

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“City of Norfolk Good on Water”

It's a familiar sight- the leaves on the potted geraniums are wilting. Many lawns are losing their green lush look and are turning brown. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows that Madison County is again officially in a drought. Still, Dennis Watts, Water and Sewer Director for the City of Norfolk, is confident in the amount of water the City has available to residents.

“We're still in pretty good shape. Though the well water levels are down two feet lower than they were this time last year, in 2006 after the dry years of 2002-2004, they were even lower. The City has 13 wells with the capacity to pump 14.2 million gallons so we have ample water,” Watts said.



Last July, during one of the most widespread droughts in the country, Norfolk citizens were regularly using about 10 million gallons of water per day. On one of the hottest days of this summer so far, July 20, the usage was at 9.5 million gallons. In the winter, the average use is about 3 million gallons of water per day.

Watts noted that a rainy 2013 spring brought down water demand in the city in June as Norfolk residents used about 22% less water this year than they did in June 2012. Since there hasn't been much rain in Norfolk this summer, the use in July is up 13% higher than what it was in July 2012.

“We watch the water levels carefully and as of right now we have no thoughts of rationing water. We're in good shape yet,” Watts said.

Data is sent every few minutes from each City well to a central computer telling how much water is being pumped from that well. The static water level from three select wells is also continuously sent to a computer at the west water plant. At least once every two weeks, water plant employees will go to each well and use a drawdown gauge to measure the static water level.

The City also has the capability of storing five million gallons of water. Usually throughout the summer months the water department flushes out the 1,245 fire hydrants in the city. With a two million gallon water storage tank out of commission for a few weeks this spring, it was thought that it'd be best to wait until next year to flush the fire hydrants.

Watts adds that although the city has a good water supply, it's always a good practice to use water as needed and not waste it.

“We're fortunate to have had supportive City of Norfolk mayors and city council members through the years who made abundant clean water for residents a priority. Now it's the citizens' responsibility to use it wisely,” Watts said.

Water Use Tips-

- ◆ Use water saving devices in your shower and toilet.
- ◆ Adjust your sprinkler so that it doesn't water the sidewalk, house or street.
- ◆ Water in the early morning or evening when the weather is cooler and the water doesn't evaporate as quickly.
- ◆ When buying new appliances, choose those with cycle and load adjustment options to save water.
- ◆ Shorten your shower by a minute or two and save 150 gallons of water per month.