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## District plans to reduce storm-water fee

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Stormwater fees for about 16,000 Oldham County property owners will not be due until July next year — and they'll save about \$13.58, on average.

The Storm Water Management District plans to save property owners four months' worth of fees in its annual billing by pushing the billing date back four months until July, chairman Kevin Eldridge said.

The annual fee is \$41.16 for most property owners, but that amount won't be due until July, instead of the usual March deadline.

He said the district does not plan to spend the entire \$836,000 it collected in the last billing cycle. One reason is that the district's partnership with Veolia Water did not start immediately, so the Storm Water Management District didn't have to pay a year's worth of fees.

Also, no major projects were required this year, Eldridge said. But he said future projects to meet requirements for storm-water runoff are likely to cost more.

"There were a lot of uncertainties, and there still are a lot of uncertainties," but strides have been made in storm-water management this past year, Eldridge said.

He said Veolia Water, which is overseeing the storm-water projects, has been mapping drainage systems and scouting out problems.

He said the district has been working out several kinks, including billing addresses. The district will continue to look at ways to save money, including possibly blending the district's board with the Oldham County Sewer District's board, he said.

Eldridge informed Fiscal Court about the proposal at its meeting Dec. 15.

The storm-water fees, which began this year, are used to help meet federal requirements in the Clean Water Act that are designed to keep rivers, lakes and streams clean.

The fee is based on the average amount of hard surface, such as concrete and blacktop, on a residential property. Businesses and multifamily units with more hard surface would be billed more, depending on their size.

The county sent out 16,000 bills last March, and around 2,200 are still unpaid, Eldridge said. He said they plan to file for liens on those unpaid properties in April.

Property owners in Pewee Valley, Crestwood and La Grange city limits were not billed the annual fee. Pewee Valley and La Grange are working on their own to meet the requirements, and the Crestwood

City Commission last year opted to pay the bills for its property owners, which cost around \$90,000. Crestwood Mayor Dennis Deibel said the city plans to pay the fee again in 2010.

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