

## **VRUC GENERAL MANAGER'S UPDATE:**

For the fastest response time to your water or sewer questions and concerns you must call Valley Rural Utility Company direct at 812-539-3330. We are pleased that VRUC and HVLPOA have a good working relationship but, we are two totally separate entities with separate management.

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For the most up to date information concerning the Valley Rural Utility Company, check our website at [www.valleyruralutilityco.com](http://www.valleyruralutilityco.com) or our Facebook page at [Valley Rural Utility Co.](#)

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VRUC Water & Sewer bills are mailed to every customer by the end of each month and, payment is due by the 20<sup>th</sup>. If you have not received your bill by the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month please call the VRUC Office to get your balance due.

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2018 is the year VRUC prepares for the future. The goal here is to no longer face a major upgrade with the only way of paying is borrowing the full amount. Borrowing a large amount means a large rate increase for our customers. The BOD and staff are well aware of future expected repairs and upgrades so, now is the time to get things in line to be able to pay for these improvements without the need to borrow large sums of money.

There are two projects that I believe need to be addressed in the near future....fire hydrants and water tower. Over the past year there has been much discussion from residents as well as the POA concerning the number of fire hydrants throughout the Valley. I am happy to say that VRUC management agrees.....there needs to be more. However, we are pretty much at our limit on the number of fire hydrants we can install due to the original 2 inch water lines feeding off of the main water line. It is against the law to install a fire hydrant on a 2 inch line; it just cannot provide enough water or pressure to control a fire. So, our goal is to over time replace 2 inch lines with a minimum 6 inch line, up to an 8 inch line and, install more fire hydrants.

The second project is the condition of our water tower and the amount of water pressure we can provide. For more than a year now we have discussed building a new water tower. You may not be aware of this but, there are certain areas in HVL with lower water pressure than most. Although, VRUC does provide the minimum required water pressure per home, some customers are not satisfied with that. Therefore, we enable those homeowners to purchase at a discounted cost, a pump to provide more pressure if they desire. After much research and discussions between Engineers, myself and, the Board of Directors, it was understood and agreed that the pressure problem is the old water tower and, the current number of customers we now serve.

Instead of repairing and maintaining the nearly 50 year old inadequate water tower, plans are to design and build a new tower that can provide plenty of water and pressure for every resident as well as new fire hydrants.

Fire hydrants and the water tower are definitely important upgrades. But, now comes the big question.... how do we pay for these? The sewer line replacement project was a real eye opener. For approximately the first 20 years of our existence, VRUC did not implement one single rate increase. Then came the time to replace sewer lines and of course, the full amount had to be borrowed. This resulted in a large rate increase for our customers in order to just cover that debt. So, in order to better prepare for future projects, the VRUC Board of Directors recently voted to implement a yearly **2.5%** rate increase on your total utility bill beginning March 2018 and each consecutive year thereafter. You will begin to see the actual increase on the bill you receive in April 2018. The current minimum monthly utility bill is **\$51.47** for 2000 gallons or less. That means a **2.5%** increase will be approximately **\$1.30 (including sales tax)** per month for minimum billing. The money from this increase will be deposited in an account and used for a designated project.

Due to ever changing priorities in the utility business, there has not yet been a start date assigned to any project, the thought is sometimes within the next 3 to 5 years. Plans are to evaluate the situation yearly and proceed with the cash on hand. This means that not all water lines will be replaced at one time. A designated area will be chosen per year. The larger water lines and new fire hydrants will be installed, the work completed and paid for before moving to another area. The Board and I understand that at some point in time a smaller loan may be necessary to complete a project within a set amount of time. Any way you look at it, a rate increase is inevitable in order to maintain and/or upgrade the system. We believe smaller yearly increases are easier to budget than one large increase.

Help control your own utility bills. Three of the biggest reasons for abnormally high water bills are leaky toilets, leaky water faucets and, water softeners. They are also three of the easiest problems to detect, any homeowner can do it. After time, the flapper inside your toilet tank loses its ability to completely seal and stop water from dripping back into your toilet bowl. Once the water level drops below the setting, the tank is automatically refilled to the set level thus, using extra water without flushing. A water softener has internal moving parts that after time can get stuck in a slightly opened position causing a small amount of water to flow steady. And as far as those dripping faucet goes, there are washers and/or o-rings in every faucet that wear out causing the faucet to drip. Here's the SOLUTION: to check for a leaky toilet you simple remove the tank lid, drop in about 5 drops of food color and wait overnight. DO NOT flush the toilet after putting in the food color. In the morning check the toilet bowl and if the water in the bowl is the color of the water in the tank, you need to at least replace the flapper. To check for a leaky faucet you simply dry the area and then place a folded paper towel under the faucet at night time. In the morning if the paper towel is wet you need to replace the o-rings or washers in the faucet. For a water softener, the best thing is to purchase a bottle of Water Softener Cleaner and follow

the manufacturer's directions for Cleaning the Nozzle & Venturi. These 3 simple solutions may just help you save money. Stop and think how many toilets and inside/outside faucets are in your home that may need to be checked. You would be amazed how much water a slow drip actually uses in a month time.

PLEASE BE AWARE, there are many false accusations on social media now. Do not believe everything you read or hear without seeing proof. Get the actual facts before the rumors start. Go to the VRUC website at [www.valleyruralutilityco.com](http://www.valleyruralutilityco.com) or the VRUC Facebook page at [Valley Rural Utility Co.](#) to see where we rank amongst local water and sewer cost.

If you still have questions, please call Floyd at the VRUC Office.....**812-539-3330**.

Thank You  
Floyd Ogden  
VRUC General Manager