







BexarMet Board of Directors Approves Increase to Theft of Service Penalty for New Construction

At their February 27, 2006 meeting, the BexarMet Board of Directors acted to reduce the tremendous increase in theft of water service experienced in the rapidly expanding service areas within the BexarMet umbrella. It is common for developers and contractors to connect directly to BexarMet curb stops and begin using water for construction of the project before opening an account and paying for the water they are using. The old penalty for these "straight connections" was \$100 per occurrence and hardly a deterrent. Under the new Theft of Service Penalty for New Construction, the penalty is increased to **\$1000 per occurrence**. Under the new rule, all straight connections will be broken or severed and the curb stop will be locked closed until a proper water service account is opened. BexarMet must report unaccounted-for water losses to the Edwards Aquifer Authority and to the Texas Water Development Board each year and these types of theft cause our audits to show unfavorable results. The straight connection penalty of \$100 for established customers remains the same, although the second occurrence of a straight connection at the same address results in a \$250 fine and a crimped service. Further violations will result in a removed service, requiring the resident to establish a new service and pay all of the required fees to do so. This new penalty takes effect on February 28, 2006.

Examples of Straight Connections*

 <p>Meter with Register Removed</p>	 <p>PVC Pipe Connected to Curb Stop</p>	 <p>PVC Straight Connection "Blank"</p>
 <p>PVC Connection with Shut Off Valve</p>	 <p>PVC Pipe Across the Ground</p>	 <p>Metal Pipe "Blank" with Taped Cutout</p>
<p>*All of these straight connections were locked to prevent further theft until a proper account was opened and a meter set in place.</p>		