



# PRESS RELEASE

January 6, 2010  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***For more information, contact:***

**Pam Lefrancois**  
**North Tahoe Public Utility District**  
**PO Box 139/ 875 National Avenue**  
**Tahoe Vista, CA 96148**  
**Phone: 530.546.4212**  
**Fax: 530.546.2652**  
**Website: [www.ntpud.org](http://www.ntpud.org)**  
**E-mail: [ntpud@ntpud.org](mailto:ntpud@ntpud.org)**

## **North Tahoe Public Utility District Crews Detect Frozen and Broken Water Service Lines**

(Tahoe Vista, CA) – After the bitter cold snap in mid-December, in which the Tahoe Basin had several sub-zero days in a row, the North Tahoe Public Utility District Operations Department prepared an action plan to proactively detect frozen and broken water service lines. Breaks in home and business services show up throughout the water distribution system as frozen lines thaw out.

District staff was particularly concerned because of the high percentage of second homes in the area means that a burst water line could run for days or weeks before being detected as "high use" during routine District meter reading.

On Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, Water Treatment Plant technicians reported that daily water production at the National Avenue Water Treatment Plant was 200,000 to 300,000 gallons higher *per day* than would be historically expect this time of year. This 20 percent spike in water production indicated either a serious water main leak, or numerous broken service lines to homes and businesses in the area.

Due to the dramatic increase in Water Treatment Plant production, the Water Quality and Operations staff teamed up and initiated a plan to investigate neighborhoods for high water use and leaks. A two-pronged plan of attack was used. This involved using the state-of-the-art **Metropolitan Water Loss Logger (MLOG)** passive water leak detection system purchased from ITRON Systems and installed by District Water Operations this summer. This network monitors the water system 365 days a year using widely distributed acoustic sensors mounted on water service lines throughout the District. These microphones listen for the distinctive audio frequencies that holes in water lines generate. This data was then combined with several repeat readings of water meters to isolate suspected leaks in residential areas.

Operations staff detected 55 suspected home service breaks in the first few hours that day, with many showing usage in the 20,000 to 40,000 gallon range. *Several homes had use in the 100,000 to 200,000 gallon range.* For reference, during the winter with no landscape irrigation, domestic (home) water usage usually runs well under 10,000 gallons per month. The cold snap in 2007 resulted in over sixty responses to frozen and/or broken water services.

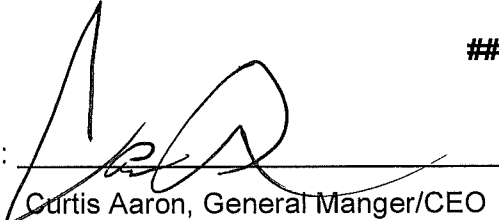
The District worked overtime into the night Friday, December 18th to dig snow off of meter boxes, check meter reads, inspect for leakage around home foundations and garages and to attempt to contact homeowners to obtain permission to shut the water off to stop homes from continued flooding.

District Water Treatment Plant Production has returned to near average levels for this time of year, and metered usage is adjusting to normal average range because of this aggressive pursuit by the District to isolate these many service line breaks. The District continues to search for possible leaking domestic service lines, but the number of broken lines has fallen to a few per week, down from dozens in mid-December. District staff will continue to monitor for main line and domestic service line breaks.

The District wishes to acknowledge, highlight, and thank the dedicated Operations and Water Quality personnel who worked late into the night on Friday, December 18th isolating these leaks and doing their best to mitigate water damage to homes and businesses in the area in the past week. This level of effort, care and dedication, while often not visible to the public, is what makes the North Tahoe Public Utility District one of the finest agencies in the Tahoe Basin.

In order to help prevent this type of damage from happening with your home in the future, the District recommends that all homeowners have a water shut off valve installed in the home that will allow you to completely drain and shut off the water to your home when you will not be home for any length of time. In addition, the heat to an unoccupied home should never be completely shut off when no one is at home to keep pipes from freezing and cabinet doors should be left open when to allow air to circulate to pipes.

The North Tahoe Public Utility District provides sewer and water service to the residents of Kings Beach, Tahoe Vista, Carnelian Bay, Cedar Flat and Agate Bay. The District owns, manages and maintains the North Tahoe Regional Park in Tahoe Vista which provides recreation opportunities to residents and visitors. In addition, the District owns and/or maintains all of the public beaches in the District including Kings Beach State Recreation Area, Tahoe Vista Recreation Area, and Secline Beach to name just a few. The North Tahoe Event Center in downtown Kings Beach is also owned and managed by the District.

Approved By:  **###**  
Curtis Aaron, General Manger/CEO