

Muskingum County Utilities

**375 Richards Road
Zanesville, Ohio 43701
Telephone (740) 453-0678
Telephone (740) 452-4940
Fax (740) 453-6448**

Dear Sewer Customer:

Muskingum County is always looking for ways to improve efficiency and to control cost of operations. As part of this effort the County will merge all billing operations of the Water Department and Sewer Department effective January 1, 2012. The Muskingum County Utilities Office will be located at 375 Richards Road. Office hours will be 8:00 to 4:00 Monday through Friday, except holidays. After January 1 all Muskingum County water and sewer business will be conducted at the Richards Road location.

As a sewer customer, the major changes that you will see are billing and payment options. Sewer rates will be unchanged during the merger. All sewer accounts will be affected but with minor differences. The payment options will be expanded. The details in this letter address changes for residential customers. Commercial and industrial sewer customers will see similar changes.

Billing Changes

1. All sewer accounts will be billed every other month with a County Utilities bill. This means that if your sewer charge is \$48.50 per month, your bill will now be \$97.00 every other month. Your County Utilities bill will be due 30 days after billing, this is a 15-day longer pay period than the current sewer bills. In order to start the new billing cycle without billing some customers twice the sewer customers the Old Falls, Dunzweiler, West Pike, Fuchs Community, Bartlett Run, and West Muskingum districts will not receive a sewer bill in December.

2. Those customers getting both water and sewer service from Muskingum County will see the sewer bill combined with the water bill as a new County Utilities bill and mailed on the same cycle as the current water bill. Those sewer customers who receive water service from another provider will not see any change in their water bills.

a. Please note that if the payment submitted is less than the amount due, the payment will be applied proportionally across all accounts. All accounts will be considered delinquent until payment is made in full.

b. If a water customer is currently using automatic bill payment (ACH) and that customer is also getting sewer service from the County, after January 1, 2012, the sewer charges will also be a part of the ACH. If you do not want to continue ACH for the new County Utilities bill you must contact the Richards Road office.

3. The account numbers will change for all sewer customers. Please make sure you use the new account number when making payments.

4. All residential sewer customers will be billed a flat rate. Those residential sewer customers who are currently billed based on water consumption will be billed the flat rate after January 1, 2012.

5. Those customers who financed their connection fee with the County will see their payments combined with the new County Utilities bill.

6. Any sewer customers that have been making sewer payments by online banking will need to update the payment information, such as name, account number, and address, in the bank payment system. If you receive both water and sewer service from Muskingum County, please make note there will be only one County Utilities bill.

7. For rental properties that have both Muskingum County water and Muskingum County sewer service, the new County Utilities bill will be mailed to the tenants, not the property owners. If the account becomes delinquent, a notice will be mailed to both the tenant and the property owner.

These billing changes may require that you adjust your payment planning. Although the total sewer payments are unchanged by the merger, the fact that the sewer service and connection payments will be due every other month rather than each month may require you to make plans for the payments. For those customers who prefer to make advance payments, those payments will be credited to their accounts when received in the Richards Road office.

Expanded Payment Options

1. Sewer customers will now be able to pay the County Utilities bill with a credit or debit card (Discover, Visa, and MasterCard). **Payments can not be made over the phone;** customers must stop by the office on Richards Road.

2. Sewer customers will now be able to establish automatic bill payment (ACH) with their bank. To set up ACH payment of your County Utilities bill, stop by the Richards Road office with a voided check to complete the authorization form or check the web site at water.muskingumcounty.org to download the authorization form and for instructions.

3. Additional drop boxes will be available to all customers. Drop boxes are located at 375 Richards Road (County Utilities office), 1410 Newark Road (old sewer office), County Treasurer's office, and the Community Bank at 2750 Maysville Pike in South Zanesville.

4. During office hours, drive-thru window service is available at the Richards Road location.

The County has been working on this office merger since the beginning of the year. Combining the billing systems and consolidating the office personnel are two of the final steps in the merger. Even with considerable planning there will be questions and concerns. Please feel free to call the current water (740-453-0678) or sewer (740-452-4940) office if you have questions.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to serve you better.

Sincerely,

Commissioners