

Des Moines Water Price Hike Spurs Increase for WDM Customers

Delivering high-quality, safe drinking water to West Des Moines residents and businesses will cost more in 2016. In response, the West Des Moines Water Works Board of Trustees voted unanimously to support a modest increase in rates to be effective January 1, 2016.

The approved 4-percent change for basic water service represents an increase of 18 cents to \$4.73 per 1,000 gallons. The basic service charge also increases 4 percent from \$3.90 per month to \$4.06. Full rate information can be viewed at www.wdmww.com.

“For the typical residential customer using 6,000 gallons a month, the increase will be \$1.24 a month,” noted WDMWW Trustee Phil Dorweiler. “That’s less than one small bottle of water you would buy at the store, and it remains one of the best values around.”

DMWW RATE HIKE DRIVES HIGHER WATER COSTS

Several factors influence the cost of delivering safe, quality water, but in this case the 10-percent rate hike levied by Des Moines Water Works was the No. 1 reason for the size of the monthly increase for West Des Moines residents and businesses.

“We purchase about 30 percent of our water from DMWW, and a 10-percent hike significantly impacts our overall costs for the year,” said Diana Wilson,

WDMWW general manager. “Moreover, DMWW expects to continue with this level of rate increases over the next several years.”



High quality, affordable drinking water may not be the sexiest issue of the day, yet it plays a major role in the health and growth of a community. WDMWW management and trustees continually assess and study supply, distribution infrastructure, growth patterns and future water sources.

WDMWW STUDIES DIVERSIFYING WATER SOURCES FOR THE FUTURE

“This past spring, we commissioned a study with Veenstra & Kimm that looked at our water sources, treatment and production assets and the growth patterns and potential of West Des Moines,” Wilson explained. “As we process the information and findings in the report, we know that we, as well as future staffs and boards, will be looking at ways to expand our production capabilities and diversify our water sources.”

West Des Moines water rates remain among the most affordable in the metro.

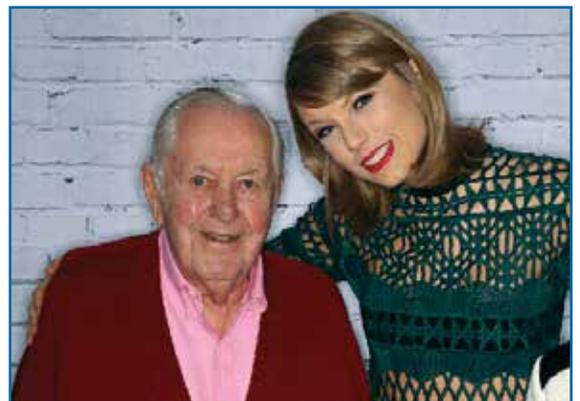
“We will never sacrifice safety and infrastructure improvements to avoid rate increases,” Dorweiler noted. “As trustees, we have a fiduciary duty to provide safe, quality water to our citizens while safeguarding the financial health and strength of our community’s water assets.”

‘Sage’ Trustee Swift(ly) Honored before Des Moines Concert

Phil Dorweiler is known among his fellow WDMWW trustees as dedicated, insightful and wise—a real sage when it comes to understanding the workings of public utilities, local governments and bond financing. Turns out, he also likes pop music.

In November, he was officially honored in the Sages Over 70 event by *DSM magazine*. Before accepting the Sage award, news somehow leaked that Dorweiler, 89, and his friend, Liz Frink, 86, had tickets to the Taylor Swift concert in October in Des Moines. After reading an article in the *Des Moines Register* about the two octogenarian fans, Swift decided she had to meet them. In addition to swapping out their seats in the rafters for two in the second row, center stage, Swift took time for a photo, a quick conversation and a hug.

“It was my first concert,” he admitted. “So, I wasn’t sure what to expect, but I never dreamed of this.”



“She is sharp,” Dorweiler said of the 25-year-old Swift. “She called us by our names, mentioned the article in the [*Des Moines Register*], hugged both of us, and then put us on either side of her for a photo. She said a few more kind words and hugged us again.”

DID YOU KNOW



What to Know about Sleet and Snow

Snow forms when water vapor in the atmosphere freezes into ice crystals. Sleet, on the other hand, begins as a raindrop (or melted snowflake) that freezes into an ice pellet on its way to the ground. In contrast to snow, sleet is in liquid form before freezing and differs from freezing rain, which freezes on contact.

Show Your Pipes a Little Love and Avoid Frozen Disaster

Most liquids contract or shrink when they cool. Water is the exception; it expands. And, it's this molecular exception that can turn destructive when water freezes in the pipes of your home.

One burst pipe can spill hundreds of gallons of water onto floors and walls, furniture and appliances, incurring thousands of dollars in damages.

You can easily prevent bursting pipes and the ensuing damage with five simple precautions.

VULNERABLE SPOTS

You are most likely to have a pipe burst in the following areas in and outside your home:

- Outdoor hose bibs
- Swimming pool supply lines
- Water sprinkler lines
- Pipes in unheated interior areas such as basements, crawl spaces, attics, garages or kitchen cabinets

1 Shore up your home's defenses by disconnecting and draining outdoor hoses as part of your winter preparations. This allows water to drain from the pipe. Water left in a hose can cause pressure in the faucet and pipe.

2 If you have a swimming pool or a lawn irrigation system, be sure to drain them carefully, following the manufacturer's and/or installer's directions.

3 Cover pipes carefully and wrap the joints with heat tape for enhanced protection. You can buy pipe sleeves at hardware and building supply stores. Adding insulation to attics, basements and crawl spaces will help maintain higher temperatures in these areas and protect against freezing.

4 General weatherizing to access doors, air vents and cracks is another way to save your pipes. Besides saving money on your heating bill, you'll reduce cold drafts that could potentially expose pipes to freezing and sub-zero temperatures.

5 If you winter in a warmer venue or leave on vacation, consider shutting off your water at the valve located next to the meter. This little extra effort adds significant protection for your home.

WHEN TEMPERATURES PLUMMET

Keep the thermostat set at the same temperature both day and night during extreme cold snaps. Opening kitchen and bathroom cabinets will allow

warmer air to reach the plumbing located in these areas. You can also let cold water drip from the faucet served by the exposed pipes during extreme weather. Running water through the pipe can help keep its temperature above freezing.



"This will affect your water bill, though, so use this tactic as a last resort," advised **Diana Wilson**, general manager. "In general, we tell people to keep thermostats at 55 degrees or higher to avoid issues."

WHAT IF IT'S TOO LATE?

Burst pipes can leave a dramatic mess, such as the photo above, or they may not be immediately detectable when you walk in the house. If water either trickles out of a faucet or starts running without the faucet being turned on, you probably have a broken pipe or fixture somewhere. The first thing to do is to turn off your main water valve—it's usually located next to your water meter. Then, call a plumber!

"We receive a couple calls each winter from customers with frozen or burst water pipes," Wilson noted. "While it may be tempting to try to thaw the pipes with a blow torch, hairdryers or heating pads, we recommend that you refrain from doing any of these without the advice of a licensed plumber. Improper thawing can cause pipes to explode."

Superfund Project Successfully Completed

West Des Moines Water Works is closing the books on a 10-year-long Superfund project with the EPA. The project resulted from a local company's contamination of an area surrounding five WDMWW shallow wells. The company paid to clean up the contamination, and WDMWW received a 10-year superfund grant for the operation of giant aerators.

"Our source water has no detectable level of the contaminants. These funds helped to ensure that our water remained healthy and safe during the clean-up," said **Mitch Pinkerton**, water production manager.

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