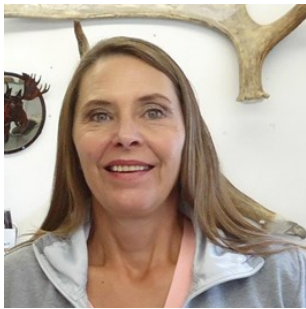




*We appreciate everything you have done!*



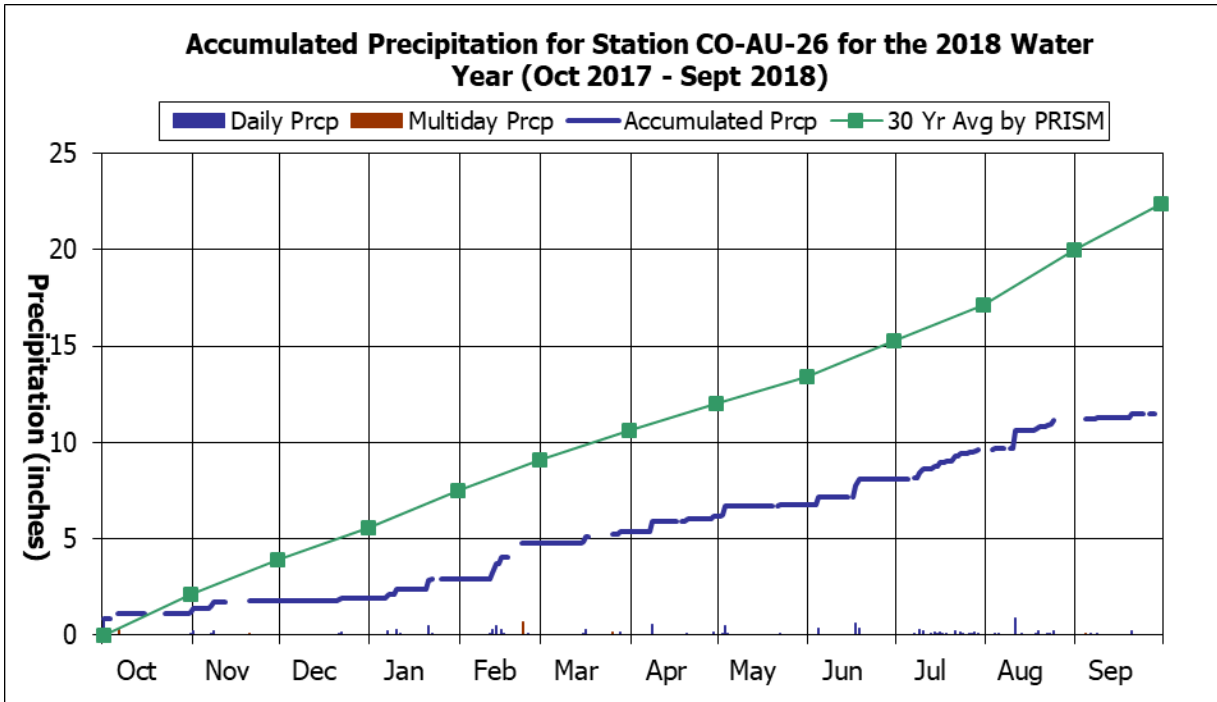
Shellie Peterson, a long time staple here at PAWSD, will be retiring at the end of this year. Shellie, the PAWSD current Business Manager, has been with PAWSD for 20 years. During her tenure Shellie has overseen the budget and accounting for PAWSD and has played a significant role in the district's ability to maintain budgets, reduce operating costs and assuring compliance with a litany of governmental statutes. I personally owe Shellie a great deal of gratitude as she has made my transition to the District Manager position much easier and I can't even contemplate how difficult this task would have been without Shellie's institutional knowledge, accounting skills and commitment to this district. Regardless of your personal opinion of PAWSD, I can assure you PAWSD is a better district because of Shellie's hard work and dedication. We are all going to miss her and wish Shellie the best in this new journey.

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### 2018 Precipitation

The water year ended on September 30 and will in all likelihood be the considered the driest in southwest Colorado's 123 year record. Pagosa Springs averages approximately 22.5 inches of annual precipitation. We will likely end this water year with under 12 inches due to a light snowpack and a monsoon season that never materialized.



In the last newsletter I discussed the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Snotel system and how data from that system correlates with available water for PAWSD. For the 2017/18 Water Year the San Juan Snotel gage (located just this side of Wolf Creek Pass) reported 25.7 total inches of precipitation, (this is on the mountain, not in town) the average precipitation reported at that gage is 53.0". This lack of precipitation is evident in our water reservoirs where Hatcher is 75 inches and Stevens is 138 inches below full.

The primary source of water for both Hatcher and Stevens Reservoirs is from Four Mile Creek. PAWSD water rights to this source are junior rights meaning as water levels in the creek drop we quickly lose access to Four Mile Creek water. In 2018 we lost access to that water source on April 12, the earliest we have lost those rights since acquiring them. Until we get full access to those rights we will see no increase in water levels on the Hatcher and Stevens Reservoirs.



### **Water and Wastewater Certification**

You may have noticed press releases in the paper regarding PAWSD employees receiving various certifications. Certified operators are a critical part of providing adequate and safe drinking water and safely collecting, treating and disposing of wastewater. Operators work in various areas of the treatment, collection and distribution system and have wide ranging skill sets from mechanical aptitude for motor and pump repair to chemistry and hydraulics. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the importance of the certification program and the dedication and work done by PAWSD employees who receive these certifications.



The state certification program for water wastewater operators is broken into four categories 1) Water Treatment 2) Water Distribution 3) Wastewater Collections and 4) Wastewater Treatment. Each of the four categories has four certification levels. Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator levels are A through D, with A being the highest level. Distribution and Collection Operator levels are 1 through 4 with 4 being the highest level.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Regulation 100 is the Colorado rule that prescribes the requirements for this certification program. The rule requires that every water treatment facility, water distribution system, wastewater collection system and domestic or industrial wastewater treatment facility, be under the supervision of a certified operator. Regulation 100 defines what the operator certification level needs to be based on

population served and complexity of the system.

Becoming a certified water professional requires education, training, experience, self-motivation and passing rigorous testing. Maintaining certifications requires adhering to a professional code of conduct and ongoing continuing education. Skills needed to be a certified operator are :

- Strong mathematical, mechanical and science skills;
- Ability to read blueprints, charts, graphs, maps and technical publications;
- Ability to engage in logical processes for troubleshooting mechanical and electrical equipment;
- Excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills;
- Ability to create scientifically sound records and observations;
- Articulate issues, problems and processes clearly;
- Have a working understanding of both federal and state rules and regulations governing water and wastewater treatment and handling;
- Have a knowledge of epidemiology as it relates to water borne illnesses and disease;
- Have the ability to work safely in hazardous environments both indoors and outdoors.

Prior to being permitted to sit for any certification exam minimum education and experience requirements must be met. Certification tests cover topics such as chemistry, epidemiology, biology, hydraulics, treatment techniques, math skills, federal and state rules and regulations, administration principles and natural and man caused disaster preparedness.

The process of water treatment is complicated and a strong attention to detail is vital to the success of the organization. The work is physically demanding and conditions are often hazardous requiring careful attention to safety precautions. The treatment and delivery of drinking water and the collection, treatment and discharge of wastewater is a 24/7 operation. Currently PAWSD does not operate 24 hour-a-day shifts however PAWSD does have staff on-call 24/7 to assure the systems are running smoothly. Our community is very fortunate to have such motivated and dedicated professionals operating and maintaining the multiple components in the District to assure a safe and continued water system.



## **Rate Increase**

PAWSD has worked diligently to reduce operating expenses and pass those savings on to the PAWSD customers. PAWSD has not had a rate increase for four years. Unfortunately PAWSD is unable to control external costs such as electric, natural gas, insurance, material costs and regulatory compliance. In 2018 PAWSD hired a consultant, Stantec, to undertake a rate study to determine rates necessary to assure PAWSD continues to have the ability to provide high quality drinking water and sewer services to our customers. The rate study looked at past operating expenses, our current ten year Capital Improvement Plan and anticipated inflation in determining recommended future PAWSD rates. Over multiple PAWSD Board Meetings the results of the rate study were discussed and revised. At the PAWSD August Board Meeting, the PAWSD Board unanimously passed at two phased rate increase. The first phase is a six percent annual increase in water rates starting January 2019 and ending in 2023. The second phase will be a 2.5% sewer increase beginning in January 2024 and ending 2028.

## Pagosa Outreach Connection

With winter approaching and some families in our community experiencing hard times, please consider donating to your community. Through PAWSD, you can now make donations to the Pagosa Outreach Connection (POC), a partnership of individuals and organizations in Archuleta County that provides emergency financial assistance to local people in need. Simply check the box on your payment stub, write the amount of your donation, and include that amount with your payment to PAWSD. The District staff will then provide all such donated funds to the POC. PAWSD is not affiliated with POC, but offers this opportunity as a community service. For information on POC, please call them directly at (970) 264-2182.

## Water Turn-On Release Agreement

Pagosa Area Water & Sanitation District (District) **strongly** recommends that property owners who plan on being away from their homes or businesses for any length of time have District personnel turn off their water service at the meter pit. This procedure will help ensure against the loss of water in the event of a leak along the service line or within the structure, which could potentially cause devastating water damage to the property. The District will perform this service, as well as turning the water back on at the meter pit, **for no charge** during regular business hours of 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM, seven days a week. After hours requests between 4:00 PM and 8:00 AM will result in a \$70.00 charge to the account. Unless you have signed and submitted the Water Service Turn-on Release Agreement with PAWSD, either the customer or representative over the age of 18 must be present at the home or business when the water service is turned on. The Water Service Turn-on Release Agreement along with other District forms can be found at [www.PAWSD.org](http://www.PAWSD.org). Customers can call 970-731-2691, fax 970-731-2693, or email turn-on or turn off requests. You will receive an email confirmation to your request within 48 hours. If you do not, please call the PAWSD office at 970-731-2691. PAWSD requires at least **24-hours notice** for these requests. Also, in an effort to schedule requests efficiently, PAWSD is only able to provide a **date and general time frame** for honoring turn-on and turn-off requests.

## Protect your outdoor Spigot

Protect your outside spigot from freezing or an unintended turn-on from falling ice with an outdoor spigot cover. There are a variety of styles available and can be purchased at most hardware stores.



**Please ensure PAWSD has your current contact information including phone numbers.**

**If we notice a leak at your home or business we will make every effort to contact you. If we cannot contact you we will turn off your water. The longer it takes to get the water off the more that is wasted and the more it will cost you.**

**YOU can make a difference!** If you would like to see something specific for the newsletter, contact us at [info@pawsd.org](mailto:info@pawsd.org)



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