

APRIL–JUNE 2008

## Counties to Consider 8 Percent Rate Increase

### WATER RATES ON THE RISE AROUND THE COUNTRY

At Pipeline press time, here was the situation regarding the proposed FY09 budget. On February 28, the WSSC Commissioners approved a proposed budget that calls for an 8 percent rate increase to pay for escalating prices for operational necessities, such as electric power, chemicals and fuel. It does not include any fee for long-term infrastructure renewal. The proposed budget has been sent to Prince George's and Montgomery County Councils for consideration. They will vote on the budget in May. The increased budget will allow for funding the replacement of 27 miles of water mains and 51 miles of sewer mains in FY09. The new rate will mean about an \$11 increase in quarterly bills for the average residential customer.

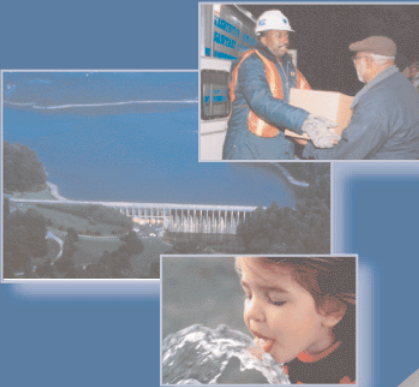
Around the country, from big cities such as New York and Chicago, to small towns, water and sewer bills are rising as communities confront the need to replace aging pipes and the rising cost of electrical power and chemicals. USA Today reported in December that the nation's water and wastewater systems need an investment of up to \$1.2 trillion over 20 years. It was reported that last year, the median residential bill was \$278 for water and \$276 for sewer service. Here's a sampling of big increases around the nation:

- Nashville residents face a 20 percent rate hike to expand, repair and replace the existing water and sewer system.
- Chicago increased its rate by 15 percent in 2008 and 14 percent in 2010 (44 percent increase over three years).
- In Columbia, Mo., the sewer rate is going up 105 percent starting next year to pay for infrastructure projects.
- Muskegon Heights, Mich., increased its water rate 100 percent for next year.

## Tap Water is a Bargain

**\$1 worth of WSSC water will fill nearly 2,200 20-oz bottles (bought for \$1.25 per bottle) and equals:**

- 125 gallons of bottled water (at \$8 per gal.).
- 333 gallons of gas (based on \$3 per gal.).
- 27 gallons of milk (\$3.75/gal.)
- 8 gallons of Starbucks coffee (\$2 for 20 oz. black coffee).
- 342 gallons of WSSC water.



### Commissioners

Prem P. Agarwal  
Gene W. Counihan  
Adrienne A. Mandel  
Dr. Juanita D. Miller  
Norman E. Pruitt  
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### Interim General Manager

Teresa D. Daniell

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Laurel, MD 20707

[www.wsscwater.com](http://www.wsscwater.com)

### General Numbers:

301-206-WSSC (9772)  
1-800-828-6439  
TTY: 301-206-8345

**To report a water or sewer emergency:**  
301-206-4002

WSSC provides water and wastewater services to Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

*We are entrusted by our community to provide safe and reliable water, life's most precious resource, and return clean water to the environment, all in a financially responsible manner.*



20% post-consumer content



## WSSC Welcomes Springtime

Spring is in the air...and in addition to providing the community with clean fresh water, WSSC offers its customers and the broader community many outdoor recreational opportunities.

WSSC recreation areas are now open for picnicking, boating, fishing and horseback riding.

The recreation areas include:

**Brighton Dam** – from mid-April to early June, the Azalea Garden flourishes. There is a covered picnic area and shore fishing (with MD fishing license for those over 16 years of age).

**Greenbridge Fishing Area** – a boat ramp and shore fishing (by permit only).

**Triadelphia Picnic and Fishing Area** – picnic area is open and shore fishing (by permit only) is allowed. The boat ramp will open depending on the water level.

**Pigtail Branch, Big Branch and Brown's Bridge** are closed for the 2008 season.

**Supple Lane Recreation Area** - providing a boat ramp and shore fishing (by permit only) and a picnic area.

**Scott's Cove** – shore fishing (by permit only), a picnic area and boat ramp.

The recreation areas are open from sunrise to sunset. Seasonal fishing permits are \$30.00 and a day permit costs \$3.00. Permits are required for persons 16 to 64 years of age.

For questions regarding WSSC recreation areas or required permits and activity fees, please contact the Brighton Dam Visitor's Center at (301) 774-9124.

## Infrastructure Plan is Solid Investment in the Future

The WSSC 30-year Infrastructure Plan, a solid investment in the future, has now moved into its next phase. This involves "drilling down" into the various elements to determine their condition, estimated remaining life span and devise the program to refurbish or replace. "This is tedious and difficult work that looks at all assets down to each small valve and screw," says Gary Gumm, WSSC Chief Engineer. "It will provide WSSC with a roadmap to refurbishing and replacing the Commission's aging water and wastewater systems over time."

The plan's goal is to ensure the reliable delivery of drinking water and the proper treatment of wastewater for the people of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties now and into the foreseeable future.

The first phase of the plan, crafted in cooperation with staff from Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, involved a broad examination of the condition and lifespan of all of the Commission's major assets. Among its major findings:

- 50 percent of WSSC's entire distribution system will reach or exceed its useful life by 2025.
- Out of the nearly 5,500-plus miles of mains WSSC maintains, 1,300 are more than 50 years old. Another 2,400 miles of pipes are between 25 and 50 years old.
- WSSC's wastewater collection system still has a substantial lifespan left. However, three types of sewer pipes are in poor condition and several drainage basins will require significant attention over the next 30 years.

The news about WSSC's above-ground assets, including its buildings, plants and pumping stations is more promising. In general, these assets are in good condition.



## Turning Wind into Water

Beginning in April, WSSC is using wind power to provide one-third of its electricity needs for the next 10 years. WSSC customers and employees will benefit from an agreement with Constellation Energy Project & Services to use power generated by 262-foot high wind turbines in southwestern Pennsylvania.

WSSC will save between \$10 and \$20 million over the next 10 years by locking in a price for 33 percent of WSSC's power.

It is estimated that the wind farm's green output will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 84 million pounds a year, sulfur dioxide by 583,000 pounds a year and nitric oxide by 188,000 pounds a year. The wind farm will make WSSC one of the largest local government users of renewable energy in the United States.