

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO LOWER YOUR SEWER BILL?

As you make your way through the busy holiday season, you may not be thinking about next year's sewer bill. However, it is important to know that the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD) uses your water consumption during the winter months to calculate your fees for the following billing year which begins each July 1.

Your sewer bill is based on your water consumption during the "reading months" of December, January and February. We use these three months because they are typically the lowest three consecutive months of water usage during the year.

Your reading month depends on the day when your water meter is read. For example, if your water meter is read on December 15, your December billing cycle will cover November 15 – December 15.



## WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS THAT CAN HELP TO REDUCE YOUR SEWER BILL

To generate the lowest possible sewer charges during the next billing year (beginning July 1, 2014); make a special effort to conserve water during these winter months.

Conservation efforts can include actions as simple as turning off the water while brushing your teeth or washing dishes, as well as more complex efforts such as installing low-flow appliances. Finding and repairing any water leaks in your toilets and sinks and modifying showerheads and other faucets with low-flow devices can also help to reduce your water usage. Save water outdoors by maintaining irrigation systems and taking your vehicle to a commercial car wash instead of washing it at home.

## ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS

Low-income customers may be able to offset their sewer bills through the department's Sewer Outreach Subsidy (SOS) Program.

The SOS program has a tiered-rate structure based on federal poverty guidelines. Depending on income and household size, low-income customers may qualify for a partial discount (25%, 50%, or 75%) on their monthly sewer fees.

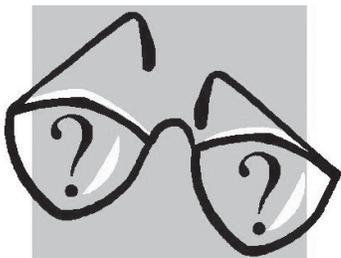
Participants must meet the following guidelines to qualify for this program:

- Be a residential sewer customer
- Have a water/ sewer bill in your name
- Meet income guidelines

Those who meet the federal poverty guidelines are encouraged to apply for the SOS Program. PCRWRD has contracted with the Pima County Community Action Agency (PCCAA) to administer this program.

You will need to schedule an appointment with PCCAA to determine your eligibility to participate in the SOS Program. Please call PCCAA at (520) 243-6794 to schedule an appointment. You will be prompted to leave your name and phone number and a PCCAA representative will contact you to set up an appointment time.

For more information about this program, please visit our website at: [http://www.pima.gov/wwm/fees/low\\_income.htm](http://www.pima.gov/wwm/fees/low_income.htm)



If you have any questions about your sewer bill, please contact our Customer Service section at 724-6609, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. You may also email us at [wastewatercs@pima.gov](mailto:wastewatercs@pima.gov).

## WHY IS MY SEWER BILL HIGHER THAN MY WATER BILL?

A common question we hear is, "Why is my sewer bill higher than my water bill?" The answer is simple: the cost of treating sewage is greater than the cost incurred by your local water provider to pump, treat and deliver ground water or to purchase, treat, and deliver Central Arizona Project water.

In recent years, there have been a series of sewer rate increases related to new mandated environmental standards. These standards are driven by the Clean Water Act (CWA). Under the Act, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency have required PCRWRD to make significant improvements to our treatment processes. To meet these standards, PCRWRD implemented several multi-year projects under a program known as the Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP). The upgrades and expansion of our facilities under the ROMP program will be completed in 2014.

***Regional Optimization Master Plan***

The ROMP consists of four major projects. Three of these projects (Tres Rios Water Reclamation Facility, Water and Energy Sustainability Center, and the Plant Interconnect) are now complete and in operation. The remaining project, the construction of the new Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility, is scheduled for completion in 2014.

***Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility***

The Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) will replace the existing Roger Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WRF) which was built in the early 1950s. The Agua Nueva WRF features state-of-the-art technology to meet modern-day environmental standards for discharge into the Santa Cruz River or to the community reclaimed water system. The reclaimed water system is owned and operated by Tucson Water, and is used to irrigate parks, golf courses and other turf facilities. The remaining reclaimed water is discharged into the Santa Cruz River where it recharges groundwater supplies and creates riparian habitats for wildlife. This new facility will have a capacity of 32 million gallons a day and is expected to be in operation in early 2014.

***Tres Rios Water Reclamation Facility***

Under the ROMP, the Tres Rios WRF (formerly known as the Ina Road WRF) was upgraded and expanded to 50 MGD. The Ina Road WRF was constructed in 1977. Before the ROMP, it had a capacity of 37.5 MGD. Today, the Tres Rios WRF features state-of-the-art technology to meet modern environmental standards. Although some work remains at the facility, in October of this year, the facility was considered to be substantially complete. The quality of the reclaimed water at the Tres Rios WRF exceeds the mandated environmental requirements.

***Water and Energy Sustainability Center***

The Water and Energy Sustainability Center (WESC) is the facility that houses the department’s new state-of-the-art central laboratory and training center. The doors to this facility opened in December 2011. Nearly 50,000 individual analyses are performed each year in the lab, which is part of a national network of laboratories that can provide emergency lab analyses in the event of a local, regional or national disaster.

***Plant Interconnect***

The Plant Interconnect, the first completed component of ROMP, became operational in April 2011. The Plant Interconnect is a five-mile-long gravity sanitary sewer that provides flow management between the Agua Nueva and Tres Rios Water Reclamation facilities. The Plant Interconnect received the prestigious National American Public Works Association project of the year award for 2013, under the category of Outstanding Large Environmental Public Works Project.

The original price tag for ROMP was projected to be \$720 million. Through a series of cost-savings measures, it appears the ROMP will be completed at less than \$645 million. This reflects a savings to Pima County sewer rate payers of at least \$75 million.



***Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department Contact Information***

General Information ( <i>during regular business hours</i> ).....	520-724-6500
Roach Control Hotline ( <i>Automated line, please provide requested information</i> ) .....	520-724-3401
Billing Section.....	520-724-6609
Sewer Emergencies .....	520-724-3400
To Report Odors.....	520-724-3400
Sewer Outreach Subsidy ( <i>Low-income bill assistance</i> ) .....	520-243-6794
Sewer Connection Information .....	520-724-6602
To Report Vandalism .....	911

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You can also access this information and more from our website, <http://www.pima.gov/wwm/about/contacts.htm>