

## Ventura Water Mails Proposed Rates Notice



Customers and property owners began receiving mailed **notices** last week about proposed water and wastewater rate increases. Following a six-month process with a **citizen Advisory Committee offering input, the new rates are based on a Cost of Service Study** and are designed to fund the operational and capital improvement budgets for the next four years.

The **2014 Cost of Service Study**

**Report** contains all the technical details about how the rates were set, but here are some key points for customers to keep in mind:

- The rates do fund some modest increases in the operational budgets, but the primary reason we are asking for more money is to fund an aggressive **capital improvement program**. Ventura is an older city and our water and wastewater infrastructure systems, and especially much of our 680 miles of pipelines, are nearing the end of their lifecycle.
- To keep rates steady and help our customers plan, the rates are proposed to be increased every July 1 for the next four years. The **bill** for an average residential household, using the same amount of water, will go up between \$5 and \$7 per month each year.
- We encourage our customers to **use less water**. This will minimize the impact to their bills of the higher rates.
- Complete information, including a **Bill Calculator**, is available at [cityofventura.net/water/rates](http://cityofventura.net/water/rates).
- Please contact Customer Care at [myvtawater@cityofventura.net](mailto:myvtawater@cityofventura.net) or (805) 667-6500 with any questions.

The **notice** contains information about the City Council's Public Hearing, scheduled for May 5, to consider the rates and how customers can **exercise their rights** under California law. Customers are also invited to a Town Hall informational meeting on April 17 at 6 p.m. at the City Sanjon Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road, Ventura. In addition, Ventura Water staff will be making presentations at community councils and other organizations over the next two months. If your group is interested in a presentation about the proposed rates and our water and wastewater infrastructure, please contact Sylvia Lopez at [slopez@venturawater.net](mailto:slopez@venturawater.net).



### Dear Valued Customer,

In early March, we experienced an extraordinary rain event in which the City of Ventura received over 5 inches of rain as measured at the Avenue Water Purification Facility. It has been widely reported that while this bountiful rain was helpful in inching closer to our average rainfall of 16 inches, it does not mean the drought is over.

At best, this rain will buy us some extra time before more drastic water reductions become necessary. As partners in managing Ventura's water, we ask you to use this time wisely to fix leaks, reduce your outdoor watering, replace inefficient appliances, and **take any action** that can save more water. The water you save today may be the water we use tomorrow.

Ventura has experienced droughts before and we are working on an

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## Learn About Planet-Friendly Landscapes



Ventura Water customers are invited to attend free Water Wise classes to learn about water-efficient landscaping. Since 40-60% of water is used outdoors, the classes are focused on helping homeowners and businesses reduce their water use to stretch water supplies during these historically dry conditions.

Classes are free, but space is limited. To register, visit [www.cityofventura.net/water/landscape](http://www.cityofventura.net/water/landscape) or call (805) 652-4501.

### **Edible Harvest Class – Saturday, April 5, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.**

*Location: Green Thumb Nursery, 1899 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura.*

Nursery expert Dave Nichols from Green Thumb will lead this fun and informative class about how to incorporate edibles into your landscape. Discover why it is beneficial, what to plant and when, and the benefits of nontoxic pest control.

### **Compost and Urban Soils Workshop – Saturday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to noon**

*Location: Cornucopia Community Garden, across from Ventura Community Park on Telephone Road, between Johnson Drive and Ramelli Avenue.*

Dr. Ben Faber from the University of California Extension and Paul Vaksvic, aka “Dr. Rot,” will expand your knowledge of water-holding capacity and the biology of soils. This fun and engaging class will teach participants how to create and use healthy compost, compost teas and natural humic acids to improve the vitality of soil.

### **Water Wise Watering Class – Saturday, May 3, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.**

*Location: City Public Works Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road.*

Ewing Irrigation professional Raul Topete will teach how to irrigate your landscape efficiently with the use of drip, rotating nozzles and smart controllers that maximize water and energy savings.

### **SoCal Bloomers Class – Saturday, June 14, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.**

*Location: City Public Works Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road.*

Lisa Burton of Nature by Design will help participants discover colorful, climate-appropriate plants to incorporate beautifully into a water-wise landscape. Burton has been installing lawn alternatives, Ocean Friendly Gardens and Wildlife Habitat Gardens for more than a decade in Ventura County.

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## March 1 Turf Alternatives Class Well Attended



On Saturday, March 1, more than 70 customers braved the pouring rain to learn about the history of the green lawn and today’s options to transform our tired turf into beautiful spaces that conserve our precious resources. The class was led by professional Garden Landscape Designer Lisa Burton (Nature by Design, [nbdgardens.com](http://nbdgardens.com)), who presented the benefits of landscapes that support our natural environment. [Read more](#)

action plan to respond to a serious water shortage, which we hope to bring to the City Council in June. The plan will lay out what actions we all need to take so we are working together to save water.

The drought has been among the topics we have been discussing with community groups over the past few weeks. The other vital subject we’ve been discussing is the [proposed four-year rate plan](#). All customers and property owners should have received in the mail recently an important [notice](#) about the proposed water and wastewater rates. We’ve been asking customers to think of the [money as an investment](#) in the reliability of our water infrastructure.

Ventura residents own our water and wastewater systems, and it is our collective responsibility to care for them. Over the next three decades, we will need to perform major [rehabilitation and replacement](#) of our extensive infrastructure systems. We cannot afford to wait to make these investments without risking much higher financial consequences and significant service disruptions. The long-term goal is to maintain a healthy water supply and infrastructure so that we protect Ventura’s economy and quality of life.

If you haven’t had the opportunity to hear us speak around town, please plan to attend a Town Hall informational meeting on Thursday, April 17, at the City Sanjon Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road, at 6 p.m. Also, if your group would like to have us speak about any water topics, please contact us.

Meanwhile, let’s all think rain and [keep saving water!](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shana Epstein', written over a light blue background.

Shana Epstein, General Manager



*Youth volunteers from City Church give climate-appropriate plants a new home as part of Fire Station No. 1's water-wise landscape makeover.*



**VENTURA  
WATER**

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[www.venturawater.net](http://www.venturawater.net)

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