

Ventura City Council Rates Public Hearing is May 5



In early March, all Ventura Water customers and property owners should have received a mailed notice about new rates proposed for the next four years, and the City Council's Public Hearing about the rates scheduled for May 5. As detailed in the notice, under California law, customers (including renters) have the right to protest the rates, in writing, before the close of the Public Hearing. For

your convenience, Ventura Water has a printable protest form (in English and Spanish) available at cityofventura.net/water/rates and at the City Clerk's office to help residents provide the correct information so the vote will be counted as valid. The form is not necessary and your vote in any written format will be valid as long as it includes all information to confirm its authenticity.

The proposed rates were developed with input from an **Advisory Committee** of Ventura residents who worked with Ventura Water to update our 10-year financial plan. As a public enterprise business, Ventura Water is completely self-supporting through revenues generated by rates paid by our customers. The rates are designed to generate the amount of money needed each year to fund operations, maintenance, debt payments and capital improvements for our extensive and aging water and wastewater systems for the next four years only. The primary reason for the continued rate increases is our growing need to replace deteriorating pipelines and facilities. Over the next two decades, many of our 380 miles of water and 300 miles of wastewater mainlines will reach the end of their lifecycle. In fact, many of the water mains made of cast iron - which comprise 25 percent of our water distribution system - are already failing, resulting in main breaks and service disruptions.

Since Ventura is one of the oldest cities in our area, we are one of the first to face the tremendous challenge of infrastructure renewal. Our grandparents' generation recognized the importance of reliable and clean water for a growing community and built our systems, which were mostly funded through federal grants. Water rates have stayed low over time because communities did not have to pay for those capital costs and the long-term debt payments. While Ventura Water is continually seeking grant monies, the truth is that in today's climate, grant funding is limited and highly competitive.

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Dear Valued Customer,

As the rate debate heats up, there are always concerns of how this additional money will be used and what type of oversight is really occurring to make sure that the water and wastewater utilities are using their customers' money wisely.

First and foremost, the rate process begins with a nine-member resident oversight **Committee** to evaluate the costs of the utilities and the capital program, so that the proper amount of revenue is estimated to be collected to cover all the expenses. Second, the City Council reviews the **Cost of Service Study** and authorizes Ventura Water to notice the proposed rates to the community 45 days before a public hearing. Third, at the same time the proposed rates are being noticed to the community, the City Council is reviewing the General Fund, Water Enterprise Fund and Wastewater Enterprise Fund and other funds' annual operating budgets. Fourth, the Capital Improvement Program

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If the new rates are approved, an average residential customer is estimated to pay about \$5 more per month the first year, and \$6-7 more per month the following years. Even with the increases, Ventura Water customers will pay less than a penny for a gallon of water. Higher rates are never easy to pay, but we hope that our customers understand that the money will be invested here, at home, to protect our vital water and wastewater services.

For more information about the rates, including a Bill Calculator, visit cityofventura.net/water/rates.

Ventura Water Around Town

March 22: Water: Take 1 Online Short Film Contest Opens



Filmmakers start your cameras! The 3rd annual Water: Take 1 film contest is officially open. If you need inspiration, check out last year's top films at watertake1.com, but there's plenty of time. Early Bird deadline is September 15 and the final deadline is November 1. [Signup for our new e-Newsletter, WT1 NewsReel](#), and stay up-to-date on all the happenings as well as get a behind-the-scenes look at our water-passionate filmmakers.

April 26: Ventura EarthDay EcoFest



Celebrate **Earth Day** and attend this very popular (and very green) event from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Promenade Park. Stop by our Ventura Water booth for water conservation tips and giveaways.

May 3: Water Wise Watering Class



Many customers have been able to save water by tuning up and managing their outdoor watering. Learn how to irrigate your landscape efficiently with the use of drip, rotating nozzles and smart controllers that maximize water and energy savings. **Ewing** Irrigation

professional Raul Topete will lead this hands-on, informational and educational class from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at the City of Ventura Sanjon Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road. Sign-up today at cityofventura.net/water/landscape or call (805) 652-4501.

May 3: Ventura Beach Festival



In our town, there are never enough ways to celebrate our beach with music. You are invited to stop by the Ventura Water booth to talk water from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the San Buenaventura State Beach. For more information and tickets for this cool event sponsored by the Friends of Channel Coast State Parks, visit friendsofccsp.org/ventura-beach-festival.

May 4: Motion By the Ocean Walk/Run



Get moving to benefit the new Community Memorial Hospital and join this fun new walk/run. Check out our booth for more ways

you can keep your water and wastewater pipes healthy too. For more information, visit motionbytheocean.org.

May 5: City Council Rates Public Hearing



The Council welcomes your input during the public hearing to consider the proposed water and wastewater rate increases at 6 p.m. at the Council Chambers, 501 Poli St. For more information about the rates, how you can protest and a Bill Calculator, visit cityofventura.net/water/rates.

is presented to the City Council by Charter prior to March and must be approved by April of every year.

The **Capital Improvement Plan** is a five-year description of all the programmed and potential projects that repair, rehabilitate or expand infrastructure. When individual capital improvement projects are advanced, each project is reviewed by the City Council at least another three times – design contract approval; approval to advertise the project for public bidding; and awarding the construction contract.

All of this review is part of operating within a public agency. Therefore, in considering the best use of resources and the valuable role of community input, staff will be recommending additional oversight when policy is being debated and created. For instance, staff will be asking the City Council this summer to consider establishing an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan Task Force to assist in evaluating what are the most viable water resources for the City's future water supply.

If you have any questions about the rates, our Customer Care team is happy to assist you at (805) 667-6500. In addition, our website contains all documents and presentations regarding the **Committee** and **rate process**.

Thank you for your interest in how Ventura Water is funded and operated as we continue to build for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shana Epstein'.

Shana Epstein, General Manager

May 22: Spring Expo - Grow Your Business



Spring by the Ventura Water booth at the Ventura Chamber of Commerce's Business Expo from 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the Four Points Sheraton at Ventura Harbor. Over 60 businesses participate in this fun semi-annual event with

lots of prizes, food and raffles. For more information and tickets, visit ventura-chamber.com.

May 31: VUSD Summerfest



Summerfest 2014 brings children and the community together in a daylong event of fun, physical activities, music and healthy food from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Ventura Unified School District's Education Service Center,

255 West Stanley Ave. Bring your child by the Ventura Water booth for some eye-opening facts about our water supply. For more information, visit vep-4vusd.org/SummerFest.

June 14: SoCal Bloomers Water Wise Class



Love plants but not sure which ones are best for your garden? Discover colorful, climate-appropriate plants to incorporate beautifully into your water-wise landscape. Lisa Burton of Nature by Design will lead this informative, free class from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at the

City of Ventura Sanjon Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road. Recognized as a leader in sustainable landscape design, Burton has been installing lawn alternatives, such as Ocean Friendly Gardens and Wildlife Habitat Gardens, for more than a decade in Ventura County. Sign up today at cityofventura.net/water/landscape or call (805) 652-4501.

Heartbleed Bug and Internet Safety



You may have read about the Heartbleed Bug and the security risk it poses for electronic Internet data. Many of our customers access their billing and water usage history at My Ventura Water, our online portal. Our IT professionals have assessed the risks and as a precaution, have applied a patch to ensure data integrity. Also, for sensitive information such as credit cards, there have always been multiple layers of encryption to provide reliable security. However, this is a good reminder that changing your Internet passwords regularly is a smart habit.



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www.venturawater.net

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www.saveourh2o.org



www.epa.gov/watersense/



www.home-water-works.org/calculator



www.saveourh2o.org/sprinklers101

