



# WAUSAU WATER WORKS

FOR YOU!

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Winter 2009-2010

## Sewer Rates to Increase

Sewer rates for residents in the City of Wausau, and a portion of the Town of Stettin (area that is served with sewer service), will increase as of January 4 by 8%. For an average family of four, this will increase their bill by about 5 cents per day. A complete rate schedule is shown on page 4 of this newsletter. The increase in rates is needed to help offset increases in chemicals and other operating expenses.

Sewer consumption charges for most residential properties are determined by the amount of water that is used during the winter quarter. In other words, if you use 10 units of water during your winter quarter, then your sewer base is set at 10 units until it is reset the following winter quarter. As an example, if your water usage goes up during the summer months, for instance to 20 units, you would still only pay sewer based on the winter quarter usage of 10 units. This adjustment applies only to full-time residents. New consumers and homeowners/renters who are gone during the winter months pay sewer usage based on their water usage for each quarter, as do non-residential customers.

Wausau Water Works had also applied to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) for a simplified rate adjustment of 3.8% for the water division. This application was withdrawn.

## Pipeline Request Approved

The Wausau Water Works Commission and the Wausau Common Council approved a request by the Central Wisconsin Pipeline Planning Committee to sell water under a wholesale arrangement to water starved communities in western Marathon County. These communities, working as a water authority, will be responsible for extending mains to their respective communities in order to distribute the water. Wausau will provide a connection point on the west side of the City. The decision to sell water was made after review of a capacity study conducted by Becher Hoppe Associates which reviewed Wausau's capacity for the next 60 years and confirmed adequate availability.



*No, it's not the Wausau subway, the picture above shows a sanitary sewer main being installed inside a storm sewer. The photo was taken in 1934, and the contractor for the project was United Construction Company. Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association.*

## Wausau Water Works Celebrates 125th Anniversary

2010 marks the 125th anniversary of Wausau Water Works. We wonder what our forefathers, who started the utility to provide water mainly to fight fires (not to provide drinking water) would think if they could see all the changes that have occurred. Wausau Water Works currently provides water and sewer service to over 16,000 customers, has approximately 250 miles of mains, and over 1600 hydrants. Although having meters to register the amount of water a property uses wasn't part of the big picture back in 1885, could they have ever imagined being able to read over 5000 meters in only a few hours through the magic of radio technology, or extending the life of a sewer main by inserting a flexible liner? What will the next 125 years bring???



## Homes Need Extra Care During Winter

Every winter we typically see a number of homes that have frozen meters, frozen laterals or frozen pipes. While all three can be troublesome, most can be avoided. Taking a little extra care around the house to make sure that doors and windows are securely closed, especially in basements where meters and pipes are normally located, can help eliminate problems with freeze-ups. If you have a finished basement make sure that warm air can circulate around your water meter. Once temperatures dip to sub-zero range, and frost starts to drop down further in the ground, laterals can also freeze. Hoses should also be disconnected from outside faucets, even those with freezeless faucets.

Property owners who spend winters in warmer climates should also arrange for a reliable friend or relative to come and check their home regularly. Only a night or two without heat can lower the temperature in your home enough to cause frozen pipes. Once the house starts to reheat, even just a simple crack in a pipe can cause significant property damage and expense.

Below are a few tips that can help you keep pipes in tip-top shape.

**Tip #1: Always protect pipes from freezing!** During winter months it is important to remember that unprotected water pipes and water meters are vulnerable to freezing. To help prevent this problem, make sure that minimum heat

(between 40-50 degrees Fahrenheit) is provided to basements or anywhere else where the water meter



or pipes are located. Inspect these areas to make sure that there are no water pipes near broken windows, open basement doors, or cracked basement foundations. Ol'man winter is sure to allow a chilly draft to blow on exposed water pipes, causing quick freeze-ups. In homes with improved basements, where water meters reside behind walls, open the wall space to allow ample air circulation and heat to flow around the meter. In older homes, pipes under kitchen and bathroom sinks that are located on outside walls are susceptible to freezing. Open the cupboard doors so that warm air can also protect these pipes.

**Tip #2: Thawing Frozen Pipes:** Before attempting to thaw a frozen pipe, the shut-off valve for the building plumbing should be located and operated. **This is important!** When thawing, if you were to discover that the pipe had a crack, you should immediately **shut off** the water supply. Shut-off valves are normally located on either side of the water meter. If you cannot locate the shut-off valve, or they do not work, you may want to contact Wausau Water Works to shut your service off at the curb. (Please note that we are required to charge a fee to turn the service back on, and that response may take some time, especially after our normal working hours.)

**When thawing a frozen pipe, never use an open flame!** It is much safer to direct the hot air from a hair dryer at the section of pipe that is blocked by ice. Heat tape can also be safely used to thaw out a frozen water pipe.

**Tip #3 - Protect Vacant Homes and Businesses.** If you own a home or business that is vacant, safeguards need to be in place to prevent freeze-ups.

- Maintain heat in all areas of the building, including the basement. Thermostats should be set at 50 degrees or higher.
- Leave doors open under sinks or other closed areas to circulate warm air.
- Turn off the water heater. If it is electric, turn it off completely. If it is gas, turn the controls to pilot. Unplug water softeners so that they won't regenerate.
- If you **DO NOT** have hot water or steam heat, turn the water off at the valve by the meter.
- If you shut off your water by the meter, open the hot and cold faucets in the kitchen sink.
- Have a trusted friend or relative check your vacant property periodically, if you're unable to check it yourself. This is especially important during extreme cold snaps.
- If you will be gone for an extended period of time, or the property will be without heat, you should contact Wausau Water Works to have your water shut off at the curb and your meter removed. You can then drain and winterize your entire system. (Please note that we are required to charge a fee to turn the service back on, but it is considerably less than the cost of water used or property damage, if a pipe were to burst.)

## Adopt a Hydrant

As winter comes and drops that snowy blanket on everything, it's important to remember your neighborhood fire hydrant as you're shoveling or snowblowing. Remember, keeping hydrants free of snow and accessible to fire fighters could mean saving either your property or your neighbors, and could mean the difference between life and death.





Gus Strehlo, front, with staff from the Wastewater Treatment Plant (left to right) Ken Rye, Matt Baker, Lonnie Lewis, Ric Frahm, Kevin Hertel, Mark Sowinski, Mark Hilgendorf, Tom Blaschka, John Grall, Jim Riege, and Pat VanOuse.

*Photo courtesy of Ed Wodalski/Municipal Sewer and Water Magazine*

## Gus Strehlo Featured In Treatment Plant Operator Magazine

Gus Strehlo, Wastewater Superintendent for Wausau Water Works was recently featured in the November issue of Treatment Plant Operator Magazine.

Gus was also recognized as Operator of the Year in 2008 by the Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association.

Gus, who has been employed as Wastewater Superintendent since January 1979, will retire in January 2010, after 31 years of service.

We thank Gus for his many years of service and wish him all the best in his retirement!

## Retirements -

2009 was a big year for a number of employees who decided to hang up their hats and enjoy the life of leisure. Jim Riege, Assistant Wastewater

Superintendent retired on July 3rd after almost 36 years of service to the utility.

Lonnie Lewis, Lead Maintenance Mechanic also retired on December 3rd after 29 year of service.

Both Jim and Lonnie will be missed, however we wish them many relaxing days ahead.

## Welcome Aboard....

There are a couple of new faces amongst the ranks at Wausau Water Works. We'd like to welcome Rick Dorn who was hired in August as a Distribution Maintainer for the Drinking Water Division. We'd also like to welcome John Rick who was hired in December as the Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor.

Congratulations also to Brad Marquardt has been appointed the new Director of Public Works and Utilities. We're looking forward to the innovative ideas Brad will bring to the utility.



## Good-bye Joe

Joe Gehin, Director of Public Works and Utilities, retired on December 28 after 30 years of service to the City of Wausau and Wausau Water Works.

Many changes were seen at the utility under the direction of Joe, including automation of both water and wastewater plants, reducing staffing needs from 24/7, to one shift, 5 days a week. Meter reading functions were streamlined, taking the reading of meters from two weeks per month by 2-3 employees to just a few hours each month. Customer billing functions were improved with several generations of computerized billing systems. Many miles of water and sewer mains were installed, as the City of Wausau continued to grow. Joe has led Wausau into the new millennium with his vision for the future, seeing the positive opportunities that existed not only for the City but the regional area as well.

Joe's friendly, easy going demeanor will be missed by fellow employees and residents alike.

Joe, best wishes for a relaxing, well deserved retirement!



# Water Works Rate Schedule

## Water Rates: Effective 3/1/06

### Quarterly Service Charge

(based on size of water meter)

5/8 inch meter.....	\$ 15.00
3/4 inch meter.....	15.00
1 inch meter.....	24.00
1-1/4 inch meter.....	36.00
1-1/2 inch meter.....	42.00
2 inch meter.....	63.00
3 inch meter.....	114.00
4 inch meter.....	162.00
6 inch meter.....	306.00
8 inch meter.....	468.00
10 inch meter.....	687.00
12 inch meter.....	906.00

### Plus Volume Charge below:

First 6,000 cubic feet used each quarter  
- \$1.64 per 100 cubic feet.  
Next 54,000 cubic feet used each  
quarter - \$1.49 per 100 cubic feet.  
Over 60,000 cubic feet used each  
quarter - \$1.13 per 100 cubic feet.

## Sewer Rates: Effective 1/4/10

### Quarterly Service Charge

(based on size of water meter)

5/8 inch meter.....	\$ 15.01
3/4 inch meter.....	16.85
1 inch meter.....	21.71
1-1/4 inch meter.....	26.14
1-1/2 inch meter.....	30.67
2 inch meter.....	46.44
3 inch meter.....	77.76
4 inch meter.....	122.04
6 inch meter.....	235.44

### Plus Volume Charge below:

All volume, as recorded by the water  
meter each quarter, shall be charged at  
the rate of \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet.  
Unmetered sewer rate is \$69.53 per  
quarter outside the City of Wausau.

## Private Fire Protection: Eff. 3/1/06

(based on size of connection)

2 inch connection.....	\$ 12.00
3 inch connection.....	22.00
4 inch connection.....	37.00
6 inch connection.....	74.00
8 inch connection.....	117.00
10 inch connection.....	176.00
12 inch connection.....	256.00

## Public Fire Protection: Eff. 3/1/06

(based on size of water meter)

5/8 inch meter.....	\$ 8.70
3/4 inch meter.....	8.70
1 inch meter.....	21.60
1-1/4 inch meter.....	31.80
1-1/2 inch meter.....	42.90
2 inch meter.....	69.00
3 inch meter.....	129.00
4 inch meter.....	216.00
6 inch meter.....	432.00
8 inch meter.....	684.00
10 inch meter.....	1026.00

Payments must be received in the City  
of Wausau Customer Service  
Department, City Hall, by the 20th of  
each month. Payments received after  
the 20th of the month are subject to late  
payment charges in the amount of 1% of  
the outstanding balance.

**Payments made at grocery stores,  
electronically, or through the mail,  
via the Milwaukee lockbox address  
should be made at least seven (7) days  
prior to the due date to ensure timely  
receipt.**