



## UP THE CREEK

October 1, 2011

### An Unpolitical Poll

In which we ask for some feedback on ideas for improving, or possibly economizing our operations. Party affiliation is not required, and we don't ask for your approval rating of any candidate for anything. Failure to participate will hardly increase your water bill at all.

At issue is the fact that it costs USCDWUA 75 cents to mail your monthly water bill to you. That's 50 cents for the envelope with postage, 16 cents for the newsletter, and 9 cents for the statement. We mail out 12,000 envelopes each year, costing \$9,000, or about 2% of our annual expense budget. Perhaps there are ways, in this age of electronic communication, to reduce that cost.

Following are some options to consider. Please take a minute to make some check marks:

- |  |          |         |
|--|----------|---------|
| 1. I would prefer to receive my water bill by email:       | Yes_____ | No_____ |
| 2. I would prefer to pay my water bill using the Internet: | Yes_____ | No_____ |
| 3. I would prefer to pay my water bill with a credit card: | Yes_____ | No_____ |
| 4. Send the bill as a postcard; forget the newsletter:     | Yes_____ | No_____ |
| 5. I want the billing system to stay the way it is:        | Yes_____ | No_____ |

You may choose any combination of the above, except that saying "Yes" on number 5 kinda rules out "Yes" on any of the others, we would think.

It is hard to predict what the economic effect on the Association would be if a change to electronic billing/payment were put into effect. Obviously, if no members need to stay with the current snail mail method, then some \$9,000 annually are apparently saved in paper and postage. On the other hand, electronic options are not cost-free. Credit card transactions, for instance require a fee from the retailer – USCDWUA – amounting to about 5.5 per cent of the amount of sale. On a \$31 base water bill, that would cost us \$1.71, making the six bits it currently costs look pretty good.

More streamlined, in theory, would be the electronic transfer of payment from your bank account to USCDWUA's. The more we can do without paper ink, and postage, the cheaper, we believe – our knowledge is inconclusive, and additional study is needed (yuck, that sounds like we're angling for a grant.) At this point, we are only trying to assess the demand within our membership for such advanced services. We receive phone calls complaining that "everybody else does it the modern way." Maybe so, and it's the purpose of this newsletter, to find out.

Please take a minute to reply with your opinion. If you are a business person with experience in electronic billing and payment, your ideas are especially valuable. So please, respond if you can. Send back this page, or write your answer on a \$100 bill and send it in (preferred).

A quick note to remind anyone preparing to head south: winter temperature in Colorado, unlike where you are heading, is often below the freezing point of water. Pipes left full of water can freeze. Ice tries to expand inside pipes, often splitting them open. Split pipes, when they thaw, cause massive ruination. Just a heads-up...