



NewsSPLASH

Summer 2011

A publication of Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority



Message from the General Manager

Dean Moss

By the time you receive this newsletter, BJWSA will have announced a water and sewer rate increase. BJWSA's last retail rate increase occurred in July 2008. Decreased demand for water service due to the economic downturn and costs rising – such as power, fuel, and chemicals – have made it necessary to increase our revenues.

I am often asked by new customers, "Why are BJWSA's rates so high compared to the place I came from?" Typically, I don't know anything about their former water and sewer utility, so it is difficult to answer the question. There are some key points to consider when evaluating the cost of our service:

- **BJWSA is a non-profit Special Purpose District that has no taxing power.** Our only source of revenue is from the fees and charges derived from the operation of our system and facilities. Many water and sewer utilities can recover some operation and capital costs through charges on property tax bills.
- **BJWSA provides service over 1400 square miles - from the tip of St. Helena Island to the Savannah bridge.** The fuel and energy needed for operation and maintenance of this expansive service area are a large part of our budget – and these costs are rising rapidly. We also must have adequate staff to respond quickly to customer requests and emergencies throughout the service area.
- **While many other utilities have convenient access to a stream or lake for wastewater discharge, BJWSA's options are highly restricted.** We must use land disposal of treated wastewater in southern Beaufort County and the Lady's Island/St. Helena Island area, which imposes costs for enhanced treatment, more piping, pumping, and management. Where we do discharge into waterways – in Port Royal Island and Hardeeville – environmental standards are very high and costly.

As General Manager, I am determined that we continually provide the highest possible quality of drinking water and excel in wastewater treatment in order to protect our environment. However, we do not collect more money from our customers than BJWSA needs to achieve this goal. We make rate increases reluctantly, and only with careful planning and analysis. BJWSA continues to encourage customers to conserve water – by using less water, you can help lower the increase on your bill.

William D. Moss, Jr.
General Manager

A Change in Rates

For the past three years, we have been able to avoid raising rates. However, after careful deliberation, the Board of Directors has concluded that water and sewer rates must change beginning July 1, 2011.

We will continue to work hard at cost-saving and revenue-enhancing strategies. Even though BJWSA's only source of funding for operations comes from rates and charges, we are committed to keeping rates as low as possible.

The following rate change will be seen in August bills, reflecting July water usage:

Type of charge	Existing Rates	New Rates
Basic Facility Charge for water & sewer services	\$6.00	No change
Water usage	\$3.32 per 1,000 gallons	\$3.46 per 1,000 gallons
Sewer usage	\$5.60 per 1,000 gallons	\$6.05 per 1,000 gallons
Monthly cap on residential sewer bills	\$45.00	\$48.00

BILLING EXAMPLES

*The average customer's water use is 7,000 gallons a month.

Type of Bill	Monthly water used	Existing Rates	New Rates	Difference
Water	3,000	\$15.96	\$16.38	\$0.42
	7,000*	\$29.24	\$30.22	\$0.98
Water & Sewer	3,000	\$38.76	\$40.53	\$1.77
	7,000* (with sewer rate cap)	\$74.24	\$78.22	\$3.98

INSIDE: Your Annual Water Quality Report



Why is your water safe to drink?

Our licensed technicians and water operators working in our certified lab play a critical part in ensuring that your

drinking water is safe. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) requires monitoring to ensure compliance with all state and federal regulations. Our lab staff carefully monitors water as it is treated and delivered to you.

BJWSA has three licensed lab technicians, two licensed water quality operators, and fourteen licensed water treatment operators. They have earned and maintained their licenses from the South Carolina Board of Environmental Certification by passing examinations, meeting experience requirements, and participating in continuing education. Our Laboratory and Water Quality Manager has 15 years of experience and ensures accuracy and quality control for all testing parameters.

In order to be qualified to analyze water samples for regulatory compliance and reporting to DHEC, our lab must be certified by DHEC and EPA. To earn and maintain this certification, the lab must pass a Proficiency Test every year. An outside lab sends a variety of samples to our lab and the staff must correctly test, analyze, and return the results to pass the required testing.

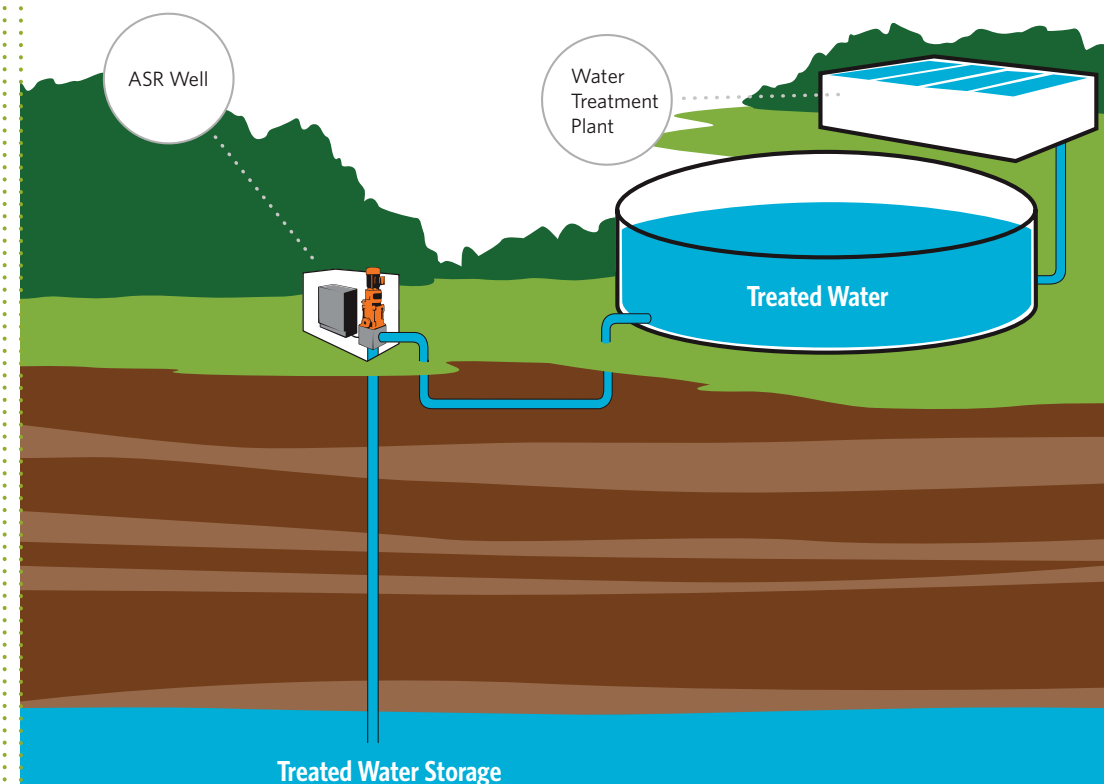
Our water quality operators test water in the treatment process 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our lab technicians perform tests for specific parameters weekly. Licensing and certification requirements ensure that we maintain proper sampling and testing, but ultimately, it is the professional work and commitment of all of our qualified staff that result in safe, high quality drinking water.

Ensuring Water Availability

BJWSA uses Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) wells to help ensure that customers have enough fresh water available year round. Our system currently has two ASR wells - one at the Chelsea Plant and one north of the Broad River. We are adding a third ASR well near Palmetto Bluff to serve the Bluffton area.

ASR wells are used to inject and safely store millions of gallons of water underground in an aquifer that is formed by natural geology. During seasons when customer demand for water is low, treated water is pumped from our plants into the aquifer. Water can then be pumped back out for delivery to our customers during the summer season when water use is high due to increased irrigation. Each ASR system also includes a booster pump station and uses an above ground storage tank to help meet daily high demands for water, especially in the morning.

Our ASR wells also provide back-up water supplies for emergencies and disaster relief. They are significantly less expensive than above ground storage tanks because so little land is required and relatively little hardware or construction is necessary. ASRs help reduce our energy costs, too. The stored water meets all state and federal standards.





“Turf Love” means saving water

Turf Love, a lawn care program by the Low Country Master Gardener Association, teaches residents how to produce healthy lawns while conserving water and reducing the use of pesticides and insecticides. BJWSA is a partner in the Turf Love program, which includes public workshops, neighborhood presentations, and home-site visits for lawn analysis. Qualified Master Gardeners make home visits and obtain soil samplings, which are analyzed at Clemson University.

For more information, contact Bill Leonard, Turf Love Coordinator, 843-540-3600 or hortusdoc@gmail.com

TOP 5 WATER SAVING IRRIGATION TIPS FROM THE TURF LOVE PROGRAM

- 1** Inspect your irrigation system in the spring, prior to heavy summer use. Be sure all sprinkler heads are working satisfactorily, including their spray pattern. If not, obtain the services of someone to make any necessary repairs or adjustments.
- 2** Lawns need an average of only one inch of water per week during the warm months. Water deeply, not frequently!
- 3** Water in early morning, not in the evening or in the heat of the day.
- 4** Avoid run-off by watering slowly, wetting the soil to a depth of 4-6”.
- 5** Leave sprinkler control setting in “OFF” position, not the “AUTO” position. Turn system on when no rain has occurred over the last few days.



What is that pink stuff on my bathroom fixtures?

That “pink stuff” that you may be seeing around your sink drains or in your toilets is naturally occurring airborne bacteria that has nothing to do with the quality of your water. These bacteria seek moist environments to grow.

WHAT YOU CAN DO Always keep bathtubs and sinks wiped down and dry. Frequently clean your sinks with a cleaning solution that contains chlorine. Chlorine bleach (3 to 5 tablespoons) can be periodically stirred into the toilet tank and flushed into the bowl itself. This will not necessarily eliminate the problem, but will help control the bacteria growth. If you have a septic tank, use a non-chemical cleaner, such as borax to avoid damaging your septic system.

IMPORTANT Follow the manufacturer’s cleaning instructions for your plumbing fixtures and countertops; chlorine cannot be used with some designer products. Use care with abrasives to avoid scratching fixtures, which will make them even more susceptible to bacteria.



Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

6 Snake Rd. | Okatie, SC 29909
843.987.9292 | www.bjwsa.org

Dean Moss General Manager

BJWSA Board of Directors

Brandy M. Gray Chair

Michael L. Bell Vice Chair

Lorraine W. Bond Secretary/Treasurer

Donna L. Altman

W. R. "Skeet" Von Harten

David Lott

James "Pat" O'Neal

John D. Rogers

Dr. William Singleton

Mark C. Snyder

Charlie H. White

Need More Information?

Contact our Communications Manager at 843.987.9213 or visit www.bjwsa.org.

Printed using recycled materials.

Do you want to help people in need in the Lowcountry?

BJWSA's Thad Coleman Fund offers a helping hand to families in Beaufort and Jasper counties who are faced with financial hardship.

The program assists low income families in paying to connect to the BJWSA water and sewer system. It is funded through various charity and government organizations and - very importantly! - our customers.

HELPING IS EASY! Make a **one-time donation** by sending a check to Thad Coleman Fund, BJWSA, 6 Snake Road, Okatie, SC 29909 or, **make automatic monthly contributions** by authorizing us to

"round up" your bill to the next highest dollar amount (for example, \$29.64 would be rounded up to \$30.00 and the extra 36 cents would be deposited into the fund). Go to our website at www.bjwsa.org/info/thad-coleman.html and fill out a sign-up form or call Customer Service at 987-9200 to set up your automatic contribution.



CHECK IT OUT!

The NEW www.bjwsa.org. Worth more than a visit - it's a site to use.