



City of Flagstaff

News Release

May 22 2013

For Immediate Release

The City of Flagstaff has experienced a second large water leak at a residential property.

In this latest incident, a property on N. Leroux experienced a 9-million gallon water leak which has generated a bill of \$105,000. The renter at the property was notified of the leak and apparently worked with the property owner to get the leak fixed. Water consumption is back to normal levels at the home; however a secondary structure on the site may be in danger of collapse. City building officials have been directed to inspect the home and the property in an attempt to identify any problems with the ground, foundation and/or the structure. While a bill has been sent, the City has not had a conversation with the renter/account holder about payment arrangements.

This follows a leak at a University Heights home which resulted in a loss of 1.5 million gallons of water totaling more than \$16,000. That leak has been fixed and the property owner is working with his insurance company to pay the bill.

These are unfortunate but important reminders to area homeowners to have pipes and plumbing checked by a licensed professional. This is especially important when there are unusual spikes in water usage, changes in water pressure, standing water/damp areas are noticed on the property, or sinking/changes in the foundation. This is in accordance with the City's Water Conservation Ordinance (7-03-001-0014) "no person shall waste water by allowing water to pool or failing to repair water leaks".

The current process to determine water usage by the City is not completely automated. The current process involves a City employee taking a reading once a month coming back to City Hall and entering that information into a database.

Once the meter reading is entered, an exception report is created within one to two weeks. When there are extremely large spikes in water usage from the previous months reading a staff member is sent to the residence to see if there is a problem with the meter. If the meter is fine and there is no evidence of a leak in the front of the home, but the spike is significant staff will attempt to make contact with someone at the home. If the resident is not home City staff will leave a door hanger notifying them that the City has observed an unusually large read and did not find any issue with the City equipment or City water lines and recommend the home owner/occupant also check water line from the meter

throughout their home and yard. Common problems include a running toilet, dripping faucets, or a broken water line under the house or in the yard.

Currently the City does not have technology that would allow the meter to be read automatically and sent to the database at City Hall which could immediately detect abnormal consumption. The City is currently exploring options for newer technology.

The City is in Water Availability Strategy 1: “Water Awareness that requires all customers to conserve water, in and outside the home, using the best practices available to minimize the wasting of water such as failing to repair water leaks.”

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