



UP THE CREEK

January 1, 2009

**** HAPPY NEW YEAR ****

And we really mean it, although it may sound a little off-pitch, given the general level of anxiety most of us are probably feeling over a few things, such as the economy, the economy, and the economy.

Discussion of that very topic occupied a great deal of time at the annual stockholders meeting held December 16. Both the Association and its members reported feeling squeezed between rising costs and declining revenues. The Manger and Board of Directors have realized that we cannot operate in 2009 at the current base monthly rate of \$29. It is also suspected that few, if any taps will be sold in 2009. A “bare minimum” budget was presented to the shareholders, suspending all new pipeline construction for the year, and keeping operational costs as low as possible.

Two alternative monthly minimum rates were proposed, \$30 and \$31. A motion to approve \$30 failed. A second motion to approve \$31 passed. The new monthly minimum water bill for 2009 is \$31. There is no change in the schedule of charges for overuse (over 7,500 gallons). See the reverse side of this newsletter for the updated rates.

It is time for our annual reminder of wintertime water etiquette. Water is most useful to us in liquid form. It's aggravating and destructive as a solid. Here are some ways to keep it flowing:

- If your house is going to be unoccupied, have it winterized and leave the water shut off. Don't assume that your heating system will prevent frozen pipes.
- If you live in a home where you know there is a risk of pipes freezing in the building or underground, leave a thin stream of water running at a faucet. We do not read meters in the winter, and this small addition to water consumption will not harm your wallet or our water supply.
- Be wary of heat tapes for keeping exposed pipes warm. They are fine if installed correctly, and if the power stays on. Wrong installation, like overlapping or crossing the tape, is a fire hazard.
- Leave the lid on your meter pit, and leave the snow cover on top of it. If you have to get into your meter pit, shovel some snow back over it after closing it up. The insulating property of snow will help prevent freezing the meter.
- If you suspect your meter has frozen, call us, and we will thaw it - at no charge. It's best to forget about corrective measures involving weed burners, gasoline and such, although certain alcohols may help, if taken internally.

Some will still believe that it is safe to leave a house for days or weeks with pressurized water in the plumbing. Unfortunately, it is almost an annual occurrence on our system that a house will have a pipe freeze, split open, thaw, and spray water into the interior. The damage can be catastrophic. The prevention is, by comparison, simple and cheap.

Now let's all take a deep breath (careful - cold air!) and step bravely into 2009.