

February 2018

waternews



Your source for all things water

SAWS Celebrates Sewer Success With Record-Low Spills

Sanitary sewer overflows, or SSOs, are messy, stinky and inconvenient. But thanks to cleaning crews and ratepayer dollars, San Antonio Water System is making vast improvements in preventing those SSOs from occurring.

In fact, SAWS significantly reduced SSOs in 2017 by 37 percent from the previous year — the lowest number since SAWS entered into an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2013 to improve the city's sewers.

"One of the first things we had to do was televise pipes throughout the city to identify critical areas needing repair," said Jeff Haby, vice president of production and treatment. "(Now we have) a clear map for prioritizing repair and replacement of pipes."

SSOs occur when the flow of wastewater in a sewer is obstructed. The largest sewer spills in 2017 were caused by heavy rain events. But the build-up of debris, grease and roots accounted for the majority of cases.

Under the 2013 EPA agreement, SAWS is investing more than \$1 billion over 10-12 years to reduce sewer spills and maintain sewer infrastructure. SAWS has inspected about 90 percent of the 5,000 miles of sewer pipes citywide.

Numerous projects in trouble-prone areas are already underway, including one near Holbrook Road on the Northeast Side replacing three miles of sewer infrastructure.

About a quarter of the 2018 rate adjustment has been allotted to wastewater service, allowing SAWS to continue repairing and replacing aging sewers.



Learn more about sewer-related construction projects at saws.org/sewer.

It won't be long before toasty temps settle in and your landscape rouses from hibernation. And that means SAWS Spring Bloom is right around the corner!

The free annual event is your prime opportunity to learn about expert gardening and landscape care — all while saving water.

This year's focus will be on landscape design using SAWS WaterSaver coupons. Learn how to create a new



Saturday, March 10
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
SAWS Headquarters
2800 U.S. Hwy. 281 North

landscape or refresh an old one, with less thirsty lawn and more drought-hardy plants.

A new rewards program will offer attendees a chance to earn a \$30 coupon to use toward water-conserving landscape supplies!

Local gardening experts will be speaking throughout the day, offering great tips to help spruce up your yard while still saving water. And, of course, there will be a fun-filled learning area for children.

As always, the first 1,000 visitors get a free plant!

Join the MySAWS Conversation:





Come celebrate critters that slither during **Rockin' Reptiles**, Saturday, March 31, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 10750 Pleasanton Road. Enjoy crafts, hikes, games and live animals.

Event Calendar

Earthwise Living Day

March 3

Leon Valley Community Center
6427 Evers Road
leonvalleytexas.gov

Doggy Day

March 3

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center
10750 Pleasanton Road
mitchelllake.audubon.org

Spring Break Free Family Days

March 13-15

McNay Art Museum
6000 N. New Braunfels Ave.
mcnayart.org

St. Patrick's Day Festival

March 16-17

La Villita / Arneson River Theatre
418 Villita Street
thesanantonioriverwalk.com

Bird Walk

March 17

San Antonio Botanical Garden
555 Funston Place
sabot.org

9th Annual Paella Challenge

March 25

Mission County Park
6030 Padre Drive
paellachallenge.com

Customer Service and
24-hour Emergency

210-704-SAWS (7297)
saws.org/waternews

Last Chance to Prune Oaks

Chop-chop. If you want to minimize the chance of oak wilt, you'll want to prune your oak trees double-quick.

The beetles that carry the spores of oak wilt fungus are very few or unlikely to fly during the coldest days of the year — which will soon be behind us.

Some helpful dos and don'ts:



- Prune narrow branch junctions that are V-shaped; these are structurally weak, especially if two or more of the branches are of equal diameters.
- Look for the "3-D" branches — dead, diseased and dying. These are a source of disease and insects.
- Never cut through the branch collar — the donut-shaped ring at the junction of two branches. This is a zone of specialized cells and chemicals that reduces the potential for decay and disease.

Most importantly, **always paint fresh oak wounds** — this is essential to preventing oak wilt.

Painting the wounds is not necessary if the tree is an elm, ash, sycamore, pine, tallow or pecan tree.

5K SPRING DASH

SAISD
SAWS

RUN FOR
EDUCATION

Calling all runners and walkers! Get ready to lace up for the 5K Spring Dash, Saturday, March 3 at 8 a.m. at Alamo Stadium, 110 Tuleta Dr.

Join over 4,000 participants as you run through beautiful Brackenridge Park and end with a final lap around the Alamo Stadium track with an opportunity to see yourself cross the finish line on the big screen.

Spring Dash is not only a great event for the family, but it also supports two local causes: SAWS' Project Agua and the San Antonio Independent School District Foundation.

Project Agua helps SAWS customers who are unable to pay their water bills with one-time payment assistance up to \$150. And the SAISD Foundation provides scholarships and grants to students and teachers in SAISD.

The event is open to all ages. Fastest time awards will be announced. Immediately following the race, all participants are invited to visit the onsite health festival.

Registration is now open. Sign up at saws.org/5k.



Honoring Dr. King's Dream

SAWS employees and their families joined more than 300,000 celebrants of Martin Luther King Day at the 2018 MLK March to commemorate the civil rights leader's message of equality and peace. San Antonio's annual MLK Day proceedings are among the largest in the U.S.