

## **Re: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding The Rate Increase In Sewer User Fees**

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The sewer user rate increase will become effective July 22, 2005 and with the increase Customer Service anticipates an escalation in questions regarding the reasons behind an increase. To alleviate a burden on the personnel fielding the calls made to the Board of Supervisors, Deputy Director's support staff, Wastewater's reception area, or the Director himself, let me urge everyone to send the calls to me at 740-6636. Should the callers not wish to be forwarded to me, the following are examples of questions we have received in the past:

- **Why did my sewer bill go up again, I thought it changes only once a year-in July?**

The sewer billing is recalculated every July and there may be a change in the dollar amount of your bill depending upon the amount of water used in the months of December 2004, January 2005, and February 2005. The increase in the rate is occurring from a study done for Wastewater Management to determine the basic cost to maintain and repair sewer lines from the house sewer connection (HSC) or curb to the treatment plant and to address costs at the treatment plant. Wastewater Management has experienced increases in their cost of service, environmental compliance, and system repair/rehabilitation.

- **Why do you need so much money? Am I paying for all of the new houses and people coming here?**

We have raised the rates to maintain costs associated with delivering untreated sewage to the treatment plants, treatment at the plants, and extensive processing to help in providing reclaimed water. The revenue received from connection fees and not sewer user fees pays for new growth and building.

- **Why did the Administrative Fee get changed to a Service Fee? Why did it go up?**

We felt the term "Administrative Fee" was not complete enough in explaining the purpose of the fee. The term "Service Fee" indicates the costs covering maintenance, repair, and administrative costs to keep the conveyance and treatment systems working. The term Administrative Fee implies the cost of paper work to handle the sewer billing system, which is a partial description of fixed costs. The Service Fee covers the opportunity or availability to use the Public Sanitary Sewer System. Outside consultants, Black and Veatch, completed a study, which indicated Wastewater has been underbilling for this service.

- **Why is my sewer bill higher than my water bill?**

**The charge for sewer per gallon cannot be equated to the charge for water per gallon. The cost of delivering, treating, and processing for reclaimed purposes is not equal to pumping and treating ground water. In Pima County there are many water companies delivering water and each one charges a different amount per gallon. Each water company has a small service area to deliver water to, whereas, Pima County Wastewater Management is providing service to the majority of Pima County and part of southern Pinal County.**

- **Why did the Vacant/Vacation rate go up?**

**The vacant/vacation rate is actually the same as the Service Fee, which covers the opportunity or availability to use the Public Sanitary Sewer System. Outside**

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- **Why is this big increase necessary?**

**The need for more revenue arises from three main areas:**

- Projects and Improvements from the voter approved bonds in 2004.
- Treatment plant expansions at Randolph, Corona de Tucson, and Ina Road.
- Increased need for rehabilitation and repairs to the infrastructure.
- Increased cost related to environmental compliance.

- **Who can explain why my bill went up?**

**The Customer Service section of Wastewater Management is available to discuss the rate increase and reasons for the increase. The number is 740-6609 and the hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.**