

Iron County ranks No. 4 in state for lowest water usage

Written by [or for St. George News](#)
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CEDAR CITY — Iron County residents' water conservation efforts are being noticed, as a Utah Division of Water Resources report ranks the county fourth of Utah's 29 counties in least amount of daily water used per person. Only San Juan, Salt Lake and Utah counties use less per person.

Iron County is one of only six counties that fall below the state average of 240 gallons per person, per day

According to a press release from the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, in addition to their No. 4 ranking, Iron County is one of only six counties that fall below the state average of 240 gallons per person, per day. The report lists Iron County at an average of 223 gallons of water use per person, per day.

Paul Monroe, general manager of the CICWCD, said in an area where water is limited and aquifer levels are continually dropping, it is crucial to optimize every drop of water in the valley, and this ranking shows that residents are taking that seriously.

"We're all in this together, and I'm excited to see people realizing how important water is," Monroe said in the press release.

The ranking takes into consideration reporting by Cedar City, Enoch and the water conservancy district and includes water use by both homes and businesses in those service areas. Monroe said that according to usage per person in Iron County, water use has been reduced by 18 percent in the past 25 years.

The CICWCD is working to build a culture of conservation in Iron County by offering public education programs and home water checks each summer. Additionally, Cedar City, Enoch and the water district all offer tiered water rate programs to encourage residents to keep their water usage low.

Cedar City Engineer Jonathan Stathis said the water department has been good to educate people on the summer ordinances that do not allow outdoor watering during the heat of the day. The city sees its peak usage in the summer months, and "anything we can do to reduce that is a benefit," he said.

Also during the summer season, the water conservancy district partners with the Utah State University Extension Office to offer free water checks throughout the Cedar Valley. The water district and USU Extension staff members visit residents' homes and help them identify how much they should be watering their lawns and how they can maximize their landscape irrigation.



The water district also partners with SUU Community Education and instructor Candace Schaible, USU Extension’s horticulture and water wise landscape expert, to offer a Locascapes class. This course helps community members create better landscape functionality, less yard maintenance, enhanced curb appeal, lower water bills and simplified irrigation.

Iron County has also allowed some neighborhoods to be created with much smaller lot sizes than in the past or with rules about the amount of grass allowed in the landscaping, which reduces water use. Stathis said Cedar City has seen more multifamily developments, such as town houses, constructed in recent years instead of just single-family homes. These developments have much less yard space, which results in less water used per person.

All these efforts are in addition to the more than \$1 million the water conservancy district has spent in the past five years to recharge the local aquifer. The district measures the recharge water and has recorded more than 14,000 acre-feet that has been added to the aquifer over the past three years.

“We are doing everything we can to help absorb water and keep it in our community before it goes out of the area and evaporates,” Monroe said. “Recharge stations throughout the valley are now working to help the area retain our water resource.”



All conservation and efforts of community members are significant as [the district moves into the Pine Valley Water Supply Project](#), which will help sustain the valley long-term.

“It is important to be responsible stewards of our natural resources,” Monroe said.

For more information on water usage in the state and the Utah Division of Water Resources’ goals, [click here](#). Additionally, the [Central Iron County Water Conservancy District website](#) includes information on the Localscapes Landscape Design class, water conservation tips, a list of water-wise plants, a lawn watering guide and a link to sign up for free water checks.

To get rebates for upgrading to more efficient toilets and for using smart controllers to manage landscape water, visit the [Utah Water Savers website](#).