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A Publication of **Draper Aden Associates**

September 2003

Residential Water & Wastewater

Survey Shows Utility Rates Continue to Rise

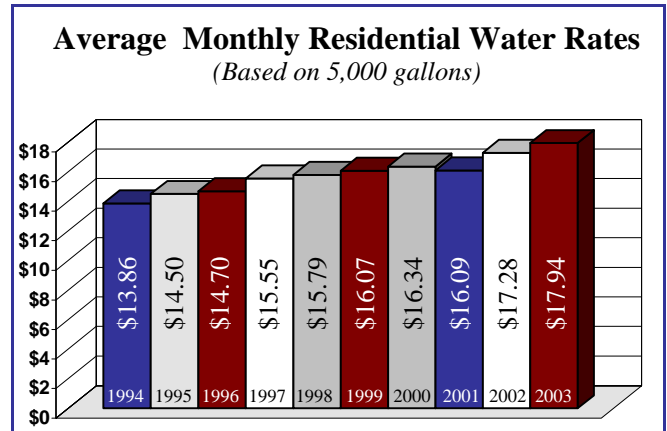
Water and wastewater rates continue to climb according to results of the 15th Annual Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Survey sponsored by Draper Aden Associates. Residential water rates rose by 4% while residential sewer rates increased by 6%.

This year's survey was sent to 297 water providers across the state with 152 responding. Questions asked included those pertaining to user rates, connection and facility fees, and anticipated capital improvement costs.

According to the survey's control group, monthly residential water rates for 5,000 gallons rose from \$17.28 last year to \$17.94. The control group is comprised of 21 water providers across the state, which represents a cross section of locality sizes and geographic regions. Based on that same group water rates have risen 29% in the last 10 years. In 1994 the average residential monthly bill was \$13.86.

The monthly residential wastewater rate for 5,000 gallons went from \$18.77 last year up to \$19.96. This rate is based on the same control group. Ten years ago the monthly sewer rate was \$14.97, which shows a jump of 33% in the last decade.

"This year's survey had a 51% response rate which we believe well represents Virginia's rates," said Bill Aden, CEO and President of Draper Aden Associates. "Water and wastewater rates have risen substantially over the past decade and I believe will continue to do so."



"While the cost of operations is continually rising, like everything else," he said, "federal and state involvement is decreasing and passing more of the expenses on to the localities. With the aging infrastructure as an ongoing cost for repair and expansion, I believe we will see dramatic increases in the

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Draft WQA Guide Available

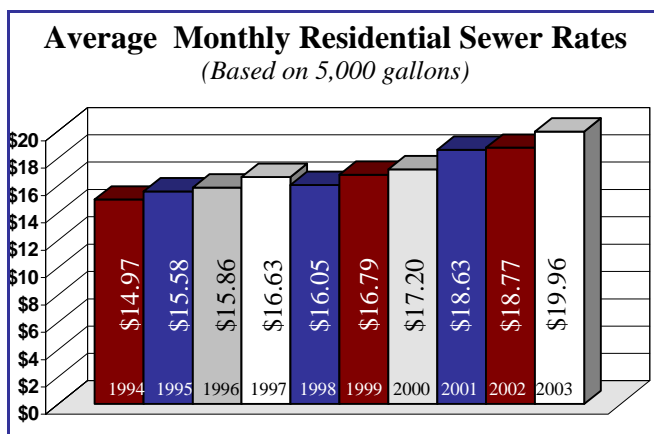
The draft of the 2004 Virginia Water Quality Assessment Guide was released for public notice in August. A copy of the draft can be accessed at www.deq.state.va.us/wqa. Written comments will be accepted through September 26, 2003 at 5 P.M.

The purpose is to meet a Clean Water Act requirement that requires each State to submit a report every two years describing the quality of its navigable waters. It is intended to be used as a planning and management tool. It acts in coordination with the State Water Quality Management Plan and the Continuous Planning Process (CPP).

The primary objectives of the report are:

1. To educate and inform citizens and public officials about Virginia's overall water quality.
2. To analyze water quality data, and compare the results to appropriate criteria and guidelines.

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Rates...

next few years.”

According to a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report released last fall, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure investment costs could range from \$492 billion to \$820 billion over the next 20 years. The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Gap Analysis report closely supports this estimate with a similar calculation of \$499 billion to \$929 billion. These figures do not take into account spending for operations, security or future regulatory requirements.

Using the same control group to look at Business/Commercial/Industrial fees, the survey results show a 3% rise in water rates from last year. The average monthly cost for a B/C/I entity using 1 million gallons of water was \$2,994 as compared to last year at \$2,917. The average monthly B/C/I wastewater fee for 1 million gallons of water was \$3,515 in 2002 and \$3,596 in 2003 showing a 2% increase.

For the purposes of this article, all figures used from the control group reflect fees charged to users within municipal boundaries.

The 15th Annual Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Report will be available in mid-October. Copies will be sent out to those on our mailing list and made available at the fall VML and VACo conferences. If you want to be added to our mailing list contact Cathy Hanks (chanks@daa.com) at (540) 552-0444. The reports are free of charge.

Draper Aden Associates is a full-service engineering, surveying and environmental consulting firm. Services include: civil/utilities engineering; environmental services, geological/hydrogeological services; geotechnical/construction/laboratory; site planning & engineering; solid waste management; surveying; subsurface utility engineering, information management services, GIS and transportation engineering.



Don't be a Drip!

Assume little leaks only waste a little water? You can lose up to 200 gallons of water a day from a leaking toilet. And a faucet can drip 604,800 drops while you are waiting for a plumber in the same time.

Eighty percent (80%) of the earth’s surface is water but only 1% is suitable for drinking. There is the same amount of water on Earth today as there was when it was formed. The difference is that today many more demands are placed on water.

Our demands continue to grow, but our supply doesn’t. Decisions that affect our water resources now are more important than ever. Conservation and protection are key to the future. Not to mention the savings on your water bill!

Trivia facts provided by the US EPA.

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3. To determine the causes for the “failure to support” the designated uses of the State’s waters.
4. To determine the nature and recognizable extent of point and nonpoint source impacts.

Comments can be submitted via email or by U. S. mail. Contact Harry Augustine, DEQ, P.O. Box 10009, Richmond, VA 23240 or at hhaugustin@deq.state.va.us.



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