

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

www.ci.norfolk.ne.us

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“Understanding Your Water and Sewer Bills”

The good news is that there won't be any increases in the City of Norfolk water or sewer rates for customers in 2014. More good news is that Norfolk water and sewer fees are some of the lowest in the state.

“Both the water and sewer divisions are run as business enterprises. They stand alone and are supported by the revenue they receive and are not supported by taxes. With good management and continued support from the elected officials, both divisions are providing Norfolk citizens with updated and efficient service,” said Dennis Smith, Public Works Director for the City of Norfolk.

In a comparison between cities in Nebraska that have a population of 15,000 or more, for households using 5,000 gallons per month, Norfolk charges the least of any comparable municipalities with an average monthly charge of \$10.55. The average charge across the state for households using 5,000 gallons of water is \$16.25 per month.



Byron Wylie, meter reader for the City of Norfolk, reads a meter located outside a building in Norfolk.

Of those who use an average of 10,000 gallons per month, Norfolk residents are similar to residents in Columbus and Lexington in paying the third lowest average monthly water rate in the state at \$19.17. The average for those households across the state is \$23.76.

Residents in the City of Norfolk are billed on a bi-monthly cycle. The City's water customers receive six water bills in a 12 month period.

The water bill is based on the actual two month water use of each household and business. The residential sewer bill is based on the resident's water consumption during the months of December and January or in January and February - depending on which billing cycle they're on. A commercial bill is based on the amount of water

used every two months.

“There is no way to measure how much wastewater leaves a home so we use the water consumption as a good indicator of the customer's output of wastewater. We use the winter months as a good time to measure usage because people use more water for watering lawns in the summer months so their bills are higher. That water typically goes into the atmosphere rather than into the waste water pipes so it's not a good indicator of wastewater amounts. If the resident's water bills throughout the year come in lower than the average that we gather in the winter months, then we'll charge them the lower amount,” Smith said.

When it comes to sewer fees for communities with a population of 15,000 or above Norfolk is in the middle of the pack for those who use about 5,000 gallons of water per month with an average sewer fee of \$18.46. For those

who use 10,000 gallons per month, Norfolk's average monthly rate is \$29.02 which is lower than the state average of \$31.69 per month.

Revenue from the City of Norfolk's Water Division and Wastewater Division not only keeps those two divisions self supportive and not reliant on tax dollars; many capital improvements at those facilities are paid from water and wastewater fees. Recent examples include the water storage tank repairs that cost over \$400,000; a new \$1.1 million sewer main replacement west of the Wastewater Treatment Plant; and a new \$2.7 million 24 inch water main in southwest Norfolk.

For more information about the City's water and wastewater divisions, go to the City's website at ci.norfolk.ne.us.