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Director  
Finance Department*

## **CITY OF ROCKFORD IS MOVING TO MONTHLY WATER BILLS!!**

Starting in January 2009 the City, just like other utilities, will begin issuing monthly water bills to all its customers. Going to monthly billing requires us to change our processes and procedures as well as the ordinance that governs the Water Utility. This letter will explain the changes that will occur in switching to monthly billing and how they will affect you and your water account.

### **Why Monthly Billing?**

Citizens will benefit by this change because monthly billing will provide:

1. Improved Customer Service
2. Consumer Safety – ability to catch leaks and problems quicker.
3. Problem Resolution – allow citizens to get information quicker, which facilitates problem resolution.
4. Budget – provides citizens an easier way to budget their bills.
5. Payment – provide more payment options for citizens.

### **Won't this cost the City more?**

Although we realize that there are additional mailing and printing expenses involved with switching from quarterly to monthly billing, our overall goal is to improve customer satisfaction and safeguard the City's revenue stream. Monthly billing will eliminate the need to do special mailings for delinquent bills and turn off notices, which will actually reduce our current mailing expense. By outsourcing the printing and mailing of monthly bills the City will receive a cost savings.

### **Will my bill look the same?**

Beginning with your January 2009 bill, the monthly water and garbage bill will look different. It will be easier to read and contain information about your water usage over the past 12 months.

### **Will I be paying more for water and garbage?**

The only changes to the water and garbage rates are that they go from a quarterly rate to a monthly rate. For example, the quarterly garbage rate of \$33.60 will now be a monthly rate of \$11.20. If you want an estimate of what your monthly bill might be, then take your last bill and divide by 3, this is only an estimate.

### **Will my January 2009 bill be for 1 month's service?**

The January bill will be a transition bill in moving from quarterly to monthly billing. What this means is that every water account will have its water meter read in December. This reading will then be compared to the account's prior meter reading to determine the amount of water used. If the prior reading was done in October, the January bill would cover 2 months of service. If the prior reading was done in November, the January bill would cover 1 month of service. Review the meter read dates on your January bill to determine how many months are included. Going forward all water meters will be read on a monthly basis. Your February bill will be the first true monthly water bill.

### **When is my water bill payment due?**

Your water bill payment is due and payable on the date of the bill. If the City does not receive payment within twenty-two (22) days after the date of the bill, a penalty of ten (10) per cent of the bills outstanding balance will be

added to the account. You **will not** receive a delinquency notice. Your next monthly bill will show the current month's charges and, if not paid, the prior month's bill with penalty as a past due balance. This bill will be your **Final Notice** and water service will be terminated if all bills are not paid within 20 days of the Final Turn Off Notice bill date.

**How will owner-only billing affect property owners and tenants?**

The City is switching to only sending water bills to the owners of the property. Since the owner is ultimately responsible for the water bills the bills should be sent to the owner's address and the owner should ensure that payment is made in a timely basis. This will be phased in as tenants change.

**How does the new ordinance affect home sales for City water customers?**

Any new potential owner, mortgagee, trustee or lien claimant of any premise in the City to determine if there are any delinquent water bills, taxes, rent or service fees owed on the premise before purchasing, transferring or instituting foreclosure proceedings on the property. The new potential owner shall notify the City's Water Customer Service (815-987-5700) department of the change in ownership at least ten (10) days before the closing or transfer date. This will initiate a final read and calculation of a final bill which should be paid to the City or the Title Company prior to the new customer being added to the account.

If the City is not notified of ownership change as stated above or the Final bill has not been paid prior to ownership change, then the new owner is responsible for all outstanding water bills, taxes, rents or service fees owned on the premise being bought, sold or transferred.

**Can I still use Electronic Bill Paying through my Bank?**

Yes. However please be sure that the payment set up information is correct. Use your water bill account number as the account number on the payment set up. If your water bill account number begins with a zero, be sure to enter the zeros on the payment set up. In the memo section of the payment set up enter your customer number which is located at the top of the utility bill. The account and customer numbers will speed up the posting of your payment. Not having this information will delay posting and may subject you to late fees.

**What other payment options will be available with monthly billing?**

The City will be implementing online payment options with the switch to monthly billing. Online options will be presented at a later date.

**What other changes are taking place?**

On top of the switch to monthly water billing, the City will be implementing other changes to improve collection. Turn off Rate Increase: The charge to customers when water needs to be shut off due to non-payment will increase from \$25 to \$75. The new rate more accurately reflects staff and equipment time necessary to perform the turn off. Require Social Security Numbers/Tax ID Numbers: The City plans to require social security numbers or tax id numbers from all new customers and in order to turn existing customers back on after delinquent shut offs. All major utilities collect this information from customers to improve collection rates for unpaid bills. The implementation date of this requirement is still to be determined. Customers will be notified before this change is implemented.

Attached is a sample of the new monthly bill format. It is a SAMPLE only, to show you what to expect in January.

If you have questions about any of these changes or how they will affect you, please contact Customer Service at (815) 987-5700.



Account Number  
**11111111**

Customer #	Customer Name	Bill Number
222222	John Sample	33333333

Service Address  
**123 Main Street**

Bill Date  
**09/17/2008**

**Account Summary**

Previous Balance	Credits / Penalties	Payments	Current Charges	Amount Due
	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$89.76</b>	<b>\$78.84</b>	<b>\$78.84</b>

**Office Hours:**  
Mon/Fri 8:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.

**Questions about your bill?**  
Please call 815-987-5700

**After Hours Emergency**  
Please call the Water Dept. at:  
815-987-5712

**Message Center**  
A 9% surcharge is added to all rates on properties not used exclusively for residential purposes. All rates are doubled for properties outside the city limits.

**Rubbish Fee:**  
The rubbish collection fee for all one through four family dwelling units within the City of Rockford is \$11.20 per month per residential unit.

Please note:  
Rubbish pick up is provided by Rock River Disposal. For service issues please contact them at 815-965-2489.

**Billing Detail**

Previous Balance .....	\$89.76	
Payments .....	89.76	
Credits .....	0.00	
Penalties .....	0.00	
Balance Forward .....		\$0.00

**Current Charges**

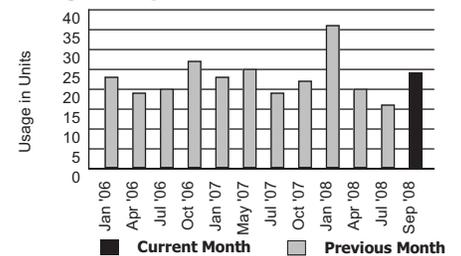
Water 5/8 Residential (24 Units) .....	57.90	
Rubbish Pickup - Flat Rate .....	18.04	
Water Tax .....	2.90	
Total Current Charges.....		78.84
<b>Total Amount Due .....</b>		<b>\$78.84</b>

This bill is due and payable upon receipt. Late payment ordinance 10% of total, after 22 days.

**Meter Data**

Service: **Water 5/8 Residential**  
Present Read Type: **Estimated**  
Present Reading: **500** on 09/12/2008  
Previous Reading: **476** on 07/25/2008  
Total Usage: **24 Units\***

**Usage Graph - Water**



\*1 unit is equal to 100 Cubic Feet

Please detach and return bottom portion and return with your payment.

THE CITY OF  
**ROCKFORD**  
ILLINOIS, USA  
425 E. State Street • Rockford, IL 61104  
*Address Service Requested*

**Water & Rubbish Bill**

Make check or money order payable to  
**City of Rockford** Account Number  
**11111111**

Bill Date	Penalty Date	Amount Due
<b>09/17/2008</b>	<b>10/21/2008</b>	<b>78.84</b>

**NOTE: If paid After 10/21/2008, the Amount Due is \$86.72**

Please write your Account Number: **11111111** on your check



\*\*\*\*\*SINGLE-PIECE  
John Sample  
ROCKFORD IL 61109-1029-1029



For address changes,  
property or contract sales,  
please call 815-987-5700  
(Menu OPTION 2)

00006042008162225005800000078840

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

City of Rockford Has Levels of Combined Radium Above Drinking Water Standards

Our water system has violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct the situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. The running annual average over the last quarter is 8.0 pCi/L. Testing results we received on September 30, 2008 show that some of our well sites exceed the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL) for combined radium. The standard for combined radium is 5pCi/L. The well sites with the average level of combined radium that exceed the MCL over the last quarter are:

Well Site	Address	Combined Radium Concentration	Well Site	Address	Combined Radium Concentration
Well #16	4550 Harrison Ave.	6.5 pCi/L	Well #36	4141 Samuelson Rd.	7.2 pCi/L
Well #30	6544 Palo Verde	5.7 pCi/L	Well #29	4750 Pepper Dr.	7.7 pCi/L
Well #27	5834 Guilford Rd.	6.9 pCi/L	Well #43	3447 Publishers Dr.	6.1 pCi/L

**What should I do?**

**You do not need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply.** However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

**What does this mean?**

This is not an immediate risk. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. *However, certain minerals are radioactive and may emit a form of radiation known as alpha radiation. Some people who drink water containing radium-226 or radium-228 in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.*

**What happened? What is being done?**

The City is in the process of evaluating treatment options and anticipates developing definitive course of action within the next year. For more information, please contact Rockford Water Superintendent, Tim Holdeman at 987-5738 or Water Quality Manager, Nadine Miller at 987-5713.

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. This notice is being sent to you by the City of Rockford in accordance with Federal and State regulations. Water System ID#2010300*

**Reminders from the City of Rockford:**

- Property must be kept free of any accumulation of garbage or rubbish. Place trash at the curbside or in the alley no earlier than 3:00 p.m. the night before scheduled weekly pickup and no later than 6:00 a.m. of the day of scheduled collection. Return containers to their original location by 8:00 a.m. of the day following the day of collection.
- Inoperable vehicles are prohibited on public or private property and in view of the public.
- Cars, trucks, vans and motorcycles should be parked on paved surface or driveway.
- RV's, campers, travel trailers and boats may be stored only in side and rear yards.
- Grass and weeds should be no longer than 10 inches tall.

From the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance and Property Maintenance Code. Any questions on above items, call Neighborhood Standards at 987-5566

City of Rockford Ordinance Sec 25-63.

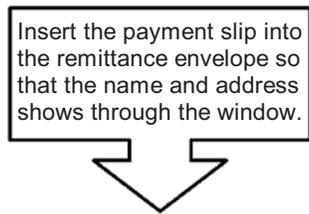
- A one time 10% penalty will be charged on all unpaid balances 22 days after the bill date. The penalty will be recorded on the next month's bill and will serve as a final notice that water service will be terminated within 20 days of the current bill date.

City of Rockford Health and Sanitation Ordinance Sec. 25-61. Municipal Service Fees.

- Application for water service to a residential unit shall automatically be considered application for garbage collection service.
- Termination of water service to a residential unit shall also terminate garbage collection service to that residential unit.
- It is the property owner's responsibility to contact the accounts receivable dept. about changes in ownership and questions about vacancies.

Please tear along the perforation and return this portion with your payment.

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD, FILL OUT BELOW.	
CHECK CARD USING FOR PAYMENT	
 MASTERCARD	 DISCOVER
 VISA	 VISA
CARD NUMBER	SIGNATURE CODE *
SIGNATURE	EXP. DATE
* M/C, DISCOVER & VISA - Last 3 digits on Back of Card	
<b>SHOW AMOUNT PAID HERE</b> \$	



**PAYMENT CENTER**  
**CITY OF ROCKFORD**  
 P.O. BOX 1221  
 ROCKFORD IL 61105-1221



Billing Address (if different)

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\_\_\_\_\_

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