

The Main Stream

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Winter 1999

a quarterly newsletter dedicated to enhancing water and wastewater services brought to you by the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority

Happy Year 2000!

YCUA recently undertook an evaluation of its infrastructure (water transmission mains and sewage collection mains) to determine what improvements/additions may be required for the future as our service area population increases. The information from this evaluation will be used to produce a prioritized list of projects and timetables, allowing YCUA to continue to serve its customers' needs in 2000 and beyond.

We hope that you received our first annual Water Quality Report in October, and that you took the time to read about the quality of the water YCUA delivers to you. If you did not receive a copy, would like extras, or have any questions, please contact the Water Distribution Department at extension 316.

This report and many other important facts and details about your water and sewer service are also published on our web site at www.ycu.org. Points of interest include updates on the composting project, new billing format, and board meeting minutes.

As always, I welcome your questions and comments.

Happy New Year!



Larry R. Thomas, Director
director@provide.net
734.484.4600

HELPING MAKE 2000 BETTER for the LESS FORTUNATE:

YCUA employees had another record campaign for the United Way, raising \$14,206.

This equates to an average donation of more than \$100 per YCUA employee.

We are proud of this achievement and commend our staff's generosity!

We Care about Your Pets!

Did you know that YCUA keeps track of which homes have pets? We do this to protect the safety of our meter readers. Your dog may be your loving family pet, but it poses a threat when YCUA workers try to access your property to read your meter. (Pets don't know the difference between burglars and utility workers.) We ask that you **restrain all pets** in an area that does not interfere with our meter-reading activities. Safety is the number one reason, but there are other issues that can affect the level of service you receive from YCUA if you do not comply with this request.



When our meter readers approach a home with a pet in the yard, they may elect to not read the meter and instead enter a code that indicates a pet was in the yard and to send an estimated bill. Until the customer has resolved the situation by calling YCUA, that code remains on the reading unit to warn future meter readers of the risk. If our readers cannot safely access your property, we will have to call and **schedule a time out of your day** to safely read your meter, or to relocate your meter to a safer location. Special calls such as this require extra effort that drives up everyone's cost of service.

Please note that some of our customers have received pet-in-yard notices, **even though they do not have pets**. Often, it is a stray animal that was loose in the yard. A quick phone call to YCUA can resolve the issue. If you are receiving estimated bills or letters of concern about a pet in your yard, please call customer service at extension 0. Homeowners, landlords, and tenants can help by calling YCUA if they move and take their pet with them, no longer have a pet, or get a new pet. This will help prevent frustration, and protect your pets and our workers!

Special tips for dog owners! Up to 70 percent of all dog bites occur on the dog owner's property. You can reduce the risk that your dog will bite by following these guidelines:

- Spay or neuter your dog; they will be three times less likely to bite
- Obey leash laws. Never allow your dog to just roam free
- Introduce your dog to different people and situations
- Train your dog to obey simple commands, such as "no" and "stay"
- Seek help for aggressive behavior, such as growling and nipping
- Don't play aggressive games, such as tug-of-war, with your dog
- Keep your dog healthy with routine vet visits and vaccinations

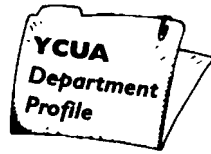
Did you know...

The Odor Control Project at the headworks (where the raw sewage enters the wastewater treatment plant) is due to be completed on schedule, in early February. This will help to substantially reduce the amount of odor leaving the facility.



YCUA
your water and wastewater service providers

Department



The Customer Service Department administers the billing, service requests, and service concerns of all YCUA customers. Every other month, the Customer Service Department must collect information for approximately 20,000 accounts. This includes processing the meter readings that are taken for each account, determining the amount of the bill, noting the type of service provided, and indicating how much has been paid on the account and the current balance owed.

They address all requests for service during YCUA business hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:25 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions about your service, want to report a problem, suspect a leak in the system or meter, or if you would like to have service installed, please call our customer service department (extension 0).



Frequently Asked Questions

Why is my bill so high?

Here are some major sources for heavy water consumption that can lead to an unexpectedly high bill. Do you sometimes have to jiggle the handle to make the toilet stop running? Does your faucet drip? Have you been watering your lawn, or are you trying to keep it green during a hot spell? Do you have a pool? Do children often play in the hose/sprinkler?

Toilet leaks are a major offender. You can test for a leak by placing 10 drops of food coloring in the tank. Don't flush for 15 minutes. If colored water shows up in your bowl, the tank is leaking. If your tank has a leak, check the flapper valve or the floating ball setting.

Has there been a rate increase?

A 5.4% increase in water and sewer rates will go into effect in February 2000. This is the first rate increase in nearly five years.

New Billing Format

YCUA's new billing format became effective January 2000. The new bill will be sent in an envelope, allowing us to provide you with more information, including a pay stub and return envelope.

In addition, we will now also be able to offer duplicate (third-party) billing. This feature may be of interest to landlords who wish to assure tenants accounts are up-to-date. It may also be useful for those who care for the financial needs of the elderly and other loved ones.

Come Work with YCUA!

YCUA hires approximately 6-8 new staff per year. With the labor shortage in southeastern Michigan, it is difficult to find high-quality employees to help serve our customers. We urge persons with clerical, construction, landscaping, trades, or public works experience to apply for work with us.

Each quarter we test for clerical workers, and every six months we test for field/maintenance workers. The next clerical tests will be in March, and field/maintenance workers will be tested in April.

Starting pay for clerical staff is \$13.72 per hour; field/ maintenance staff start at \$13.52 per hour. Benefits are similar to those of auto workers.



Application for employment and information about available positions can be made from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday at the Administration Office. You can also download an application through our web site at www.ycu.org and return it via e-mail to kherbert1@mediaone.net. Directions to the office are available on our web site or by calling the customer service department (extension 0).

YCUA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Kudos?

ALL WELCOME! - Contact YCUA at
734.484.4600 or www.ycu.org