



# The Waterworks

A Publication of the Petaluma Department of Water Resources & Conservation

## Securing the Future by Investing in Our Infrastructure



*A group tour views the secondary clarifiers at the Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility's grand opening in July 2009. Over 200 community members attended the grand opening.*

The Petaluma City Council adopted a comprehensive water and wastewater utility investment program in January 2007 to be supported by annual rate increases phased in over a five year period. The most recent rate change became effective January 2010, and is reflected in your utility bill. A description of the rate increase is provided in this newsletter.

Since January 2007, the City has invested \$1 million for the repair and replacement of over 800 feet of severely deteriorated and failing wastewater piping on Water Street North, adjacent to the Petaluma River; invested \$1.5 million for the repair and replacement of over 1,800 feet of deteriorated water main in Washington Street, some of which was over 100-years old, and

over 1,600 feet of severely deteriorated sewer piping; invested \$800,000 in the upgrade of the City's largest sewer pump station; invested \$800,000 in the repair and replacement of 4,000 feet of severely deteriorated sewer pipelines near downtown; and invested \$115 million in construction costs for the Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility, which was completed in summer 2009. This facility replaced the City's circa 1938 wastewater treatment plant. We anticipate obtaining construction bids for a \$2 million upgrade to a downtown sewer pump station in early 2010. We've also completed design of two recycled water projects and a new water storage tank, and are currently pursuing federal funding for these projects.

## SCWA Raises Cost of Water 11 Percent

Petaluma purchases most of its drinking water from the Sonoma County Water Agency. On July 1, 2009, the Agency raised the price of its water 11%. This follows an 11% increase on July 1, 2008. As we did last year, Petaluma has made strategic adjustments in its water operations in order again to absorb this cost increase, and not pass it on to our customers. 40% of your water bill is the cost of water Petaluma purchases from the Agency. This limits our ability to absorb future rate increases from the Agency.



*Water team repairs a 6-inch water line near Middlefield Drive. The Water Dept. completed over 240 water line repairs this year, which is much higher than the national average.*

## Conserve & Save!

Petaluma's water conservation programs can help you reduce water use and wastewater production and help save on utility costs. As part of these programs, we offer:

- Rebates on water efficient washing machines and high efficient toilets
- Free in-home Water-Wise HouseCall water use evaluations

For more information, visit our website at [www.cityofpetaluma.net/wrcd/waterconservation.html](http://www.cityofpetaluma.net/wrcd/waterconservation.html) or call 778-4507.

# Your Bi-Monthly Water Bill

Petaluma bills for water and wastewater (sewer) services on a bi-monthly basis. The separate charges for water and wastewater services are addressed in the following sections.

## Water Service

Water bills include a fixed service charge and consumption charge. Consumption charges for single-family residential customers are based on four tiers. The first tier rewards outstanding water conservation efforts by our customers. The average household will see some usage in the second tier.

Here is what a typical single family residential water bill will be under the new rates based on an average household usage of 12 hcf/month (1 hcf = 1 hundred cubic feet = 748 gallons, 12 hcf = 8,976 gallons). The first 9 hcf will be charged at \$2.83. The next 3 hcf will be charged at \$3.25 per hcf. The total bill will be \$5.42 + (9 x \$2.83) + (3 x \$3.25) = \$40.64.

| Water Rate Schedule 2010                                    |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>Type of Charge</b>                                       | <b>Rate</b>    |
| <b>Monthly Service Charge (based on meter size)</b>         | <b>(\$/mo)</b> |
| 5/8"  | \$5.42         |
| 3/4"  | \$5.42         |
| 1" (residential)  | \$6.51         |
| 1"  | \$6.73         |
| 1.5"  | \$11.81        |
| 2"  | \$18.54        |
| 3"  | \$38.27        |
| 4"  | \$51.55        |
| 6"  | \$74.47        |
| <b>Consumption Charges (\$/hcf)</b>                         |                |
| <b>Single Family Residential (monthly)</b>                  |                |
| Tier 1 (0-9 hcf)  | \$2.83         |
| Tier 2 (10-18 hcf)  | \$3.25         |
| Tier 3 (19-24 hcf)  | \$4.07         |
| Tier 4 (25+ hcf)  | \$4.50         |
| <b>Multi-Unit Residential, Business, Industrial, Public</b> | \$2.96         |

## Wastewater Service

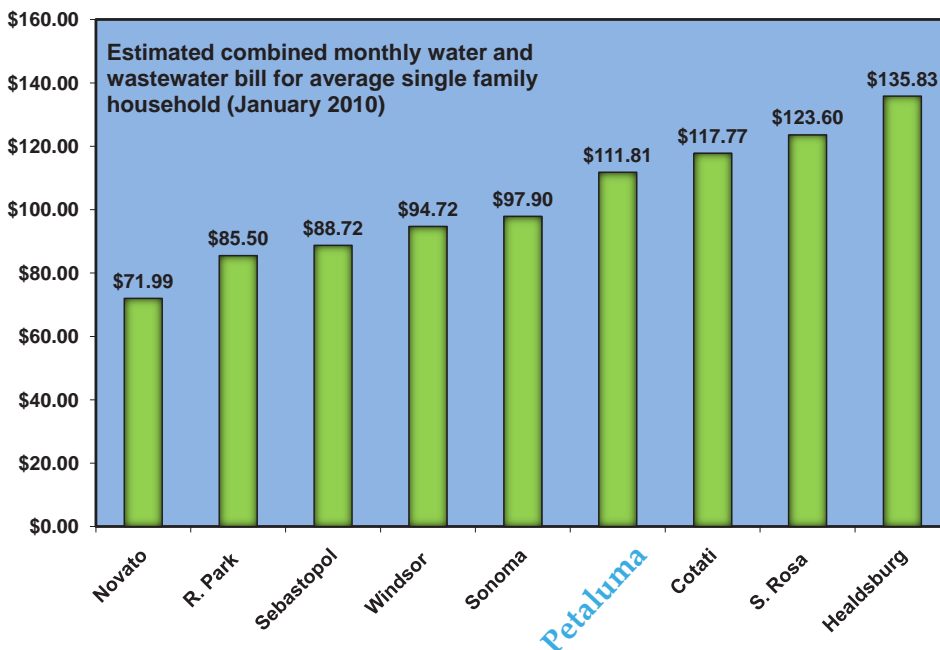
Wastewater rates for commercial and industrial customers are based on a fixed service charge and a commodity charge based on wastewater produced, as measured by the water meter. Wastewater rates for residential customers are based on a fixed service charge plus a commodity charge based on average winter water usage (therefore water that is used for irrigation outside the residence is not included in the wastewater service charge). This structure rewards indoor water conservation efforts.

Here is what a typical single family residential wastewater bill will be under the new rates based on average household usage of 8 hcf (5,984 gallons) of water per month during the winter: \$14.85 + (\$7.04 x 8) = \$71.17 .

| Wastewater Rate Schedule 2010             |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Type of Charge</b>                     | <b>Rate</b> |
| <b>Fixed Monthly Charge (\$/mo)</b>       |             |
| Single-Family Residential                 | \$14.85     |
| Multi-Unit Residential, per dwelling unit | \$14.85     |
| Unmetered Residential, per dwelling unit  | \$72.08     |
| <b>Commercial</b>                         |             |
| Low/Medium/High Strength                  | \$14.85     |
| Metered Industrial Users                  | \$14.85     |
| <b>Variable Charge (\$/hcf)</b>           |             |
| Single Family Residential                 | \$7.04      |
| Multi-Unit Residential                    | \$7.04      |
| <b>Commercial</b>                         |             |
| Low-Strength                              | \$7.01      |
| Medium-Strength                           | \$8.34      |
| High-Strength                             | \$10.79     |
| <b>Metered Industrial Users</b>           |             |
| Flow (\$/hcf)                             | \$5.22      |
| BOD (\$/lb)                               | \$0.51      |
| TSS (\$/lb)                               | \$0.55      |

## Petaluma's Rates Remain Competitive

With the new rates, the average single family residential customer's monthly bill will be \$111.81, an increase of \$10.06 above the 2009 rate. As shown in the chart below, Petaluma's combined monthly water and wastewater bills will remain competitive with other nearby communities. This comparison is for a typical single family household with an annual average water use of 12 hcf per month and an average wastewater use of 8 hcf per month. This chart is a useful resource for benchmarking Petaluma's utility rates.



## For More Information

If you have questions about the utility investment program, please:

Call: 778-4546

Visit: [www.cityofpetaluma.net](http://www.cityofpetaluma.net)

For questions about your utility bill, please contact the Finance Department at 778-4352