



# NOVEMBER INFORMATION SHEET

Presented by the Rosamond Community Services District for their valued customers. If you would like more information, or have suggestions for future information sheets, please let us know by calling 661-256-3411.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

RCSD provides a number of vital services to our community. Among them is the transportation and treatment of liquid waste, or sewer service.

As you can imagine, a modern and effective sewer system is key to community health and wellbeing. A lot goes into keeping our toilets flushing, community healthy and water sources clean.

Our sewer system includes household connections, pipes to transport waste and the sewage treatment plant. Maintaining and expanding our sewer system to provide service for our community, as it grows, is a big and costly job. However, by spreading out the cost of sewer evenly across the entire community, the cost becomes manageable.

Sewer fees are calculated using a simple formula of estimated cost divided by number of connections. To estimate the cost of our sewer system, we use an engineering firm. Their team of experts examine our current system, the community demand for services, plans to expand, equipment age and lifespan, projected population growth and other factors to estimate what our sewer system costs to operate.

Using a firm that specializes in this allows us to tap their experience and expertise, and also keeps their report unbiased, since they are a neutral third party.

For years, RCSD has used water bills to collect sewer fees. However, this method had a shortcoming that has become increasingly apparent in recent years. Water bills are only sent to homes receiving water service. This means that vacant homes, like rentals not being rented, are not paying sewer, despite still being connected to and receiving sewer service.

Not having every connected home pay their fair share of the sewer costs creates a funding shortfall for our community sewer system. Recognizing this, RCSD has

### November District Closures

**RCSD will be closed:**

**November 11th** in observance of Veterans Day.

**November 27th** in observance of Thanksgiving.

Despite these closures, RCSD crews will remain on call and ready to deal with any urgent situation that arise.

been looking into ways to overcome this shortage. One option would be to raise rates to make up for the vacant properties, but RCSD wanted to avoid this.

Another way to overcome the funding shortfall was to find a way to get the vacant homes to still pay into the system. This is accomplished through the common practice of having sewer fees placed on the tax roll. This option was brought to the RCSD board as a way to cover the funding shortfall without having to raise rates.

Moving sewer fees to the tax roll was voted on by the RCSD board and adopted in April of this year. Beginning in July, 2014, sewer fees were no longer collected on water bills and were collected, instead, on tax rolls. By doing this, RCSD is helping prevent having to prematurely raise sewer rates while still raising the funds needed to operate and maintain Rosamond's sewer system.

It's important to note that RCSD customers are paying no more or less for their sewer than they were before the change. The only change is that the sewer fees are now paid every six months, instead of monthly.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to us by calling 661-256-3411.

**Rosamond Community Services District**  
3179 35th Street West, Rosamond CA 93560  
Monday - Thursday, 8 am to 4:30 pm  
(661) 256-3411 - [rosamondcsd.com](http://rosamondcsd.com)

**Upcoming RCSD Meetings**  
November 12 - 6:00pm  
November 25 - 6:00pm  
at the RCSD Offices

## Sewer Fee Timeline

*The move of sewer fees from water bills to tax bills is not a new development, but the final step in a solution to fix a serious funding problem.*

**2008-***RCSD initiated a sewer rate study to determine how much each Rosamond resident would need to pay to maintain the community sewer system.*

**2009-***RCSD initiated the Proposition 218 process to increase sewer rates to the level recommended in the rate study.*

**2012-***While looking to optimize the RCSD budget to use funds more effectively, General Manager Steve Perez discovered a shortfall in sewer fees that averages out to \$150,000 a year.*

**2013-***The sewer shortfall is investigated internally to discover its cause and possible solutions.*

**2014-**  
**January-***The solution of placing sewer fees on the tax bill, which would close the sewer shortfall by ensuring that every property owner pays their fair share is developed and investigated by RCSD staff.*

**March-***The proposed solution of putting sewer fees on the tax bill is listed on the agenda of an RCSD public meeting. In the public meeting the solution is discussed and voting is delayed two weeks to allow the public more time to comment. At the second public meeting the solution is again discussed and then passed.*

**June-***Notices of the change to sewer fees are sent to customers with their water bill.*

**July-***The sewer shortfall solution goes into effect. Sewer fees are no longer on water bills, but are included on tax bills with no other changes to the fee.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What changes were made to the sewer fee?**

Effective July 1st, 2014, sewer fee collection for RCSD customers was moved from customer's water bills to their tax bill. This did not change the amount each customer pays, but did change the frequency they pay from monthly to twice a year.

### **Is this why my water bill went down in July?**

While this change did not affect water rates and charges, it may have appeared like water bills went down in July because the sewer fee was no longer included on that bill.

### **Why were my sewer fees moved to my tax bill?**

To help close a revenue shortfall of around \$150,000 a year by ensuring every property owner pays their fair share, not just those with inhabited homes.

### **Was there any public notice of this change?**

Yes. Moving sewer fees from the water bill to the tax bill was originally discussed in our regular public board meeting on March 12th, 2014. The board realized this was an important issue, so they delayed voting on the change for two weeks until the next board meeting on March 26th, to allow extra time for public input. Both of these meetings had publicly distributed notices and agendas. Additionally, notices were sent out with customer's bills in June and the Mojave Desert News published stories both about the discussion and the final decision.

### **Were there any other solutions to the sewer shortfall?**

Yes, another solution would have been to raise sewer rates to make up for the shortfall, but the RCSD Board and staff wanted to avoid an increase.

### **Was the sewer fee increased?**

No. In fact, moving sewer fees to the the tax bill was done to prevent a premature increase in sewer fees.

### **Why didn't I get to vote on this?**

Because the rate was not changed, the movement of the sewer fee was within the power and authority given to the RCSD Board by the community.

### **Is RCSD trying to collect the lost \$150,000?**

No, RCSD is not attempting to recoup the uncollected funds, only to close the shortfall.

### **Is there a way I can let the board know my opinion on this matter?**

Yes! The public is always invited to attend our bi-monthly board meetings, where everyone is given an opportunity to comment on agenda items or any other topic relevant to RCSD and the services we provide.