

## **Why Call the Water Company For a Problem With Your Sewer Bill?**

Over the last few months, Watson Water has received a tremendous volume of phone calls regarding customer concerns over increasing sewer bills. These callers have been led to believe that the water company is responsible for their high bills. We would like to address these concerns.

At Watson Water we read our meters monthly. The monthly meter readings give us a measure of the amount of water used since the last reading. We send (currently at no cost) the member's gallon usage to the sewer company. The sewer utility uses its own rates and charges to calculate your sewer bill, and they base their charges on the amount of water you use. After they have processed the information we give them, they send you your sewer bill. Their bills are sent approximately 6 weeks after you receive your water bill for the same meter reading.

**Why then is your bill so high?** Watson Water does not charge sewer rates. We do not control sewer rates. Sewer rates are established, billed and collected by the sewer company, a completely separate utility from Watson Water. The sewer rates have increased as a result of a federal consent decree in which the Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency, and Indiana Department of Environmental Management mandated expensive improvements to Jeffersonville's combined sewer system. A brochure explaining the reasons for the increased sewer bills can be obtained from the City's sewer department.

We started receiving a flood of complaints as soon as the City's sewer rate increases showed up on customer sewer bills. These complaints have been persistent and unyielding. It costs Watson Water time, resources and money every time we have to make a

service run to answer these complaints. This diversion of resources adversely affects our ability to offer the high level of customer service we strive to provide to our water customers.

Our members are being told that our water meters are “broken.” This simply is not true. Watson Water reads approximately 5000 meters each month. Of those, approximately 2000 readings are sent to the city’s sewer department. A small percentage of our accounts are estimated due to defects we have discovered in some brand new but faulty remote radio meter readers. We have replaced almost 300 radios in our system to date. Despite having received a batch of faulty remote meter readers, **the meters themselves** still accurately measure water usage. The sewer billing office is well aware that the meters are accurate.

Watson Water will continue working with the sewer department in every capacity. However we look forward to the time when it is acknowledged that higher sewer bills are the result of higher sewer rates, not broken water meters. If you have a question about your sewer bill, Watson Water urges you to **call the sewer company**. They are the only ones who can specifically answer questions and address your concerns regarding a sewer bill.