



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Public Utilities

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City Reports No Sewer Spills in Month of February *Number of sewer spills down significantly in San Diego*

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego had a “No Spill Month” for the month of February 2014. This is only the fourth time the City’s Public Utilities Department has recorded no sewer spills for an entire month. The accomplishment was reported to the California Water Resources Control Board.

“The City’s wastewater collection system is complex and diverse. With more than 3,000 miles of sewer pipelines located throughout the city, sewer spills are bound to happen on occasion,” said Halla Razak, Director of Public Utilities. “The City is committed to reducing the number of spills with an ultimate goal of zero; while an idealistic goal, we’re happy to report we achieved it for February.”

The City has greatly reduced the number of sewer spills from a high in 2000 of 365 spills (an average of one a day) to 45 spills in 2013. So far in 2014 there have been two spills. Most sewer spills are caused by roots from trees and plants blocking sewer lines. Grease buildup in sewer lines is another potential cause for spills. Thus the Department puts great emphasis on programs addressing these two causes with very successful results.

“Reducing the number of sewer spills in San Diego is extremely important for public health and the environment,” Razak said. “I’m very proud of what we’ve accomplished over the last few years in reducing spills and improving the wastewater system in our region.”

In 2001, the City embarked on an aggressive Sewer Spill Reduction Program. All 3,000 miles of the Municipal Sewerage System were cleaned by 2004, and a system-wide maintenance schedule was developed. This included televising and assessing the condition of more than 1,200 miles of the oldest and most problematic sewer lines in the system, appropriately adjusting the cleaning frequencies of these lines based on findings, and increasing the number of miles of sewer lines replaced or rehabilitated from 15 miles to 45 miles per year.

Beginning in 2007, City sewer rates were increased over a four-year period to operate, maintain, repair and upgrade the City’s wastewater system. These rate increases are paying for more than \$585 million of necessary sewer system upgrades throughout San Diego.

The City of San Diego’s Public Utilities Department provides safe, healthful drinking water to the 1.3 million residents of San Diego; and regional wastewater treatment and disposal services for more than 2 million residents of San Diego County. More information is available at www.sandiego.gov/publicutilities

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