

## MARCH IS GROUNDWATER AWARENESS MONTH

Experts estimate that 95 percent of this planet's available and accessible fresh water is located underground.

In the Indian Wells Valley, our sole source of drinking water is our aquifer – a natural underground area of the earth saturated with water and/or sufficiently permeable to transmit water. If you think of a sponge made of sand, gravel and clay, you can picture that water flows easily through gravel, not quite as easily through sand – which is more densely packed – and that it would take water a long time to permeate clay. That is why ancient man crafted drinking vessels from clay and why you might sip your morning coffee from a similarly made cup.

Because of these unique properties, you can see that once a hazardous substance enters an underground water supply, getting it out is almost always an expensive and complex proposition. It is therefore important to take precautions whenever working with chemicals, pesticides, antifreeze, paint thinner, oil, etc. to ensure our water source remains pristine.

Here are some simple and important rules:

- 1) Never dispose of chemicals by flushing them down the toilet, tossing them down the drain or emptying them on the ground. **NOTE:** This is also true of prescription medication.
- 2) Only use pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides in recommended amounts.
- 3) Try handling chemicals over cement to avoid runoff from accidental spills.
- 4) For those of you with septic tanks, have them cleaned and/or serviced by a professional.

Another great way of protecting our drinking water is to use it as efficiently as possible. At the upcoming Home and Leisure Show, scheduled for March 29-30 at the fairgrounds, the Indian Wells Valley Water District will be handing out water efficient showerheads, hose nozzles, irrigation gauges, kitchen faucet aerators and refillable water bottles. Our booth will also feature do-it-yourself plumbing guides, gorgeous Xeriscape plant guides and watering guides specifically designed for the high desert as well as many fun treats for the young ones – and so much more! We invite you and your whole family to stop by and pick up these free informational materials and water conservation items.

And if you ever have questions or concerns about your water here in the Valley, contact Water District offices at 375-5086. We are here to serve you.