



**E-NEWS**  
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*New Year's Message 2010*

As we begin the New Year in 2010 we thank all of our customers for your patience and support during the 2009 construction season. Many of you have already realized the benefits of these vital improvements to both water quality and overall service. This year we are preparing to continue these programs and start work on a new treatment plant and various distribution system and service pipe replacements. The majority of the infrastructure replacement work for the upcoming year will take place in Coventry, East Greenwich and West Warwick. The completion stages including final paving for last year's construction projects in Cranston, East Greenwich and West Warwick will commence as weather permits in early spring. The commencement of contractor work will be preceded by newspaper advertisement notification to assist our customers and municipalities in the coordination of activities during this period.

We look forward to a very productive construction season and appreciate your patience and understanding as the construction activities progress throughout 2010.

Last year sales did not meet the Public Utilities prediction figures used to establish rates to meet operational and obligatory budgetary requirements. The realized revenue shortfall restricts us from fulfilling our financial obligations and legislatively mandated requirements over the remainder of the fiscal year. After restricting future spending and considering all the consequential factors, it was with great reluctance that the Board of Directors moved to request a minimal increase in rates necessary to meet our mandated obligations. At this point it is anticipated that even with the imposed spending restrictions and prevailing cutback in personnel, rates must increase by 8.2% percent to meet known and measurable budgetary obligations. Yet with the projected increase in rates, water is still the best bargain in town in comparison to other utility and cable services; less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cent per gallon delivered to your home. Final rate determinations are reviewed, adjusted and approved by the Public Utilities Commission based on the determinations made by their hired consultants as part of the rate process. The Board of the Kent County Water Authority would like to thank all customers for their understanding given the current revenue shortfall situation and we look forward to working with you during this year on all of our programs that are aimed at benefiting our customers.

## *New Rates*

As of October 5, 2009 the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) approved new water rates for all customers of the Kent County Water Authority. The new rates were of a pass through increase associated with the PUC approval of the Providence Water Supply Board wholesale rate increase. Kent County Water Authority did not receive any additional revenue from this filing. An increase in rates is never easy for any of

us. This increase was necessary to cover the Public Utilities approved increase in the cost of wholesale water purchased from the Providence Water Supply Board. Our Board of Directors feels it is very important to balance the overall costs of water supply, the system and our customer needs very carefully. This is why we embrace the regulatory rate process to provide a complete and transparent review of water rate filings that impact our customers. This process assures our customers the cost efficiency they deserve. Our new rates can be found on our website. We will be happy to discuss our rates with you. Please feel free to contact our customer service department at 821-9300 should you desire additional information or we can be of further assistance to you on this subject.

## *Statewide Supplemental Water Supply Feasibility Assessment.*

In 2008 the Rhode Island Water Resources Board completed a study to assess the potential risk of losing critical water sources of the State's major water suppliers in an attempt to identify potential supplemental emergency water sources to meet emergency demands. The assessment indicated it did not consider development of new surface water sources as part of the supplemental supply portion of the study. Loss of the Providence Water Supply Board source was indicated to present the largest impact on our customers. The assessment conclusions rely on existing local supplemental sources to provide minimum levels of service during a loss of a critical supply source. Many of which will require extensive infrastructure or development of alternate pumping facilities to be viable. We are unaware of any action by the state to move forward with any of the facility improvement recommendations necessary to implement the water strategy conclusions in this report.

It is our understanding that the Water Resources Board is continuing to move towards evaluating the potential of developing drinking water wells in the Big River Reservoir Management Area. It is well documented that groundwater aquifers that support well withdrawals do not provide sufficient storage capacity necessary during the summer use period and during drought conditions. Essentially the water is not there when you need it most. Results from test well development pumping studies indicate that initial assumptions on future production well capacity were overstated by the study engineers. It has been subsequently determined that an increase in the number of production wells will be necessary to meet the well field supply capacity output contemplated by the Water Resource Board for this type of drinking water resource. State regulatory requirements for permitting new groundwater sources have remained not well defined or specific enough to fully evaluate the overall cost associated with meeting the open-ended prerequisite requirements for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management groundwater withdrawal application and permitting process. Very limited progress has been made to date towards obtaining a viable cost effective withdrawal permit on this initiative because of regulatory ambiguities and funding issues.

Water supply is perhaps the most important component to statewide economic sustainability and a reservoir in the Big River Management is the only long term cost effective solution to both drinking water and environmental viability in this state. A second reservoir system is also intrinsic to future growth and to respond to future supply needs resultant from malevolent acts or major catastrophic events with the Scituate reservoir system. We will continue to bring forward our concerns regarding the water supply industry in the state and present ideas for improvement and/or modification as appropriate. We urge all customers to consider the same by contacting their senator or representative to voice your concerns regarding the future of water supply in Rhode Island. An abundant reliable supply is crucial to our growth and well-being of the state.

## *Cold Weather Protection*

The onset of colder weather means the possibility of frozen pipes and the potential for damage as things thaw. Drafts on un-insulated pipes and failure to drain the branch connection to outside hose bibs are common occurrences leading to leaks and flooding as pipes thaw. Preparation for the cold weather is the most important step to mitigation of these types of problems. Thoroughly inspect your plumbing and make sure there are no openings or faulty windows in the vicinity of where the plumbing runs along the foundation or outer walls of your home. Many products are available for “Do It Yourself” fix for these types of problem areas. Know where your meter isolation valve is and make sure it is in proper working order. This is your first response to isolate the water to your plumbing should a leak occur. Even if you have not experienced problems in the past, it’s important to inspect your plumbing and perform annual preventative maintenance to protect your property from unforeseen changes as things age.

## *Water Conservation News*

It may have once been thought that the New England area was abundant in potable water supplies. We are quickly coming to the realization that our everyday use is reaching the limits of our developed supplies. This is especially true during cycles of dry summers or periods of drought. Drinkable water supplies are a limited natural resource that requires affirmative conservation measures by all of us today. The effective use of water-efficient products and practices can help save natural resources and reduce water consumption and costs. Products bearing the “WaterSense” label allow consumers to readily identify products and services that use less water and also perform as well or better than conventional models.

The next time you purchase water using a product (i.e. dishwasher, washing machine, and toilet) look for the WaterSense label. In general, WaterSense labeled products will be about 20 percent more water efficient than their less efficient counterparts in the same category. If a WaterSense product is not available you should consider ENERGY STAR labeled products as these are also made with efficiency in mind.

## ***Backflow Prevention***

Legislative initiative in 2007 resulted in new laws concerning cross connection control and backflow prevention. The Rhode Island Department of Health has promulgated new rules that outline enforceable regulatory requirements concerning the installation of backflow prevention appurtenances in both residential and commercial buildings. The new requirements mainly focus on “containment.” Containment requires the installation of an appropriate backflow prevention device directly after the meter in the vicinity where the water service enters the building. Rhode Island plumbing code also requires the installation of thermal expansion controls in conjunction with the backflow device installation. To be in compliance with the new regulations, the Kent County Water Authority has implemented revised full scale cross connection control requirements as part of its Rules and Regulations. Copies of the Kent County Water Authority Regulations can be obtained at our office or online at [www.kentcountywater.org](http://www.kentcountywater.org).

## ***Shutoff For Nonpayment On The Rise***

Over the past four billing periods we have seen a marked increase in delinquent accounts. Failure to make payment on your bill eventually leads to a shutoff notice and subsequent discontinuance of service. The charge for shutoff of a delinquent account is \$55.00. After payment of

the delinquent amount the turn on charge is \$45.00. This amounts to an additional \$100.00 dollars added to the delinquent amount before water service can be restored to your property. It is very important that you contact us as soon as you think you may not be able to make payment within the normal 30 day grace period. At that time we can discuss options for payment and perhaps offer a payment plan to get you through a tough period and avoid the shutoff and turn on charges. If you stay within your payment structure it will save you from the additional \$100.00 charge associated with the shutoff and turn on policy.

## *Water Legislation*

The 2009 session of State Legislature approved new laws pertaining to water use and conservation outlined in the Water Use and Government Efficiency Act 2009. At this point we are unsure of the implications this new legislation will have until state agencies develop and implement regulatory guidance on the content of the new law. As things develop we will keep our customers informed on our website [www.kentcountywater.org](http://www.kentcountywater.org).

## *Notice to New Customers*

If you haven't had the opportunity yet, be sure to check out the new 2008 Water Quality Report on our website along with our new Wise Water Use Tips Brochure and our Household Water Audit Brochure at [www.kentcountywater.org](http://www.kentcountywater.org). The information for the 2009 Water Quality Report is currently being compiled. This report is scheduled to be posted on our web site and mailed to your home June 2010.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to call our offices at 821-9300 between 8 am and 4 pm or email us at [customerservice@kentcountywater.org](mailto:customerservice@kentcountywater.org).

**Watch for our next issue in March.**