



**YOUR ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT INSIDE...**

## A Change in Rates

Providing our customers with high quality water and wastewater services at an affordable rate is our goal. As a non-profit, non-taxing public agency, our only source of money to operate the utility comes from the rates and charges our customers pay us every month. For the past three years, we have been able to avoid raising water rates due to steadily increasing revenues from customer growth as well as careful control of expenses. However, customer growth has slowed due to the national housing downturn, while the historic rise in fuel and energy prices is driving our operating costs higher. The Board of Directors concluded at the June meeting that a rate increase is necessary to maintain current service levels.

Effective July 1, 2008, water and sewer rates will change. You will see the following rate change in your August bill, reflecting your July water usage:

Type of Charge	Existing Rates	New Rates
Basic Facility Charge for water and sewer services	\$5.00	<b>\$6.00</b>
Water Usage	\$3.32 <i>per 1,000 gallons</i>	<b>No Change</b>
Sewer Usage	\$5.30 <i>per 1,000 gallons</i>	<b>\$5.60</b> <i>per 1,000 gallons</i>
Monthly cap on residential sewer bills	\$42.00	<b>\$45.00</b>

### Billing Example:

Type of Bill	Amount of Water Used*	Existing Rates	New Rates	Difference
Water	7,000 gallons	\$28.24	<b>\$29.24</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>
Sewer (with cap)	7,000 gallons	\$42.00	<b>\$45.00</b>	<b>\$3.00</b>
Water & Sewer (with cap)	7,000 gallons	\$70.24	<b>\$74.24</b>	<b>\$4.00</b>

\* The average customer's water use is 7,000 gallons a month

### How are rates determined?

Every year, BJWSA works with an independent rate consultant to determine water and sewer rates for the following year. The goals of the rate-making process are to ensure that rates are fair and equitable and generate enough funds to reliably operate and maintain our water and wastewater systems. In addition, rates are designed to promote water conservation.

### Why do rates increase?

As the community grows, regulations change, and our infrastructure ages, BJWSA must continually upgrade and expand our systems to ensure a reliable supply of safe drinking water and proper wastewater treatment. Rates increase to help cover the costs of these improvements. BJWSA conducts careful analyses of population trends and growth patterns, along with system operations and facilities, to determine what is needed and what it will cost.

### Do you know how much water you use?

If you have an automatic sprinkler system, it is most likely the largest water user in your home. Below are national averages on other household water uses:

Washing machine	40.9 gallons per load
Shower	2.2 gallons per minute
Bath tub	24 gallons
Dishwasher	9.3 gallons per load
Toilet (not low flow)	3.61 gallons per flush
Low flow toilet	1.54 gallons per flush
Leaking toilet	30 to 500 gallons per day
Faucet	1.3 gallons per minute
Leaking faucet	192 gallons per month
Standard garden hose	10 gallons a minute

Using less water can save you money. Indoors and outdoors, use water wisely. Always fix leaky faucets or toilets quickly. For more water conservation tips, visit [www.h2ouse.org](http://www.h2ouse.org).



## What Affects Water Quality?

Dean Moss, General Manager

With much recent news about pharmaceuticals in water supplies, this newsletter focuses on the quality of your water. Our enclosed annual Water Quality Report provides the latest test results on your drinking water. BJWSA's water quality is very good and we concentrate on making it better all the time.

Water quality changes as water travels a long journey that begins with rainfall in the mountains of North and South Carolina and ends at your tap. Geology probably has the most significant natural impact. The water we withdraw from the Savannah River has become more mineralized and laden with sediments from its journey. The vegetative environments, such as swamps along the river, also affect water quality.

Large urban/industrial areas around Augusta, GA and North Augusta, SC, as well as the Savannah River Site (SRS) and limited farming and timbering activity in the river basin also impact the Savannah River. Pollutants are at very low levels, but unexpected pollution can occur from a road or rail accident, or an accidental discharge. Our river monitoring program ensures that we will not be caught unprepared.

Once the raw water taken from the river leaves our treatment plants, it is extremely clean and fresh. However, the distribution system can also change the quality of the water. BJWSA has a wide-ranging distribution system with many thinly populated areas. If water stays in the pipes too long, it grows stale and develops a musty odor and sometimes a bad taste. We frequently flush the system to keep the water fresh.

Finally, conditions in the home or workplace can easily affect the water, especially the hot water. If a hot water heater is old or if water has not moved through the system for a while, bad taste and odors can occur.

BJWSA works very hard to ensure that high quality water always arrives at your tap. Yet problems can occur in our complex system. Whenever you detect something different in your water or it tastes or smells bad, we want to hear about it. We will respond to every complaint. Your safety and satisfaction are our foremost concern.

## NewsSPLASH



A quarterly publication of the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

Dean Moss General Manager

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### Need More Information?

Contact Jerrie Legare,  
 BJWSA Communications Manager  
 at 987-9213 or jerriel@bjwsa.org.

## Water efficiency just plain good sense



In our commitment to wise water use, BJWSA has joined WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by EPA that seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply through water efficiency. Efficient water use can help to improve water quality, maintain aquatic ecosystems, and protect drinking water resources.

Our many ongoing efforts to promote efficient water use include:

- Using water efficient equipment in operations
- Monthly monitoring and reduction of unaccounted-for water loss
- Using reclaimed water for residential irrigation (first utility in the State to do so) and irrigation on golf courses
- Partnering with Clemson Extension in promoting water-efficient landscape practices for homeowners and businesses

For more information about WaterSense, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

## Pharmaceutical and Personal Care Products...

### ...in Our Drinking Water

According to a recent Associated Press study that has been widely reported in the national and local media, pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) have been found in the country's drinking water supplies. To date, international research has not identified a health concern associated with pharmaceuticals and consumer products at the extremely small levels detected in the study.

We have sampled our water supply, the Savannah River, and the treated drinking water produced at our two water treatment plants. The only compounds found were Carbamazepine, a mood regulator, at 0.001 parts per billion and Deet, a common ingredient found in bug spray, at 0.005 parts per billion. What does one part per billion (ppb) actually mean? Picture in your mind one drop in one billion drops of water or about one drop of water in a swimming pool. The bottom line - these chemicals were detected at such low levels (almost the lowest possible to detect) that they should not pose any health threats.

We believe that these very low levels are due to the large volume of water flow in the Savannah River (on average 2.7 billion gallons a day flow by our intake) and the fact that the river basin area upstream from our water intake is highly rural. We are currently developing a PPCPs testing plan for our pre-treated river water and treated drinking water and will expand our tests to include more compounds in FY 09.

BJWSA is paying close attention to PPCP health effects research. We will continue to work with regional and national partners to advance the science regarding these issues.

### ...in Treated and Reclaimed Wastewater

Even in BJWSA's modern water reclamation facilities, some prescription and nonprescription drugs and chemicals in personal care products (PPCPs) are not completely broken down by the treatment processes and remain in the wastewater discharge. We sampled the treated wastewater from three of our wastewater treatment plants and, not surprisingly, found many more PPCPs in this water than our drinking water. While they were also at very low levels, it is clear that our area, like the rest of the country, is contributing to the presence of these compounds in the environment.

One of the largest sources of PPCPs in wastewater treatment plants is the typical household - human excrement, flushing unused medications, and washing chemicals down the drain. And as we use more and better deodorants, disinfectants, birth control products, and pesticides, the amount of PPCPs found in the environment will become greater.

An important step that we all can take is to prevent pharmaceuticals from entering into the wastewater in the first place with the proper disposal of unused PPCPs.



## Federal Guidelines for proper prescription drug disposal

The best and most cost-effective way to ensure safe water at the tap is to keep our source waters clean. You can help by following these federal guidelines:

- Take unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers and throw them in the trash.
- Mixing prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and putting them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags, will further ensure the drugs are not diverted.
- Flush prescription drugs down the toilet only if the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs doing so.



## Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

6 Snake Road  
Okatie, SC 29909

843.987.9292  
www.bjwsa.org

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### WANT MORE INFO?

Visit [bjwsa.org](http://bjwsa.org) to learn about:

- Water quality
- Water conservation
- Wastewater treatment
- Outages and emergencies
- Payment policies and options
- How your money is used
- Meter reading
- Rates

## What is that pink stuff on my bathroom fixtures?

That "pink stuff" that you may be seeing around your sink drains or in your toilets is naturally occurring airborne bacteria that has nothing to do with the quality of your water. These bacteria seek moist environments to grow.

Always keep bathtubs and sinks wiped dry. Frequently clean your sinks with a cleaning solution that contains chlorine. Chlorine bleach (3 to 5 tablespoons) can be periodically stirred into the toilet tank and flushed into the bowl itself. Cleaning and flushing with chlorine may not eliminate the problem, but will help control the bacteria growth. If you have a septic tank, use a non-chlorine cleaner, such as borax to avoid damaging your septic system.

Important! Follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions for your plumbing fixtures and countertops; chlorine cannot be used with some designer products. Use care with abrasives to avoid scratching fixtures, which makes them more susceptible to bacteria.



## BJWSA Acquires Railroad Land

BJWSA is acquiring the Right of Way for the Port Royal Railroad from the State Ports Authority. This Right of Way (RoW) extends from Ribaut Road in Port Royal to the Town of Yemassee. BJWSA has many large pipelines installed in the RoW that would be at risk if the RoW were to disappear or be acquired for development. Additionally, this RoW will be critical for the installation of future pipelines should the growth projected for Port Royal Island and other parts of Northern Beaufort County occur.

The RoW will be placed in and protected by the federal rail bank program, which ensures that the RoW can be used in the future as a railroad again, if needed. The program requires that nothing can be done in the RoW that would be inconsistent with its future restoration as a railroad.

There is community interest in using the RoW for a linear park and recreational trail. BJWSA, under state law, cannot undertake this type of development or spend funds on such projects. This type of activity is the responsibility of the county and municipal governments, by themselves or in cooperation with a not-for-profit organization. BJWSA will make the RoW available to the county and the municipalities for them to begin development of any auxiliary uses they determine, as long as these uses are consistent with BJWSA's Master Plan.

## Operations & Safety Earn Awards

For the 2nd consecutive year, BJWSA has received a Facility Excellence Award from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control for all seven of our wastewater plants. The award is based on plant operations, maintenance, collection system operations, capital improvement program and rehab & replacement planning, and our fiscal strength.

BJWSA has received the American Water Works Association's Wendell R. LaDue Utility Safety Award. The honor recognizes the most distinguished safety programs among utilities throughout the nation.