

Spring/Summer 2025

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Water lines

News you can use from your Sunnyslope Water District*Coming soon!*

More water storage for dry years

Construction is now underway to increase surface water storage and improve water resiliency for Sunnyslope Water District, and the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista.

Thanks to three consecutive wet winters, the Hollister urban area received a 75 percent imported surface water allocation from the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) in 2025 and 2024, on top of a 100 percent allocation in 2023. These large allocations were a welcome respite after the zero allocation we received in 2022, and 25 percent allocation in 2021, which led to mandatory conservation rules.

To mitigate the ongoing effects of climate change and drought, the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) is constructing a new Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP) which will store excess surface water from large allocations for future use during dry years. ADRoP includes expansion of the West Hills Water Treatment Plant from 4.5 to 6.7 million gallons per day capacity, construction of five aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells, and pipeline to connect the

wells to the plant and water distribution system. The project will provide an additional 2,700 acre-feet of surface water storage annually.

"With more local storage, future droughts will have less impact on our water supply and water quality," said Sunnyslope General Manager Drew Lander. "That will save money and help keep water rates (Cont. on page 3)



Construction is underway at the West Hills Water Treatment Plant so we can treat and store more excess surface water for use during dry years.



¿Prefieres tu newsletter en español?

Por favor, visite sunnyslopewater.org
y haga clic en el enlace del
boletín para ver o descargar.
¡Muchas gracias!

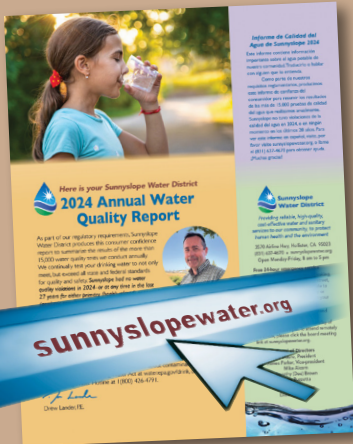
**Win a \$100
gift card when
you sign up
for paperless
or autopay!**



Get two chances to win when you sign up for both! Just click on the contest icon at sunnyslopewater.org to enroll in paperless billing, and you'll be automatically entered to win a \$100 gift card to La Catrina Mexican Grill restaurant!

We congratulate our latest winners, who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you to our many conscientious customers who have signed up for paperless billing to save time and money, and help keep water rates down!

**Get the facts on
your drinking water!**



Sunnyslope's Annual Water Quality Report was recently mailed to all customers. You can also access it online in Spanish and English by clicking the link on our home page.



*Providing reliable, high-quality,
cost-effective water and sanitary services
to our community, to protect human
health and the environment*

3570 Airline Hwy, Hollister, CA 95023
(831) 637-4670 • sunnyslopewater.org
Open Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

Free 24-hour emergency service:

If you think your water meter is leaking, or you see water gushing in the street, it is an emergency. Do not hesitate to contact us at (831) 637-4670, day or night! Our on-call staff will return your call immediately.

The public is welcome to attend Sunnyslope Water District board meetings, held every fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:15 pm. To attend remotely via Zoom, please click the board meeting link at sunnyslopewater.org.

Board of Directors

Mike Alcorn, President
Jerry Buzzetta, Vice-president
Dorothy (Dee) Brown
Orlando Martinez
Ed Mauro

General Manager

Drew Lander, P.E.



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Stepping up with electric step vans

Thanks to a \$200,000 grant from Monterey Bay Air Resources District, Sunnyslope Water has purchased two new electric step vans to help us meet our environmental sustainability goals. The new vans protect air quality with zero emissions, and save money with lower fuel and maintenance costs.

The Chevrolet vans were purchased from a local dealership and included a significant rebate, which is being used along with remaining grant money to customize the van interiors for maximum productivity. The electric vehicles are recharged daily from the solar array on the roof of the Sunnyslope Water administrative building. To compound environmental benefits, we have removed an old diesel pickup truck from our fleet, as part of our grant requirements.



Water Maintenance Operators Raul Azcona (left) and Abraham Romero check out Sunnyslope's new zero-emission step vans.

Cleaner, safer, more efficient

"The vans have many other benefits besides lowering our carbon footprint," said Sunnyslope Water Superintendent Jose J. Rodriguez. "Before, our technicians had to perform repairs out on the street, in high traffic areas and harsh conditions like intense heat, wind, and rain. Now they have a workshop on wheels, a protected space where they can focus on the task at hand with all tools and hardware within arm's reach." The larger vans also carry more supplies, which saves time and energy because staff do not have to stop working and drive back to base to restock.

"Our field mechanics are grateful to have this new transport streamlining their workflow," said Jose. "The vans are our workhorse vehicles, out in the field every day as we replace meter boxes, perform maintenance, and respond to customer emergencies."

Have questions about your water service?

Sunnyslope Customer Service is here to assist you. We can help you set up and navigate your SmartWater online portal, update your autopay bank details, explain how your bill is calculated, set up payment plans, and much more. Please feel free to call us at (831) 637-4670.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP! Call Sunnyslope Customer Service to reach one of our friendly representatives (from left): Valeria Prado, Account Technician; Melissa Campagna, Billing and Public Relations Specialist; and Taya Bravo, Account Technician.

Friendly reminder:

Keep meter boxes accessible

Most water meter boxes in Sunnyslope Water District are located in front of the house near the curb, or near the sidewalk on the customer's property. Regardless of location, it is important to keep your box clear and free of obstructions so that Sunnyslope personnel can perform maintenance, and respond to water emergencies without delay.

Please do not plant trees, bushes, or any plants nearby that could block access or grow into the meter box. Trim existing plants within a 3-foot perimeter, and prune overhanging branches. Grass should be trimmed to the edge of the meter box. Also check that your box is not buried under soil or wood chips, or obstructed by hoses, lawn ornaments, trash bins, vehicles, trailers, etc. *Thank you for helping us ensure reliable water service. For questions about your meter box, please call (831) 637-4670.*



Jorge Mendoza installs a new radio read meter, which gives customers detailed online access to their water use data (see back page WaterSmart article).



Annexation update

Safe water for everyone

We're happy to report that Best Road Mutual Water Company customers are now connected to the Sunnyslope water system. Residents in the Heatherwood, Fox Hills Estates, and Fischer Hills Estate neighborhoods had previously been relying on bottled water due to high arsenic levels in their well water, but now they are receiving safe, reliable tap water that meets all state quality regulations.

Sunnyslope administered a \$2.2 million grant from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to build the project. The grant came from DWR's Urban Community Drought Relief Program, which helps communities with failing wells. We are also administering a \$13.6 million DWR grant to extend service to the Tres Pinos Water District and the Stonegate water system, which have similar issues. These annexations are currently in the permitting process, with construction slated for spring 2026.

More water storage *(Cont. from page 1)*

lower. Also, the wells won't lose water to evaporation and infiltration as does our local San Justo Reservoir."

Sunnyslope will treat the surface water before it is injected into the wells, so ADRoP will be able to provide high quality drinking water even if treatment plants are not in operation. The stored water will require only final chlorination before delivery to customers. In addition, having more stored surface water will allow us to use less hard groundwater during drought, which enhances drinking water quality and helps conserve our groundwater basin.

Slated for completion by November 2026, the project received a \$11.5 million grant from the California Department of Water Resources for initial phases, and SBCWD anticipates further grant funding of \$30 million.

"The ongoing partnership and cooperative efforts of local water agencies in San Benito and Hollister was instrumental in making this project happen," said Drew. "Working together, we can meet the water needs of our communities now and into the future."

**You ask;
we answer!**



"I had a water leak. What can I do about my bill?"

Leaks and accidental water use can happen to anyone. If you discover and repair a water leak, or mistakenly leave the water running, you may be eligible for a water bill adjustment. To qualify, your bill must be at least \$100 more than prior year bills for the same time period, or, the water used must be at least 50% more than your normal previous usage at the same time of year. We will calculate how much extra water was consumed, and that amount will be charged the lower tier rate. The credit will be applied to your bill.

To see if you qualify, you can check your billing history on your WaterSmart account page, or call us for help. You must fill out and submit a written Leak Adjustment Request Form (downloadable at sunnywater.org) within 30 days after the end of the billing period in which the leak was repaired. Credits may be given for up to two billing periods. Bill adjustments for leaks outside a customer's control (such as a burst pipeline) are allowed once every five years. Avoidable leaks are allowed a one-time credit.

Each leak adjustment request receives full and fair consideration. If you need help with your credit request, please call our customer service representatives at (831) 637-4670. Customers should continue to make normal bill payments to avoid late fees while their request is being considered. Our service reps can tell you the required minimum payment based on previous consumption.

We are happy to answer any and all questions from our customers. Please contact us at billing@sunnyslopewater.org or (831) 637-4670, and your question may appear in our newsletter!



Tap into your WaterSmart benefits!

Need to pinpoint when a leak started? See if you're using more water than last summer? Or maybe you want to know where you use the most water, or if you use more or less than similar households. Sunnyslope's Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system can answer these questions, and much more.

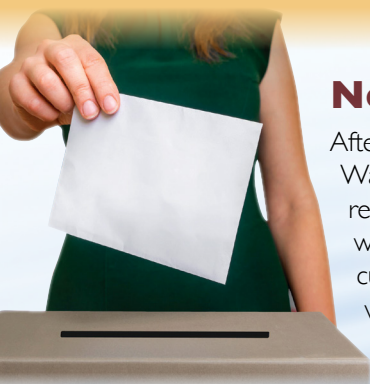
Hour by hour water-use tracking on your account page can help you resolve leaks by pinpointing when they started.

Knowledge is power

With hour-by-hour water usage tracking, customers can gain deep insight into their water consumption patterns to control their water bills. Currently, 75 percent of customer meters are online with the new AMI system, and technicians are in the field every day working to upgrade remaining meters.

To see your data, visit sunnyslopewater.org and sign into your WaterSmart account page. There you can access powerful tools and sign up to receive immediate leak notifications and emergency alerts. You can also set parameters to be notified when you exceed a water usage threshold.

Sunnyslope is committed to improving customer satisfaction and empowering people to take charge of their water consumption. If you need help setting up or navigating your SmartWater account page, please call us at (831) 637-4670.



In the new by-district elections, Sunnyslope customers vote for one board member only.

New Sunnyslope voting districts

After many months of effort and consultation, Sunnyslope Water has adopted five new voting district zones to replace our previous at-large elections, in accordance with California Voting Rights Act requirements. Previously, customers voted for as many candidates as there were vacant board member seats, but now they will only vote for the one board member who represents their voting district. If nobody runs in your voting district, the Board of Directors will appoint a representative. If current and perspective board members live in the same voting district they may run against each other

to fill that district's seat.

We thank everyone who attended our public meetings and gave input during the redistricting process. To view the voting districts map and find out why the election process is changing, please visit sunnyslopewater.org and click on the "Your Vote is Changing" link.

Are you interested in serving on the Sunnyslope board?

Sunnyslope Water District needs candidates to run for next year's November election. If you're passionate about water quality, environmental stewardship, and community service, we encourage you to consider running for office.

If you have questions about Sunnyslope's new by-district election process, or if you want more information about serving on the board, please call (831) 637-4670, or email elections@sunnyslopewater.org.



To receive immediate leak alerts, you must sign up! Please visit sunnyslopewater.org and tap on this icon!

Save water and money:

Get paid to replace your lawn

Our local Water Resources Association San Benito County (WRASBC) is distributing lawn replacement rebates on a first-come, first-served basis. Conserve water and lower your water bill by installing a drought-tolerant landscape. Receive a \$2 rebate for every square foot of lawn you convert, from 200 to 1,000 square feet (\$200-\$2,000).

Free home/yard water survey

Need help adjusting your irrigation system, or suspect you have a leak? Please call the number below for a free home water survey. An expert will check your irrigation controller and help you program it for maximum economy and productivity.



Irrigation hardware rebate

Receive a rebate up to \$100 on qualifying water-wise hose timers, rain sensors, and rotator nozzles.

Free toilet

Bring in your old pre-1992 toilet and receive a free ultra-low-flow toilet.

Toilet rebate

Replace your pre-1992 toilet with an ultra-low-flow model to receive a \$75 rebate.

For more information and application forms, please visit wrasbc.org, and click on "Local Rebates," or contact Jenny at (831) 637-4378, or jcsioarellano@sbcwd.com.

