

UTILITY RATE INCREASE: TOP 11 QUESTIONS

Why is my bill higher in recent months than it used to be?

The utility company was forced to implement a water and sewage rate increase.

How much, as far as a percentage, was the increase?

An overall average of 39% combined.

Why did the rates go up?

The main reason was a federally mandated CSO Wastewater Treatment Plant. Along with the CSO project, the city felt it would be wise to install utility lines in conjunction with the new 16th Street project, and the Utility Board felt that it is vital to plan for a proactive preventative maintenance program in the budget.

What does the unfunded federal mandate mean?

A federal mandate is when the federal government tells the local government that they need to make costly upgrades to meet newly developed criteria but the federal government provides the local government no funding to pay for the upgrades. Thus, the local government and user are saddled with the costs to pay for the upgrade. The unfunded mandate we are addressing in Rushville with this rate increase involves updating our wastewater treatment plant to handle the treatment of the CSO water during heavy rain events.

When was the last increase?

The last increase was in 2009, when a 20% increase (combined) was implemented.

Why was it so much?

The upgrades needed at the existing facility are extensive. These are the front-end costs of the CSO Wastewater Treatment Plant project.

Did you inform your customers?

We made every attempt to contact our customers through various means including public notices for two months in the local newspaper, articles in the local newspaper, local radio station news casts, local radio talk show, and also an insert in the October water/sewage bill.

Is there something I can do to keep my costs down?

Make sure to conserve on water use. Take time to check your plumbing to make sure toilets and faucets are not leaking. If you suspect a leak, contact the Rushville City Utility (765) 932-4124 office to request a check of your service to get assurance you have no leaks.

Will the meter deposits go up now because the rates went up?

No. The Utility Board did not feel that the citizens of Rushville needed another financial hardship with the implementation of this rate increase.

Why wasn't there a gradual increase over a period of years instead of one large increase?

The timing required to make the improvements combined with the financial requirements did not allow this increase to be spread across much time. This improvement portion was too interdependent and could not be phased in more efficiently. We will always default to a gradual increase, if possible, in the future.

Can I go back to using my well (if I have one) as my fresh water source?

No. The introduction of well water into the city's water distribution system could potentially cross-contaminate our system and for that reason doing so is not allowed.