

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

September 24, 2020

- 1. Damaged Veterans' Head Stones** – Thank you to our excellent police department who has successfully located and cited the individual responsible for the destruction. The city will pursue restitution for the damage caused.

Also, a big thank you to Chris Waite and his team for their work to rectify the damage. Here is a brief update from Chris on the division's process of replacing the damaged head stones:

- Between me, my two volunteers and the staff at Billings Monument, we have compiled a majority of the Veterans' information in order to submit the replacement applications to the VA.
- I intend to submit the applications by Friday if possible.
- Even with an expedited process, we may not get to set the stones before the winter weather arrives. At the latest, they will be installed in the spring of 2021 when weather is conducive to setting stones.
- I am receiving estimates for replacing our entrance monument along with costs to install the stones.
- The VA has committed to replacing the stones at no charge to us. If insurance money from the driver is available, they will seek reimbursement.
- The National Cemetery in Laurel has offered to loan us temporary markers to place at the stones that were completely destroyed until replacements are installed. I imagine we will receive those next week.

- 2. Budget Books** - FY21 budget books are printed and available in Council mailboxes at City Hall. Electronic versions can be found online at <https://ci.billings.mt.us/475/Budgets-Financial-Reports>

- 3. Utility Bills** - As per the discussion at the September 8, 2020 Council work session, Public Works is looking into the costs of providing tier information (residential only) on the utility bills and reporting in gallons rather than Ccfs. Once we have these costs, staff will report back to Council. For a reference point, the cost to provide the amount of each bill going towards the west end reservoir/plant project was \$11,200.

We invested in WaterSmart a couple of years ago which greatly enhances the customer experience and subsequently, Public Works has been promoting WaterSmart as the tool for those customers looking for more detailed information than can be provided on a bill. Data on WaterSmart is actually reported in gallons. Currently, about 20% of customers have signed up for WaterSmart and Public Works will soon be rolling out a media campaign to attempt to increase that percentage. In the past, messages on the bills have proven to be ineffective and the following tools will be utilized to get our messages:

- Media spot with Q2
- Facebook notifications
- Pop up messages on the Public Works website
- Snipe envelopes (messaging on the utility bill envelopes)

A packet of information is attached for those who have not or cannot (Heights Water District customers) use WaterSmart that highlights some of the functionality of the software.

Please find the WaterSmart PowerPoint attached.

- 4. International City Managers Association (ICMA) virtual conference** – Though this year's conference couldn't be held in Toronto – the city administrators and assistant administrators from Belgrade, Kalispell, Bozeman, Great Falls and Billings participated together in Great Falls. This year's conference focused on global and national issues related to race relations.

We had an excellent panel discussion with Great Falls community members representing law enforcement, the Little Shell and Assiniboine Tribes and an African American pastor. The panel members shared their stories (good and bad) of growing up, living, working and raising their families in Montana. One of the primary questions I walked away with is: What are we doing, at the neighborhood level, to promote relationship building among neighbors. We tend to fear those we do not know and empathize with those we understand.

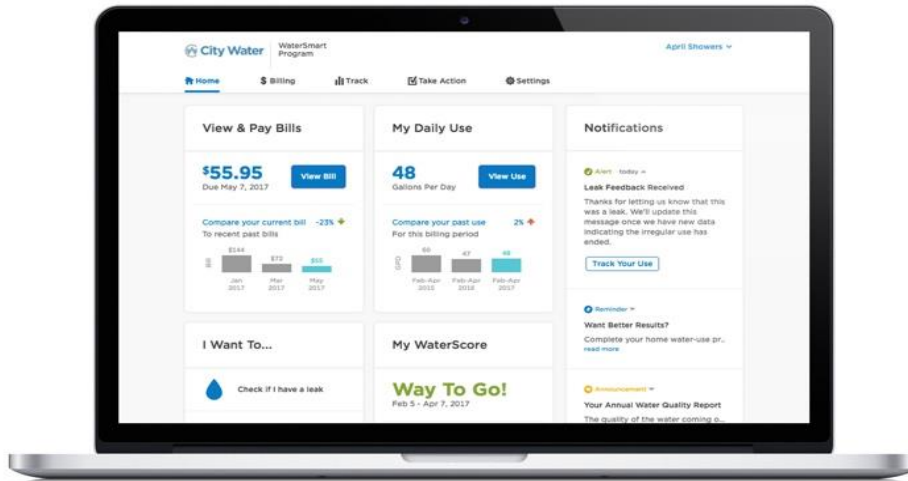
Have a great weekend.

City of Billings

WaterSmart

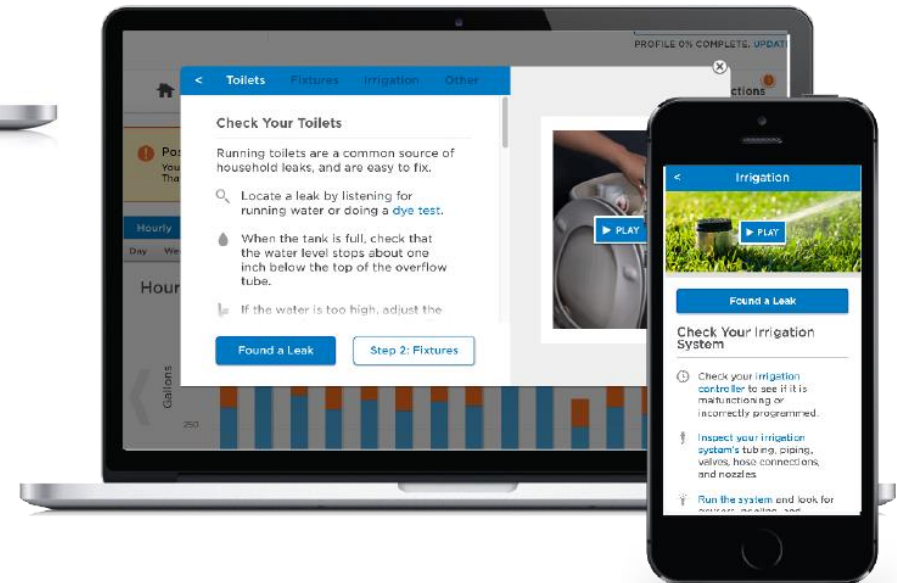
The Customer Experience

24 x 7 ACCESS TO CUSTOMER INFORMATION



Customer Portal provides water use information and tips, bill information, payment, forms and more

Customer Initiated Self-Service Leak Resolution, Bill Explainer & Forms help customers to handle common issues online



Detailed water utility information at your fingertips

The screenshot shows a customer portal for the WaterSmart Program. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Public Works' logo, 'WaterSmart Program', language selection ('English'), account type ('Accounts'), a dropdown menu showing '355 Waterton Way, SFR', and a 'Logout' link. Below this is a main navigation menu with 'Home', 'Billing', 'Track', 'Take Action', and 'Settings'. The user's service address is '355 Waterton Way, Billings MT 59102' and the account number is '161410'. The dashboard is divided into several sections: 'View & Pay Bills' showing a current bill of \$136.48 due on Sep 18, 2020, with a 36% increase compared to recent bills; 'My Daily Use' showing 796 Gallons Per Day, a 9% decrease from the previous period; 'Notifications' with reminders and announcements; 'I Want To...' with options like 'Understand a high bill', 'Sign up for unusual use alerts', and 'Check if I have a leak'; 'My WaterScore' with a 'Take Action' alert for Jul 18 - Aug 17, comparing the user's 796 GPD to an efficient 128 GPD and an average 265 GPD; and 'Recommended' with a tip about mulching.

View & Pay Bills

\$136.48 [View Bill](#)
Due Sep 18, 2020

Compare your current bill to recent past bills. **36%** ↑

Bill	Amount
Jul 2020	\$86
Aug 2020	\$100
Sep 2020	\$136

My Daily Use

796 [View use](#)
Gallons Per Day

Compare your past use for this billing period. **-9%** ↓

Period	GPD
Jul-Aug 2018	603
Jul-Aug 2019	872
Jul-Aug 2020	796

Notifications

- Reminder: Enroll in Alerts. Protect your property and get pe... [read more](#)
- Announcement: Internet Explorer Not Supported. Microsoft is encouraging custome... [read more](#)
- Announcement: Add a shortcut to the Portal on your mobile phone. Did you know that you can add a ... [read more](#)
- Announcement: Get help understanding if your bill is higher than normal. Evaluate your bill, online, any tim... [read more](#)

I Want To...

- [Understand a high bill](#)
- [Sign up for unusual use alerts](#)
- [Check if I have a leak](#)
- [Learn where I use the](#)

My WaterScore


Take Action
Jul 18 - Aug 17

You used more water than similar households.

Who am I compared to?

Category	Value
Efficient	128 GPD
Average	265 GPD
You	796 GPD

Recommended

 Mulch under shrubs, bushes, and trees

Daily Use

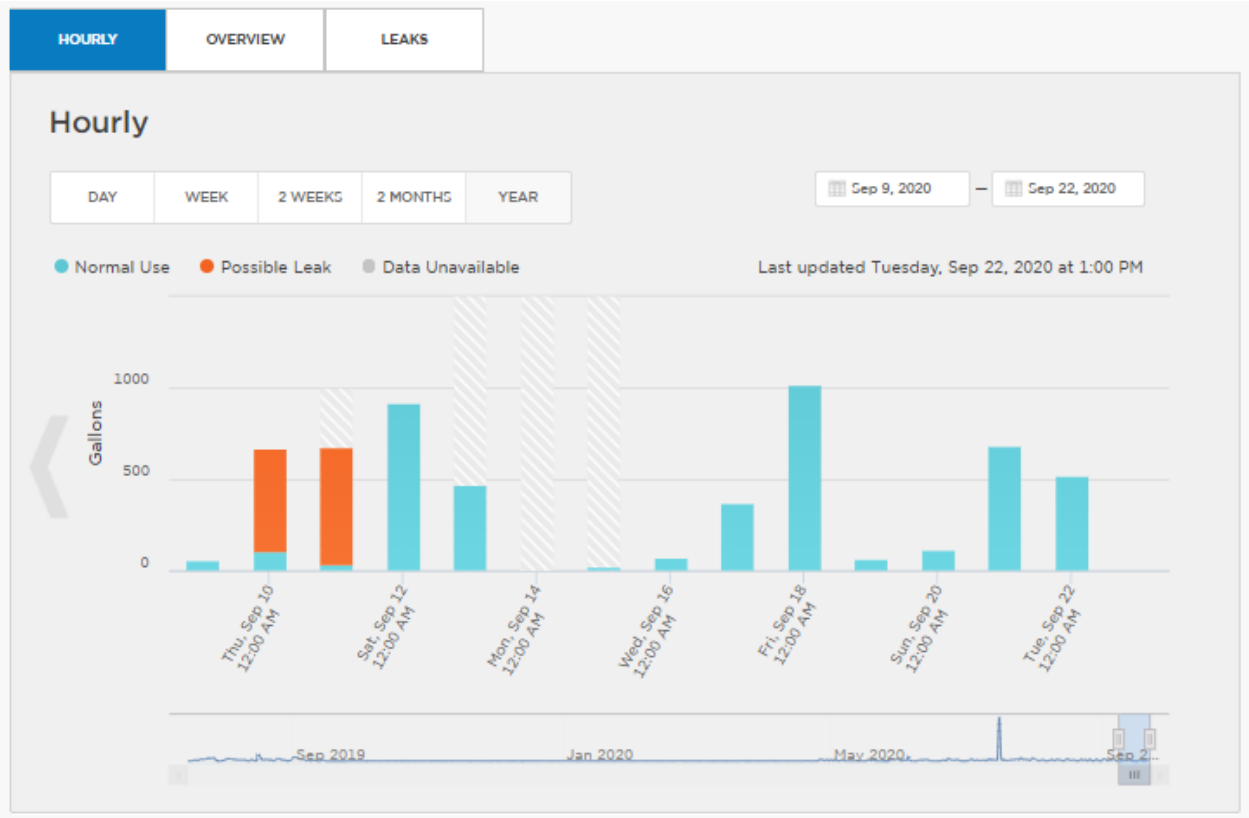
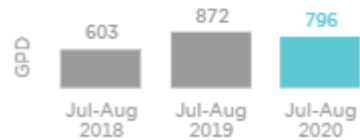
My Daily Use

796

Gallons Per Day

[View use](#)

[Compare your past use for this billing period.](#) -9% ▼



Customer Notifications

A variety of notifications are available through WaterSmart including:

- *Leak Alerts*
- *High Use Notifications*
- *Bill Forecast Notifications*
- *Unplanned Use Notifications*

The customer is able to customize their water utility experience to meet their needs.

Leak Alerts

! Possible Intermittent Burst Leak

You used 1,041 gallons in 14 hours.
This has happened a few times before.

Investigate possible leak

All registered customers will begin receiving leak alerts beginning in October, 2020.

HOURLY OVERVIEW LEAKS

Hourly

DAY

● Normal

Gallons

! Possible Burst Leak

You used 1,201 gallons of water in 14 hours.

Start checking for leaks

Already Found a Leak?

Let us know what it was.

Found a leak

Changes to Your Property?

Some property features use large amounts of water and can look like a leak.

Not a leak

Sep 2019 Jan 2020 May 2020 Sep 2020

High Use, Bill Forecast & Unplanned Use

Communication Preferences

High Use Notifications
You will be notified when your daily use is over 2X times your normal seasonal use.

1X 3X 5X

**Typical Seasonal Use: 473 GPD*

Email
 Text Message
 Voice Message

Bill Forecast Notifications
You will be notified if your use in the current period is on track to exceed \$50 more than your normal seasonal bill. We will only contact you a maximum of once per billing period.

more than your typical bill

Email
 Text Message
 Voice Message

Unplanned Use Notifications
For Account #161410, you will be notified when use from your property exceeds your Daily Threshold setting.

Daily Threshold (Gallons)

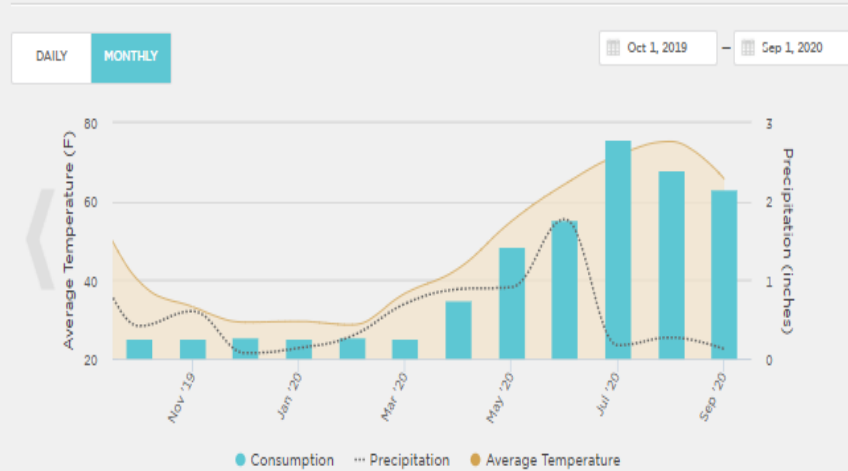
Email
 Text Message
 Voice Message

Starts on Ends on

Never

Seasonal & Long-Term Use

Your Seasonal Use

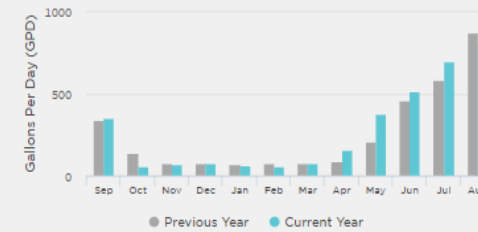


Strong seasonal use and irrigation

You use **more than five times** the water in the summer than in the winter, most likely due to irrigation.

Ways to save

Comparing Your Use: Last 24 Months

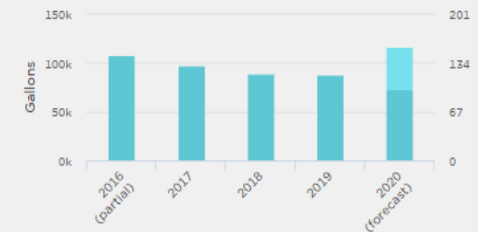


Increasing use

You used about **10% more water** during the most recent twelve-month period compared to the prior twelve-month period.

Set use notifications

Tracking Your Long-Term Use



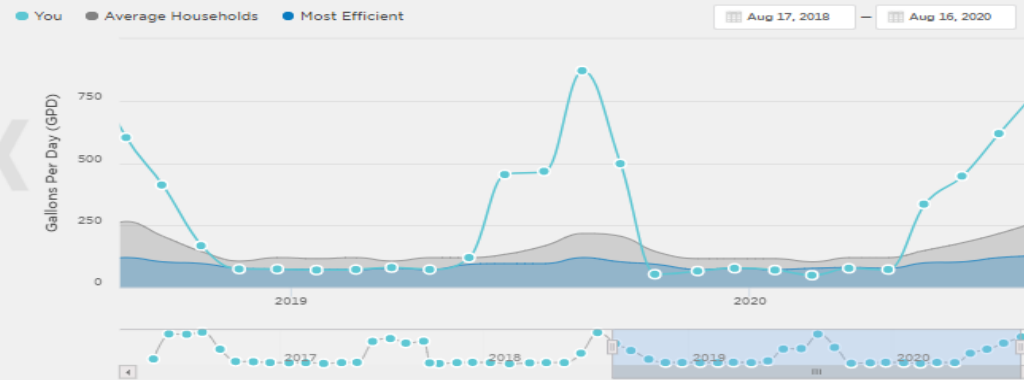
Not as efficient as last year

You're tracking to use about **33% more** than last year.

Ways to save

HOURLY OVERVIEW LEAKS

Overview









Find Cost Savings Based on Customer Needs

Recommended (6) Outdoor (35) Indoor Resources (7) All (79)

Recommended Actions

Selected based on your [Household Profile](#).

Gallons Per Day (GPD) ⓘ

<p>Tree Watering Advice</p>  <p>Read more</p> <p>Savings up to... 138 GPD \$295/yr</p>	<p>Choose low water-use plants</p>  <p>Read more</p> <p>Savings up to... 41 GPD \$89/yr</p>	<p>Upgrade Your Irrigation Control...</p>  <p>Read more</p> <p>Savings up to... 31 GPD \$67/yr</p>
<p>Water at Dawn or Dusk</p>  <p>Read more</p> <p>Savings up to... 18 GPD \$39/yr</p>	<p>Minimize Fertilizer Use</p>  <p>Read more</p> <p>Savings up to... 13 GPD \$28/yr</p>	<p>Mulch under shrubs, bushes, an...</p>  <p>Read more</p>

Access Billing Information



WaterSmart
Program

English

Logout

Home

Billing

Track

Take Action

Settings

SERVICE ADDRESS

638 Alderson Ave, Billings MT 59101

ACCOUNT NUMBER

236352

Payment

View Bill

Pay Bill

AutoPay

Payment Methods

Scheduled Payments

Evaluate Bill

Compare Bill

Forecast Bill

View Bill

Bill Amount

\$112.60

DUE SEP 25, 2020

Bill date: Sep 10, 2020

Account Number: 236352

Pay Bill