



Public Information Division

Anthony Wilson, Public Information Officer
72 W. College Ave. | Office: 325.481.2727 | Cell: 325.234.0014
anthony.wilson@cosatx.us

For immediate release
Sept. 26, 2018

City seeking water customers who earned conservation discounts

The Water Utilities Department is seeking to refund \$284,138 to 25,031 water customers who did not receive conservation discounts they have earned since 2009.

The average credit owed is \$11.35 per customer. In total, 14,225 customers with active accounts are owed \$197,557. Another 10,806 non-active account holders are owed \$86,581. Active customers will be credited the amount they are due during their next monthly billing cycle. The names of former water customers who earned discounts are published at cosatx.us/WaterConservation, along with information about how they can claim their credits.

Water customers earned a conservation discount up to \$3.32 for each month from 2009 to the present in which they used no more than 3,000 gallons. The credits were not received because of a coding error in the water billing system.

“We apologize to our customers for this oversight and understand the frustrations this news will cause,” Water Utilities Director Allison Strube said. “We are doing and will do all we can to return what is rightfully theirs to our current and former customers. At the same time, we are taking measures to strengthen incentives to conserve water and to ensure this does not happen again.”

Some customers who had received the conservation discount contacted the Water Utilities Department after noticing the credit was missing from their monthly bill. During their investigation, City officials unearthed an error in a handwritten, 48-page computer code that a former City employee created in 2006 to determine who receives the discount.

The City has begun the process of refunding active customers. If an account closes prior to all the credits being used, the remaining balance will be returned to the customer.

“We encourage any customer who has questions about this to contact us,” Strube said. “We are trying to be as open and transparent about this as possible. Again, we apologize for this mishap and are willing to work overtime to make the customers who were impacted whole again financially.”

The Water Utilities Department plans to soon present to the City Council for its consideration an ordinance that would reward customers who actively conserve water.

“Many of the customers who earn the discount currently are not actively seeking to do so,” Strube said. “They manage to earn the credit simply by circumstance, such as the case with a realtor briefly needing water service for an inspection or a single person living alone in a home. We want to create a robust conservation program that encourages our customers to actively take steps to save water.”

###