

## Instant Hot Water

by Commissioner Robert Peterson



There we were in our new house in Bothell, ready to enjoy the convenience of a modern home. Day two, it was my turn to wash the pots and pans, a required task I didn't really mind. I turned on the hot water in the kitchen and waited and waited for the hot water to arrive. It took forever.

I started doing a little research on the subject of wasted water and energy waiting for the hot water to arrive and discovered that on average a family of four can waste up to 10,000 gallons of water a year just waiting for the water to get hot. Imagine the energy that is wasted; turn-on the hot faucet, drain out the cold water until the hot gets there, use enough water for some small task, then turn it off. The water remaining in the pipe gets cold and the next time you turn on the faucet the process starts over. I like instant hot water and I hate to wait for it to get hot.

A little more research and I came up with the fairly simple solution; recirculating hot water. In my simple version I installed a parallel pipe from the hot water supply at the sink back to the cold water side of my hot

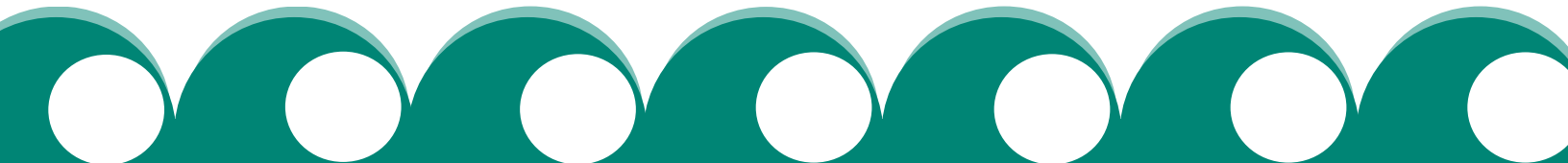
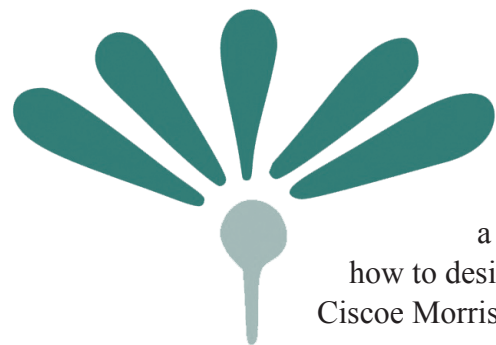
water heater. A simple "Tee" at both ends; a check valve and a small pump at the water heater end, a timer to shut it off at night and I was ready to go. I wrapped both pipes through my crawl space with extra insulation so they wouldn't waste energy. It worked so well that I got hot water out of my kitchen faucet in less than two seconds. Small expense with a big reward.

Home supply stores now have simple kits that can be installed without crawling under the house and cutting into the plumbing as I did. The small circulation pumps use little energy and are installed under the sink that is farthest away from the water heater. The units that I have seen have all of the connections, a built in timer to shut off the pump during times of no use and turn it back on in the morning when hot water is needed. These units claim to provide virtually instant hot water to the whole house.

I suspect the cost to operate the system pump is at about the breakeven point for the hot water that was left to cool in the pipe without the system in the first place. The water not wasted is considerable and the cost of the pump assembly isn't free, approximately \$250. The one drawback is that the cold water may not be as cold as it was right out of the faucet. All in all, in my book that's okay. Instant hot water is still the only way to go. ♦

## The Spring Garden Fair is Coming!

The 2011 Spring Garden Fair is fast approaching. The Fair will be held Saturday, April 30, 2011, at the UW Bothell Campus. There will be informational booths to help answer your difficult gardening questions as well as a plant sale. Master Gardeners and Composters will also be available to share tips on how to design, plant, and maintain a spectacular Water-Wise garden. Featured speakers will be Ciscoe Morris and Meeghan Black. For more information visit [www.springgardenfair.com](http://www.springgardenfair.com). ♦



# Seattle Reducing Fluoride in the Water

On January 7, 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a proposed recommended level of fluoride in drinking water of 0.7 parts per million (ppm). A final recommendation on the fluoride level is expected in the spring of 2011.

Seattle is coordinating with the Washington Department of Health and Public Health-Seattle & King County in responding to this proposal. State and county public health agencies are taking this new information under consideration. In the interim, Seattle will be reducing the fluoride in the water supply to the lower end allowed by current state law, 0.8 ppm. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) acceptable range is 0.8 to 1.3 ppm.

Currently the DOH sets the optimal level of fluoride in drinking water at 1 ppm and the acceptable range as 0.8 to 1.3 ppm. Based on 2009 water quality data, the fluoride content in Seattle's drinking water has averaged about 1.0 ppm, the state's optimal level. Based on the new proposal to lower the optimal fluoride level, on an interim basis, Seattle will be reducing the fluoride in the water supply to the lower end allowed by current state law, 0.8 ppm.

Seattle has been adding fluoride to the drinking water since a referendum vote in 1968 directed Seattle to fluoridate drinking water. Fluoridation of Seattle's water began in 1970. Seattle Public Utilities sells water to 21 wholesale customers (cities and water districts) generally located around Lake Washington. ♦

## NUD Customers Received \$49K in Rebates in 2010

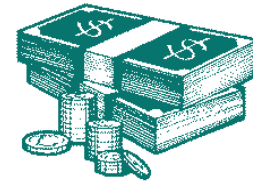
In 2010, 469 of our customers took advantage of the various incentive programs offered by the District and received \$49,000 in rebates. In addition, many also took advantage of the free low-flow shower head exchange program available from the District.

These rebates and water-saving devices are offered to our customers through the Regional 1% Water Conservation Program. The District takes part in the program as a wholesale customer of Seattle Public Utilities. These rebates and free water-saving devices are provided by Seattle Public Utilities. The District pays for the program as part of the wholesale supply contract.

There are a total of four programs for which our customers are eligible:

- WashWise High Efficiency Clothes Washer Program – Depending on the washer you purchase, rebates can range from \$50 to \$100.
- Multi-family Toilet Replacement Program – This \$100 rebate is for replacing an older toilet with a new

water-efficient toilet. New toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush (GPF) while the older toilets use between 2.5 and 5 GPF.



- Water Efficient Irrigation Improvement Program (residential and commercial) – There are rebates for upgrades made to existing systems (\$100-\$450), new systems (\$50) and commercial rebates for both new and old systems.
- Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Efficiency Program (Water Smart Technology and Commercial Pre-Rinse Spray Heads) – These rebates have many categories, from toilets to medical equipment, ranging from \$80 to a maximum of 50% of the project cost.

We hope these programs will encourage all of our customers to take advantage of the great water saving products that are available to help conserve water and cut down on water bills. For a complete listing of all rebates available, go to: [www.savingwater.org/rebates.htm](http://www.savingwater.org/rebates.htm). ♦

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Meetings  
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