



## Rate Survey Reflects Rates On The Rise

The question is usually not, have the rates gone up, but by how much. Once again Draper Aden Associates' Annual Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Survey reflects a rise in residential, as well as commercial rates. Based on a control group of 21 water and wastewater providers from across the state, the average residential water rate for 5,000 gallons inside municipal boundaries increased 2%. The average residential wastewater rate for 5,000 gallons inside municipal boundaries increased 5%.

We'll continue to see those rates rise, according to Draper Aden Associates President and CEO, Bill Aden. "The rates are rising due to the rising costs of operating water and wastewater systems," said Mr. Aden. "The systems are aging and as a result are requiring more maintenance, replacement and rehabilitation. The intent of rates is to take care of those escalating costs."

Out of 297 public water and wastewater providers polled, 165 or 55% participated in this year's results. "We had a tremendous response rate of 55% from water and wastewater providers across the state," Aden continued. "With that kind of response, we feel confident in our numbers."

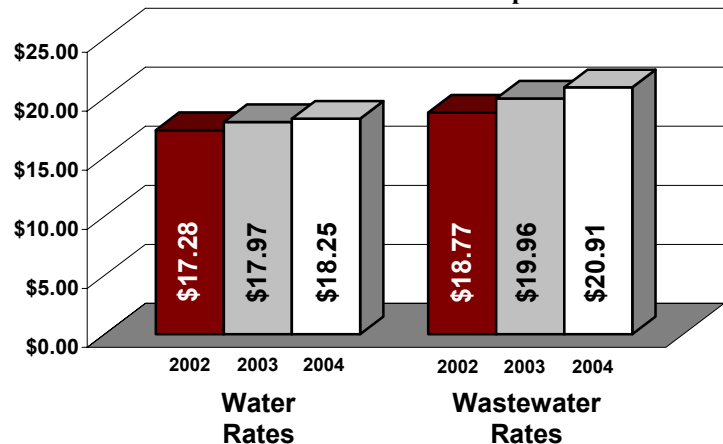
Rates also continued to rise for business/commercial/industrial (B/C/S) water users. The average one month rate for 1 million gallons inside municipal boundaries rose from \$3,346 to \$3,951, an increase of 3%. This average is based on all participants who responded to the question.

If it's any consolation, a 2002 survey by the NUS Consulting Group, an independent consulting

**This year's respondents included 81 towns, 24 cities, 18 counties, 39 authorities/boards/sanitary districts and 3 private systems.**

found that rates increased in 12 of 14 countries surveyed. Water rates in the United States were among the lowest in the countries surveyed, and were one half to

**Average Residential Water & Wastewater Rates**  
(5,000 gallons per month)  
Based on Control Group



one third the rates charged in most European countries.

Also according to that report, in the upcoming years, the U.S. will continue to experience even greater increases in rates as systems deal with aging infrastructure, water quality is subject to stricter federal regulations and local governments introduce additional measures to promote water conservation.

The 16th Annual Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Report 2004 will be available in early October. They will be mailed out at that time and will also be available at the Virginia Municipal League Annual Conference as well as the Virginia Association of Counties Annual Conference. To see if you are on the mailing list or to request more copies email [wssurvey@daa.com](mailto:wssurvey@daa.com) or call (540) 552-0444.

## New Research Study Supports Submetering

In December 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the policy concerning the applicability of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to submetered properties. Submetering is a billing process where the property owner bills tenants for water

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## Submetering.....continued from front

based on metered use. The property owner is then responsible for payment of the water bill to a public water system.

This was done to promote the use of submetering which is a little used but effective water conservation tool. Now a new study co-sponsored by the EPA reports the use of submetering can reduce annual water consumption by an average of 15 percent.



The National Multiple Family Submetering and Allocation Billing Program Study, a three-year project, was produced with the cooperation of the EPA, 10 municipal water providers and two national apartment associations. The research found that 85% of apartment properties still include water in the rent. The report suggests that billing water usage separately will enhance users awareness of the cost and will in turn promote water conservation and efficiency.

It may seem pointless to think about water conservation when Virginia is enjoying abundant rainfall this year. It wasn't but a few years ago, however that this region was caught in the grip of a severe and damaging drought. The practice of water conservation never ceases in importance regardless of the current conditions.

The study calls on policymakers to establish incentive programs to facilitate the acquisition of water submeters. The water saved will not only benefit the im-

mediate community but the entire watershed by saving water. The study also suggests there would be "enormous conservation potential" if utilities use their avoided costs to provide incentives to property owners to upgrade plumbing fixtures and implement direct billing programs.

The full report can be found at [www.nmhc.org/Content/ServeContent.cfm?ContentItemID=3243](http://www.nmhc.org/Content/ServeContent.cfm?ContentItemID=3243).

### The Five Most Effective Home Water-Saving Actions.

1. **Fix those leaks!**
2. **Replace your largest indoor water user -- your old toilet.**
3. **Replace your old clothes washer.**
4. **Plant suitable plants properly.**
5. **Water just enough to meet your plants' needs.**

These actions can save \$100's/year on water, sewer, and energy bills. Cities like Houston, Boston, New York, Phoenix and Seattle have reduced water use by 6-20% and saved on infrastructure costs by controlling water loss, offering efficient toilet and clothes washer rebates, conducting landscape irrigation surveys, adopting conservation water rates, and other measures.

Water efficiency does not mean doing without, it means using water more wisely; getting the same benefit with less water.

*Excerpt from the Environmental Protection Agency's Web Page-- The Year of Clean Water.*

*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; structural engineering; surveying; subsurface utility engineering, information management services, GIS and transportation engineering.*



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