

## **Media Release**

**For Immediate Release**

September 16, 2021

# **PRVWSD raises water/sewer rates**

The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District Board of Directors on Thursday approved a rate increase for its water and sewer customers effective for the October billing cycle.

The rate increase is necessary to offset the higher costs the state agency is paying its regional sewer providers, PRVWSD General Manager John Sigman told board members at its September meeting.

“We are looking at an 80 percent increase in what we pay to the West Rankin Utility Authority, which just built a \$150 million wastewater treatment plant that is scheduled to go online in October,” Sigman said. “That’s in addition to past increases by both the Madison County Wastewater Authority and the East Madison County Sewage Disposal System.

“The agency has absorbed those increases in Madison County without increasing rates to our customers, but we can no longer afford to continue absorbing those costs if we are to maintain a fund to repair and replace infrastructure, some of which is 50 years old.”

While PRVWSD supplies its residents with clean water from its own wells, all sewage is sent to regional providers to be processed. Prior to the new wastewater facility opening in Rankin County, all of the sewage has been sent by Rankin County and south Madison County to be processed at Jackson’s Savannah Street facility. In October, the Rankin County sewage will be carried to the new facility.

PRVWSD's last water/sewage rate increase was passed six years ago with built-in annual escalations that ended in 2020.

The new increase will average out to about 20 percent per customer, mostly through a new line item on the monthly bill called a Regional Sewage Charge (RSC). This is a charge, Sigman said, that most surrounding communities in the metro area are already billing their customers, and mostly at higher rates than PRVWSD will be charging. PRVWSD's RSC for FY 2022 is based on a \$2.25 fee per 1,000 gallons of water used.

Rates currently charged in neighboring communities range from \$2 to as high as \$5.35.

Under the new PRVWSD rates, a customer who uses 6,000 gallons of water per month currently pays \$68.40 per month for water and sewer. Beginning in October, that same customer would receive a bill for \$82.50, an increase of \$14.10.

Sigman said that there will be small increases in both the water (5 cents per 1,000 gallons) and sewer (15 cents per 1,000 gallons) volumetric charges, a fee charged only to those customers using over 3,000 gallons of water a month.

The current water volumetric rate is \$5.45 per 1,000 gallons, which will increase to \$5.50 per 1,000. The current sewer volumetric rate is \$7.35 per 1,000 gallons and will increase to \$7.50 per 1,000 gallons.

Sigman said that nearly half of PRVWSD's customers will see only the increase created by the regional sewage charge. Leaseholders using less than 3,000 gallons in July 2021 made up 47 percent of PRVWSD's residential customers (2,578 of 5,487). Those customers will see their bills increase from the current \$30 per month to as high as \$37.50.

Thursday's rate increase was approved for the water year 2022, which begins Oct. 1 2021.