

# Understanding Your Water/Sewer Rates

In June 2008, the City Council approved a four-year rate program of water/sewer rate increases to ensure maintenance of Atlanta's water and wastewater systems and to fund Clean Water Atlanta Program improvements, such as new water and sewer pipes and sewer overflow facilities. That rate package expires June 30, 2012.

In February 2008, more than 70 percent of the City's voters voted to reauthorize the Municipal Option Sales Tax (MOST), which provides one-third of the Department's funding. The one-cent sales tax expires in 2012 and can be reauthorized for one more four-year period.

These rate increases help ensure the continued success of Clean Water Atlanta by providing funding that allows the City to meet its legal and environmental clean water obligations. The success of Clean Water Atlanta lays the foundation for our City's continued economic success and helps us protect our water resources for future generations.

## **Some facts about water/sewer rates:**

- Water/sewer rates are based on the amount of water you use.
- Water use is measured in CCF (100 cubic feet). 1 CCF = about 750 gallons of water. So, if you use four CCF, you are using 4x750 or 3,000 gallons of water every month. All customers pay a monthly base charge of \$5.21 for water service and \$5.21 for sewer service (\$10.42 total).
- Atlanta and other local water service providers have adopted a conservation-based rate structure as a financial incentive to encourage customers to use less water. Per-CCF rates increase with usage; customers pay one rate for the first three CCF, a higher rate for the next three, and the highest rate for everything else.
- Your bill contains a Homeland Security surcharge of 15 cents per CCF. That money goes to upgrading and maintaining security at the City's water and sewer facilities.
- The average Atlanta family uses eight CCF (6,000 gallons) a month. That family's combined water and sewer bill is \$120.82.
- The sewer portion of the bill is based on the amount of water that a family uses and is significantly higher than the water portion of the bill. That is because it is vastly more expensive to treat wastewater for return to the river than it is to treat river water for drinking. Additionally, the two federal Consent Decrees underlying the Clean Water Atlanta Program deal specifically with pollution of the river because of untreated wastewater (combined and sanitary sewer overflows). Funding for projects that reduce sewer overflows is also a factor in higher sewer charges.
- Senior citizens 65 years old or older with household incomes of \$25,000 or less can receive a 30 percent discount on their water/sewer rates. For information, visit <http://www.atlantawatershed.org/custsrv/senior.htm> or call 404-658-6500.
- The City's Care & Conserve fund is a special fund to help low-income customers with especially high bills on a one-time basis. Care & Conserve also offers plumbing assistance to help control water use. For more information on the program, call 404-885-1877.