4. Domestic Waste Water Program
5. Facilities
6. Financial
7. Grants
8. Planning
9. Public Safety / Security
10. Roads / Water-Operations
11. Water-Development (Culinary)

A copy of a document that has a full narrative of the 2010 Accomplishments is available on our website: www.starvalleyranchwy.org, at Town Hall or upon request, we will either mail or send you an e-mail.

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2011 Goals with Priorities

1. Communication (MPO)
 - ❖ 4th – Enhance Two-way Citizen Communications
2. Community Involvement
3. Economical Development (MPO)
4. Financial
 - ❖ 2nd - Demand Fiscal Responsibility
5. Personnel
 - ❖ 3rd – Develop and Enhance our Town’s Team
6. Planning
7. Project Funding
8. Public Safety (MPO)
9. Public Works (MPO)
 - ❖ 6th - Maintain our Roads
10. Waste Water Program (MPO)
11. Water-Development (Culinary) (MPO)
 - ❖ 1st - Safeguard our Water’s Quality
 - ❖ 5th - Continue to move towards an adequate Water System

MPO = Master Plan Objective
❖ = Top Priorities

TSVR Planning and Zoning Board

The Town of Star Valley Ranch Planning and Zoning Board approved 15 building permits in 2010. Four new residences in the Town were permitted in 2010; only two new residences were permitted in 2009. This year the Board approved three permit extensions and re-permitted an unfinished foreclosed residence whose permit had expired. The down economy at the national level continues to be felt locally as only 15 permits were issued in 2010 while 35 permits were issued by the Board in 2009.

In 2011, the TSVR Planning and Zoning Board will meet in Town Hall at 5 PM on the first and third Wednesday of each month. The public is invited to attend all regularly scheduled Planning and Zoning Board meetings. The Board's consideration of permit applications, variances, and public input is normally scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm. Members of the public who have an interest in a building permit or any other Planning and Zoning matter are especially encouraged to attend Board meetings.

The Town of Star Valley Ranch and the TSVR Planning & Zoning Board remind the public of the need to obtain a building permit for new building construction or any construction that involves exterior or structural modifications to their residence. The Town Code also requires permits for building driveways and fences. **Members of the public should contact Town Hall before starting any construction project to determine if a permit is required.**

The Planning and Zoning Board has completed a comprehensive review of the Town's Building Construction and Alteration Permit Process. As a result, some changes have been made to the building permit application packet that will provide the public with better and more complete information on how to obtain a building permit. The Board believes that information provided in the updated permit application packet will simplify the permitting process for the public and help insure timely, appropriate action is taken on building permit applications.

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Association Corner

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Historic DCC&R Revisions Vote Has Begun

Star Valley Ranch Association's (SVRA's) current DCC&Rs allow the membership to make changes only every 20 years, so for the first time in two decades, proposed revisions to the DCC&Rs have been mailed to all members. If you have not received your packet with RETURN-FAST – WIN CASH in red on the envelope, please notify the SVRA Office at svrawy@silverstar.com at 307 883 2669.

Because a large and rapid return is of utmost importance (current DCC&Rs require 70% of the membership's approval) four incentive cash drawings will begin on Feb. 19th. Rules are in the packet or on the website www.svrawy.com.

Your encouragement to friends and family who are members of the Association is critical. If each member persuades one or two other members to cast their vote, we will have the large turnout necessary to give direction to the Board for the future.

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