

## HELP STOP WATER THEFT

The City of Blue Ridge Water and our paying customers are victims of thousands of gallons of water annually stolen from fire hydrants and unmetered connections.



The City of Blue Ridge has invested millions of dollars to ensure our customers are provided safe, clean and reliable drinking water. That is compromised when water is illegally taken from fire hydrants and other unprotected connections. Illegal and careless connections carry the risk of contaminating our water supply and can lower pressure required for fire protection. Opening or closing a fire hydrant too quickly can cause nearby water mains to rupture, causing our customers to be without water. Since the Water department is non-profit, money spent to treat all of the stolen water comes from our paying customers. That's why in addition to putting locks on fire hydrants and having the police department watching for theft, we want to reach out to the public to report any suspicious water connection.

**How to spot theft?** Water is most often stolen from fire hydrants without using a metered connection. A permit is required to take water from a fire hydrant and backflow equipment must be used to ensure the water supply is not contaminated. If you see someone taking water from a fire hydrant other than the Fire Department or City of Blue Ridge, the best thing to do is report it to City Hall and then we can see if they have a permit. Water is also frequently stolen to fill swimming pools, water landscaping, and a new construction sites.

**Help us stop water theft.** If you suspect water is being stolen, please call 706-632-2091 during regular business hours or 706-455-0768 after 5pm and on weekends/holidays to report this illegal activity. City personnel will investigate to see if it is a legal connection or if it is theft.

**Fines for Theft:** Water theft may result in a misdemeanor, which is punishable by fines of up to \$2,000.

Contractors that need water should either obtain a permit at City Hall or purchase water from our metered connection at the City Maintenance Shop @ 134 East Main St.