

## CAÑON CITY HOMEPAGE

# Stormwater Edition

### Stormwater Utility In Brief

#### Contacts

William F. Jackson  
Mayor  
275-3901  
Mike Near  
Mayor Pro Tem  
275-4471  
  
Council Members -  
Dan Brixey  
275-8531  
Mike Gunkel  
275-5658  
Frank Jaquez  
269-3641  
Catherine Mortensen  
275-6418  
Ernie Reynolds  
429-1998  
Dennis Wied  
275-6645  
  
Also:  
Bob Saulmon  
City Engineer  
269-9011

In 2004, the Cañon City Council approved an ordinance creating a Stormwater Utility and set in motion the initial step towards taking care of the City's stormwater problems. Specifically, this utility will operate as a government-owned business to provide for the maintenance and construction of stormwater channels and facilities in the Cañon City area to help reduce the damage from heavy rainfall that has plagued our community.

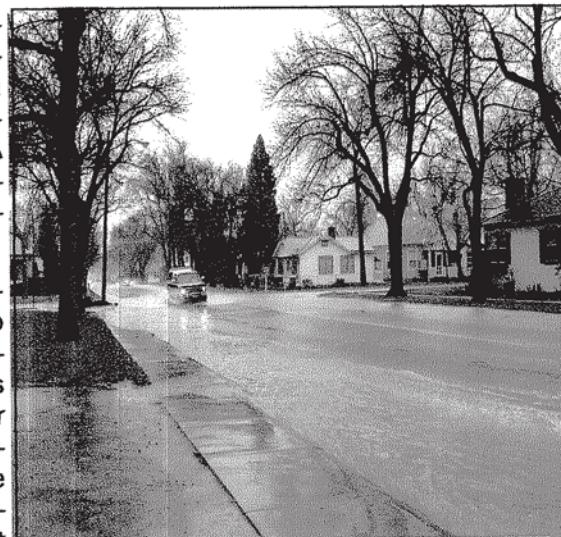
As with any business, in order to operate, it must have revenues. Revenues for this business will be generated almost entirely from fees charged to its customers, the residents and businesses of Cañon City. Following the customary and fairest manner used in most other cities, the City has determined it will charge its customers on the basis of impervious surfaces. As such, fees will be charged based on the total amount of impenetrable surface on each property. The City is in the process of having satellite photos taken of the area (see page 3), from which these impervious surfaces can be calculated. A fee-setting ordinance will then be submitted to Council for their consideration, likely this summer.

The City Council has determined that fees must be charged to provide adequate funding for stormwater management in Cañon City. This fee-based revenue for the Stormwater Utility will be dedicated to the management of Cañon City's public drainage and stormwater systems. Those comprehensive stormwater management

duties will include: long-range planning, drainage system improvements, preventative maintenance, limited facilities construction, and public education about drainage issues and water quality.

Since stormwater runoff is a primary source of water pollution, it is important that pollution reducing measures are included in stormwater projects whenever possible. Many pollutants are washed into channels, the Arkansas River, irrigation ditches, etc., through stormwater runoff, severely degrading downstream water quality. Because of this, projects such as the new City Hall and the soon to be built Home Depot capture

*(Continued on page 2)*



A typical flood event on North 9th St.

(Continued from page 1)

runoff from their property and clean it before it is released into these other water sources.

In the 1970's, the Clean Water Act was passed on the federal level with the goal of restoring the quality of the nation's waters. The City of Cañon City was mandated in 2003, as part of the Phase II Regulations of the Clean Water Act, to apply for and receive a stormwater discharge permit through the State of Colorado. This permit requires the City to develop, implement and enforce stormwater management programs designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants, to

These measures must be accomplished by 2007 or the City faces the possibility of fines up to \$10,000 per day.

the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act. Specifically, the City must establish six minimum control measures: public education, public involvement and participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site stormwater runoff control, post-construction stormwater management

in new developments, and pollution prevention and housekeeping. These measures must be accomplished by 2007 or the City faces the possibility of fines up to \$10,000 per day. Funding through the Stormwater Utility will allow the City to meet the required

measures.

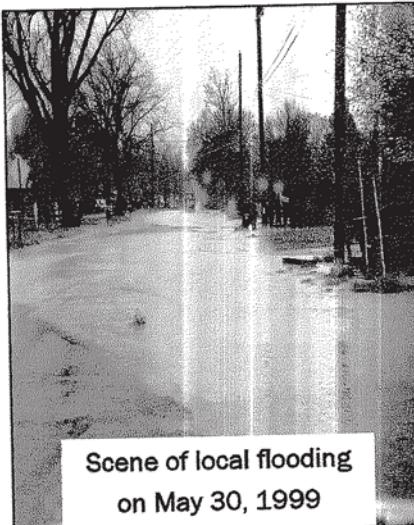
The City maintains sections of the drainage system that are in the public rights-of-way or otherwise accessible by public easement. Runoff from private property eventually drains into the public drainage system or receiving waters such as the Arkansas River. Because the public drainage system routes stormwater from higher land away from lower-lying properties and public roads, it serves a protective purpose. Roadside ditches and drainage improvements significantly reduce flooding on downstream roads and property. The public drainage system protects both public and private property from the impact of stormwater.

## When It Rains — It Drains

When it rains, the water that hits the ground has three basic options: soak into the ground, evaporate, or run off. In natural settings, rain water is slowed and filtered by plants, soil and other natural buffers. When rain falls on hard or "impervious" surfaces, such as rooftops, parking lots and driveways, it becomes runoff. The amount of storm water runoff increases as the amount of impervious surface increases. Runoff flows faster across impervious surfaces and also picks up pollutants.

In Cañon City, storm water runoff is channeled to the Arkansas River through a system of paved streets with curb and gutter, irrigation laterals and main ditches, roadside drainage ditches and several drainage channels.

Impervious surfaces increase the QUANTITY and decrease the QUALITY of storm water runoff.



### Stormwater Countdown

- Impervious Surfaces are calculated—April
- Fee Schedule is introduced—June
- Ordinance setting fees introduced to City Council—July
- Stormwater Projects to start—2006

Question: How will this new stormwater utility be paid for?

Answer: A monthly Storm Water Fee will be charged to each property, both residential and commercial, within the Canon City limits based on the square feet of impervious area on each property. It is proposed that the fee will be included on the City water bill, which is mailed monthly to commercial-type properties and quarterly to residential properties.



### How to get there -

Using satellite photos produced by Digital Globe, a world-known corporation headquartered in the Longmont area, and the City's GIS database, the City can establish the impervious area on each lot and then establish the stormwater fee for that property using the water billing program.



### Quick Fact

Impervious surfaces allow many types of pollutants, derived from a variety of sources, to accumulate upon them. Many of these pollutants are subsequently washed into water bodies by storm water runoff, severely degrading water quality. This type of pollution is known as non-point source water pollution and is linked to land-use activities. Water quality problems increase with increased imperviousness and intensity of land use.

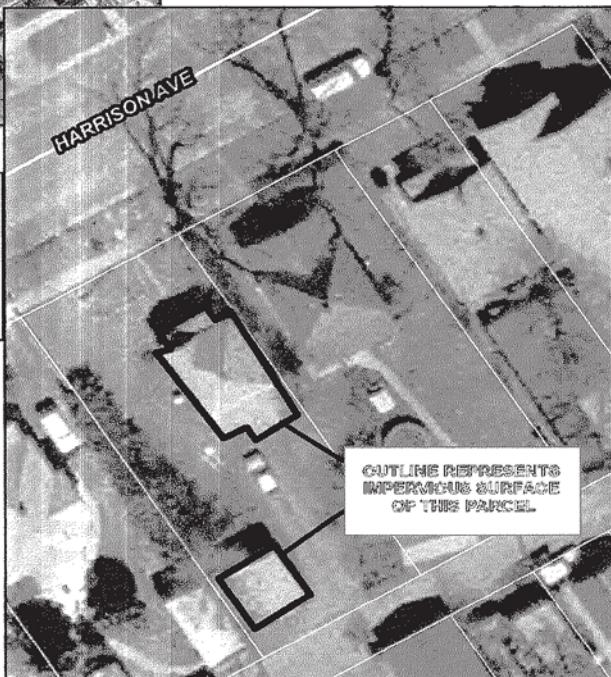
Photo to right contains a home and unattached garage and no paved parking

### What is an Impervious Surface?

Impervious surfaces are mainly constructed surfaces — rooftops, sidewalks, roads and parking lots — covered by impenetrable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick or stone. These materials seal surfaces, repel water and prevent precipitation and meltwater from soaking into soils. Soils compacted by urban development are also highly impervious.

**Question:** If impervious surfaces cause run-off, why does the City require paved parking?

**Answer:** The City of Cañon City is not only mandated to protect water quality but air quality as well. Years ago, the City fell into the "non-attainment" category for air quality which required it to pave streets, improve street sweeping programs and reduce dust emissions. That's why sand is quickly removed from most streets after a storm event, why the City is actively working with citizens to pave unpaved streets, mag chloride is used on other unpaved streets with high traffic counts, and businesses are required to pave parking areas for their customers.



## !!! We're Back!!!

Two years ago, because of budget and other reasons, the City of Cañon City discontinued its direct-mail newsletter. The newsletter's short-lived run of two years came to an uneventful halt and with its demise, also went the dreams of a few to be able to directly communicate with City residents about City-wide subjects of community interest.

The good news is "we're back!" After much encouragement from the community, the City will once again "get the word" out about local issues, projects and programs. And, we begin this reintroduction with an important issue on the horizon — stormwater and stormwater management.

Citizens of Cañon City realize that heavy rains don't come often. But, when they do, friends and neighbors suffer from flooding, property damage and inconvenience because the City does not have adequate facilities to meet the infrequent torrential downpours. Because of the actions of City Council, this is about to change.

What are these changes, what can you expect and how much is it going to cost. Some of those questions will be answered, we hope, in this newsletter. What remains is a story in the future needing to be told.

We're glad to be back. We

hope you'll agree. But, most of all, we hope that we are able to communicate to you the issues at hand, what the future holds and where your City leaders are taking this community.

In the meantime, please feel free to let us know how we're doing. For your convenience, the contact information for each Council member is listed on the front page. These elected officials are waiting to hear from you and to do the best that they can do by representing the City of Cañon City.

**Mayor William F. Jackson**

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