

## **DETECTIVES IN INDIAN WELLS VALLEY**

There are some detectives here in the Indian Wells Valley – our customers. And they're doing the kind of job Sherlock Holmes would be proud of.

From time to time, the Indian Wells Valley Water District receives phone calls regarding questions and/or concerns about water quality at a home or business. We take each one seriously and value this kind of communication. For one thing, it helps us continually improve our service. For another, it assists in uncovering potential trouble spots in our system which we can then attend to with a minimum investment of time and money – a stitch in time, so to speak.

It's no secret that parts of the pumping and distribution infrastructure in place here are aging – something our system has in common with thousands of others throughout the United States. Locally, the 1920s and 1940s were both periods of significant population expansion. As more people settled here, the many small water systems that had been springing up throughout the Valley drilled new wells and installed more pipelines to stay abreast of increasing demand. Often, water lines from the different entities crossed one another and one company had no idea where another company's pipes and valves were located – a difficult situation especially during an emergency.

When the Water District was officially incorporated in 1955, the first Board of Directors began buying up these smaller agencies so that one cohesive system could be fashioned, making maintenance, repair and new construction much easier. And since that time, the IWVWD has practiced an extensive routine of replacing older mainlines and servicing valves over and above its installation activities.

Even with this diligent program in place, occasionally water quality and/or pressure issues are reported to us by our customers. Of course, our crews are available to handle these situations quickly and efficiently – seven days a week in case of an emergency. But I thought it might be informative to outline a couple of common concerns and give some background on their causes and fixes.

### **Milky Water/Fizzing Water**

Usually, the reason for white, milky or fizzing tap water is the presence of air in the lines. This harmless condition can result from such things as low main line pressure, a recent shut down of a nearby main, or “cascading” water in wells - due to a small hole in the casing, for example. Air can also be introduced into your water as it flows through your home or business's pipes. The procedure we use to handle this complaint involves checking the water pressure at the consumer's premises, flushing incoming lines and nearby hydrants if indicated, checking air valves and advising our customers to flush their faucets. There are no adverse health affects from the presence of air bubbles in drinking water.

## Discolored or “Rusty” Water

If only one customer in a distribution area makes this complaint on any one day, the problem most likely lies within his or her home or business. This can be the result of old galvanized iron plumbing, as iron corrosion can turn water red or yellow. Of course, we conduct an investigation to pinpoint the cause – just as we do if we receive several phone calls about this occurrence from a particular area. In the case of “rusty” water, we determine the cause – which can involve changes or activities in the distribution system or even damage to pipes by construction work – and then inform our consumers of the findings. Our crews flush relevant main lines, using nearby fire hydrants or “blow-offs” at the ends of main lines – as you might find in a cul-de-sac.

Note: You should be aware that since the water supply falls under the regulation of the Department of Health Services, we regularly take and test nearly a thousand samples a year from throughout our system to ensure our water meets or exceeds all health standards.

The District also receives occasional queries regarding low or high pressure. In this situation, our crews check the pressure at the nearest fire hydrant as well as at a hose bib outside the home or business. We have found over the years that in the absence of a detectable problem on our side of the hookup, low pressure, especially in irrigation systems, can often be traced to a build-up of sand in our customers’ drip irrigation systems, screens or faucet aerators. A thorough cleaning of the sprinklers usually fixes the problem.

We at the Water District value our relationship with our customers and our reputation here in the Indian Wells Valley. Our friendly, knowledgeable and well trained crews are here to assist you in an emergency any time of the day or night. If you ever have a question or concern about your water service or quality, I urge you to contact us so that we can identify and rectify the problem as quickly as possible. We appreciate your interest and communication and, with your input, will continue to provide high quality water at the lowest possible price now and for generations to come.