

IT'S NOT JUST A WATER BILL



A note from the Finance department

Since the recent rate increase that began on July 1st the Finance department has received many calls asking, "Why is my water bill so high?" We have tried to explain that the rates had to go up for us to be able to provide the services that the citizens of Hartsville are used to receiving, but some of our customers don't realize that their bill consists of many "utility services" that the City provides. It's not just a water bill. There is now a \$23.50 per month fee on residential accounts for sanitation services, which includes garbage, recycling and yard debris collection. (The additional \$6.50 added this month was necessary to cover the additional cost to the City for the elimination of the yellow bag program.) Commercial customers pay a sanitation fee based on the type of service they receive (roll cart, dumpster, etc.). There is a \$4 per month storm water fee on all residential accounts to cover the DHEC requirements for us to add a storm water department. Commercial customers pay a \$5 storm water fee. There is a sewer charge that is based on the amount of water that you use (no we do not monitor the number of times you flush your commode). And then finally there is a water charge that is based on the amount of water that you use.

Please realize that our water, sewer, storm water and sanitation departments are run just like regular businesses. No tax dollars are used to finance these departments. The cost of operating and maintaining all of these services are paid for with dollars collected from our "utility bills". Those revenues pay for the people who provide the services, materials and supplies, the equipment they use and the replacement and repairs done to our water and wastewater systems (most of which is underground and can not be seen). Those funds are also the source for repayment of the principal and interest of our debt service, which is made up of prior water and sewer line projects that were financed with the issuance of bonds.

No one hates rate increases more than the people who work in the Finance department, but for the citizens of our beautiful City of Hartsville to continue to receive the services they are used to receiving our City Council had no other choice. Please try to remember, "Its' Not Just a Water Bill". (updated 7/27/2011)