

Iowa Lakes REGIONAL WATER

Member Newsletter

January 2009 Edition

Iowa Lakes Regional Water Announces Change in the Cost of Water

At Iowa Lakes Regional Water, the primary goal is to provide the highest quality product and dependable services at the most reasonable cost while ensuring the financial stability of the District.

The Value of Water

Drinking water is essential for life and Iowa Lakes Regional Water offers some of the best quality tap water in the United States. It is our responsibility to ensure that the quality of water delivered at every home is safe to drink and there is adequate quantity every day of the year. Furthermore, water is valued for many uses beyond drinking and personal hygiene, including agricultural and industrial use.

Decision Making

Each governing decision is made by the Board of Directors, as elected officials by members of the District. The board members have been selected from all areas and type of users to represent all Iowa Lakes Regional Water members' interest with balance and fairness.

Cost of Water

Since access to safe, reliable water is a requirement for daily life, you might assume that it is

highly valued, yet throughout the United States, many people take water and its relatively low price for granted.

We believe it is important for you to understand the cost of clean, safe, reliable water. At Iowa Lakes Regional Water, the water rates are made up of operation and maintenance costs, system replacement, and debt service.

**The change in the cost
of water will be effective
February 1, 2009**

Annually, the Board of Directors reviews the cost to deliver water, regulatory costs, costs in water purchased from suppliers, and system replacement costs. This year an adjustment was required to meet those needs and pay for all costs associated with operating a safe, reliable system, which includes electricity, laboratory fees, chemicals, transportation (including fuel), and system replacement/improvements made to the existing infrastructure.

The change in the cost of water, which will be effective February 1, 2009, includes a \$3.65

adjustment, resulting in a minimum charge of \$40.15 for either no water used or up to and including the first 2,000 gallons and then a 10% adjustment per 1,000 gallons. Stated another way, average residential usage of 4,000 gallons will adjust from \$53.15 to \$58.50.

Growth and Expansion

In the late 1980's, the Board of Directors established an entrepreneurial vision supported by the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, engaging an aggressive expansion schedule to provide additional homes and farms a safe, dependable source of water.

Along with an annual review of the cost of water, the Board of Directors also analyze the opportunity for expansion. Expansion is healthy for any organization and because of the growth in terms of membership along with our own workforce, construction technology, and innovative financing, we have learned how to beat back inflation and even higher rates.

Water is essential for life and we strive do our part to make water service available and provide the very best possible services at the most reasonable cost.

Customer Service Changes

Iowa Lakes Regional Water Announces New Payment Options

Iowa Lakes Regional Water is a utility leader using state-of-the-art technologies to provide excellent customer service. At Iowa Lakes Regional Water, it has always been our priority to service our customers in the best manner possible.

During the past couple of years, Iowa Lakes Regional Water has responded to membership requests and incorporated new options, such as the Direct Payment Program and, most recently, an option to allow members to pay by credit/debit card or electronic check over the Internet or telephone, to make payment as easy and convenient as possible.

Direct Payment Program

With Iowa Lakes Regional Water's free Direct Payment Program, members can simplify monthly bill paying and save time and money by having their water bill automatically withdrawn from their financial institution.

- No check to write
- No postage to pay
- No more monthly trips to pay bill in person
- Away from home, bill will be paid

To sign up for the Direct Payment Program, an application must be completed and returned with a voided check or deposit slip on the account to be used for payment to Iowa Lakes Regional Water. The voided check or deposit slip will provide Iowa Lakes Regional Water the information needed to set up a direct payment account.

Members associated with the automated billing system will continue to receive a monthly statement, but it will reflect a Direct Payment authorization. All members will have ample time to review the statement and usage, plan for the automatic payment, or contact ILRW if there is a question about the bill. On the specified date of each month, the payment will be deducted from the account. If the due date falls on a weekend



or holiday, the account will be debited on the next business day.

As part of our commitment to provide members with efficient, convenient service, Iowa Lakes Regional Water has partnered with Official Payments to offer new payment options. Members can now pay by credit/debit card or electronic check over the Internet or telephone. American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa credit and debit cards are accepted. Official Payments, the service provider, charges a con



To Make A Payment Online:

1. Go to www.officialpayments.com.
2. Click on the *Make A Payment* button.
3. Select the option for Local Payment.
4. Enter 2509 for the Jurisdiction Code and select Iowa as the state.
5. Select *Iowa Lakes Regional Water* under the Payment Entity category.
6. Select the payment amount.

To Make A Payment By Telephone:

1. Call 1-800-272-9829.
2. Press 3 to select the option for all other payments.
3. Enter Jurisdiction Code: 2509.
4. Press 1 to confirm the code, if entered correctly.
5. Select the payment type. To select the payment type, choose from one of the following definitions:

Residential \$0- \$150 payment
Farm and Home \$150 - \$350 payment
Commercial \$350 - \$1,000 payment

If bill is above \$1,000, electronic check is the only payment type allowed.

6. Enter in your ILRW Account number when prompted.
7. Follow the remaining instructions to enter your preferred method of payment and payment amount.

Service Call Fees

In 2008, the Board of Directors' approved applying rates to Iowa Lakes Regional Water's operational services.

As a reminder, the charge for service calls is \$30.00 per hour plus mileage at the Internal Revenue Service rate, which is currently \$0.55 per mile. The list of billable operational services includes:

- Turning water on/off for plumbing or remodeling projects
- Raising a curb stop
- Meter pit relocations, extensions, or repairs
- Identification of a customer's leaks to private lines, including their service line
- Remote post repair or replacement

A charge for winter disconnect and spring reconnect was also implemented in Fall 2008. The charge, which includes both the appointment for winter disconnect and spring reconnect, is \$40.00 and is reflected on your bill after your winter disconnect appointment has been completed. Please note that a 48-hour notice is needed to schedule these appointments or further charges will apply.

If members have questions on the operational services or rates, please contact ILRW's office at 712-262-8847.

Spring Reconnect

Remember it is the customer's responsibility to contact ILRW to schedule an appointment for reconnection. If a 48-hour notice is not given, a \$75.00 service charge will be applied. Only rural water personnel have access to the meter pit. Thus, reconnection must be scheduled. Please contact ILRW at 712-262-8847 for an appointment.

Website Makeover

ILRW is currently in the process of changing the layout of our website. The new website will feature drop-down menus from six main menus, announcements, and a new header design. As ILRW continues to expand, members need and like to have more information available to them, as well as the convenience of finding the information, at their fingertips.

It is ILRW's goal to continue to provide more online support, account information, and payment options in the future. Your comments and suggestions are appreciated to continue to provide the very best possible services.

The new website design is scheduled to be completed by the end of January. The website address will remain the same - www.ilrw.org.

Calendar of Events

February

1 Rate adjustment goes into effect for members

April

7 ILRW Annual Meeting

May

25 ILRW Office Closed in observance of Memorial Day

June

13 Flagfest Parade (Spencer, Iowa)

July

4 ILRW Office closed in observance of Independence Day

September

7 ILRW Office closed in observance of Labor Day

November

26-27 ILRW Office closed in observance of Thanksgiving

December

25 ILRW Office closed in observance of Christmas

Announcements & Reminders

Treatment Plant Maintenance Scheduled for January and February

About six years ago, the softening/expansion project to the water treatment plant was completed and customers started to enjoy the benefits of softer water flowing to their homes and farms.

Maintenance is a very important part of operating a public water supply and a driving force for service reliability. At ILRW, it has always been a top priority and as a result, all components of the treatment plant are in excellent operating condition.

In our ongoing effort, and as part of our successful maintenance program, Iowa Lakes Regional Water has scheduled annual maintenance on our water softening equipment at the treatment plant, which will begin in January and continue through February. During this time, ILRW does not expect any service interruptions, but you may notice the water will not be as soft during this maintenance period.

ILRW would like to thank you for your cooperation during this time. Members with any questions are encouraged to contact Elizabeth Johansen at 712-262-8847.

For water emergencies

between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. on weekdays and anytime on Saturday, Sunday, or holidays, please call 712-262-8847 to access ILRW's emergency information.

Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting date has been set for April 7, 2009. Again this year, a free meal will be served followed by the business meeting along with prize drawings. Please stay tuned to the Member Newsletter for more details on the event!



Iowa Lakes Regional Water
P.O. Box 555
Spencer, IA 51301

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage Paid
Spencer, IA
Permit No. 33

Inside This Edition:

- Page 1 Rate Adjustment
- Page 2 .. Customer Service Changes
New Payment Methods Offered
- Page 3 Customer Service Cont'd
Service Call Fees
Spring Reconnect
Website Makeover

Calendar of Events
- Page 4 Announcements
& Reminders