

DRIP encourages smart water use this summer

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Special to the Sentinel

The Grand Valley Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) has promoted water conservation techniques and practices since 2003. This summer, DRIP will focus on smart water use inside and outside homes and businesses. Keep an eye on The Daily Sentinel's Home & Garden page for water-saving strategies, reports on water supplies and other water conservation topics. The DRIP campaign this year also includes practical ideas you can use to save money and water.

The DRIP campaign was created by local domestic water providers, the City of Grand Junction, Ute Water, Clifton Water, the Town of Palisade and Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service to educate customers about water conservation after the 2002 drought. One part of the DRIP effort is to inform our customers about the drought response plan developed after that difficult summer. Water providers have spent the last 15 years making improvements to water systems to lessen the effects of water shortages or droughts on customers.

In the past, our goal has been to reduce domestic and commercial water use by 20 percent. While we continue to encourage our customers to save water, we feel the focus on smart water use will help emphasize changes that don't require a lot of extra effort to realize significant savings.

Although it seems like spring has barely begun, before long, the Grand Valley will heat up and dry out. Residents will be watering parched landscapes and using more water inside their houses and outdoors. That's where DRIP's smart water use practices and techniques will bring the greatest return. Now is the time to get prepared for the summer watering season. Watch for upcoming articles on sprinkler system tune-ups and proper plant selections for more drought-tolerant landscaping. Another topic we'll cover is the installation of new water-saving technology for irrigation systems, including "smart" controllers, which use computers to automatically adapt watering schedules for changes in water needs throughout the season. We look forward to sharing information with you on how this technology is working at various residential and commercial properties located across the valley.

If you have any unique water-conservation ideas or questions, contact your domestic water provider, which is a member of DRIP. Visit www.thedripwebsite.com for ideas on how you can save water at home.

We live in a semiarid climate where droughts will always be a part of our environment. Water for our future means conserving now. The Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) is a collaboration between the valley's domestic water utilities and CSU Cooperative Extension to provide information and educate the public about drought and the importance of water conservation.