

Fall 2009

Winner

PRSA - Virginia Best in Show

# UTILITY *Talk*

NATURAL GAS

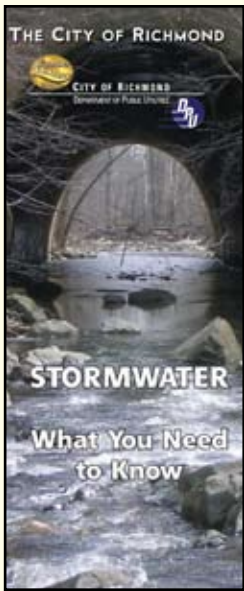
WATER

WASTEWATER

STREET LIGHTING

168374-0115396

Para una copia de este boletín en español, visite la página [www.richmondgov.com/departments/publicutilities/utilitytalk.aspx](http://www.richmondgov.com/departments/publicutilities/utilitytalk.aspx) o llame a la Oficina de Enlace Hispano de la Ciudad de Richmond al 646-0145.



## Stormwater Utility bills are in the mail

The new Stormwater Utility went into effect July 1, and the bills are tentatively scheduled to begin going out late in September.

This new utility will provide dedicated funding to implement federally mandated preventive maintenance, repair and improvements to the City's storm drain system. Local flooding problems will be resolved as projects are completed. Controlling stormwater runoff and all the pollutants it carries to creeks, streams, the James River, and the Chesapeake Bay will improve our water quality.

To learn more about the Stormwater Utility,

visit [www.richmondgov.com/dpu](http://www.richmondgov.com/dpu) and click on Stormwater. There you can register to receive river alerts, find answers to your questions about the new utility, download or request a brochure, and learn how you can help prevent pollutants from reaching our rivers and streams.

Join the conversation at [www.cordpu.blogspot.com](http://www.cordpu.blogspot.com) to ask additional questions and read the latest information.

To schedule a presentation about the stormwater utility for your civic association, community, nonprofit or church meeting, call 646-7323.

## Utility Talk wins award

*Utility Talk*, the publication you're now reading, received the Best in Show award at the 2009 Virginia Public Relations Society of America awards in June.

Judges called it "effective, creative, diverse, short and to the point, timely and easy to read."

*Utility Talk* was created in 1993 to provide Department of Public Utilities' customers with important information about water quality and conservation, wastewater and stormwater management, streetlighting, cooking, gas safety, and the benefits of using natural gas appliances.

To read back issues of *Utility Talk*, visit [www.richmondgov.com/dpu](http://www.richmondgov.com/dpu).

## Water Quality Report offers information on City's water



If you have not received the 2008 Water Quality Report in the mail, you can view it online at [www.richmondgov.com/DPU](http://www.richmondgov.com/DPU) or call 646-5224 to have a copy mailed to you.

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities is proud of its record of providing safe, high-quality drinking water to citizens throughout the region.

The water quality report is a snapshot of the quality of water that the City provided in 2008, including where your water comes from, what it contains and how it compares with standards mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia Department of Health.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Customer Service: 644-3000 TDD: 1-800-855-1155  
Streetlight Outages & Gas, Water & Sewer Emergencies: 644-3000  
TDD: 1-800-855-1155  
Miss Utility: (Before You Dig): 811



## MetroCare Can Help



Are you facing economic hardships this winter that may prevent you from paying your heating bills? Then register for the MetroCare Program. The application period is from December 15 through April 30.

Any person living in the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities service area and who meets prescribed guidelines is eligible for MetroCare funds.

Customers should call the Department of Social Services' Energy Assistance division at 646-7046 to learn if they are eligible under guidelines published by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, have a family crisis or change in employment that may qualify for assistance.

For more information, call the United Way at 2-1-1 or 275-2000.

## Sign up for the Equal Monthly Payment Plan

Almost 75 percent of the natural gas consumed in your home occurs during the winter months when you have holiday expenses as well. Sometimes it's hard to predict how to budget.

The Equal Monthly Payment Plan (EMPP) does it for you by spreading your annual gas bill over 12 months. Based on the previous year's gas usage, an estimate is determined. Each month's bill shows the actual month's usage and the outstanding balance. Accounts are reviewed and adjusted each August.

With the EMPP, you'll be able to plan ahead with confidence. Call 644-3000 to enroll today!

**\*  
Win a  
\$25 bill  
credit!**

The Department of Public Utilities randomly selects two customer account numbers to hide in the *Utility Talk* newsletter each issue. If you find your account number in this issue, call 646-3937 by Sept. 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your utility bill.

Always read each issue of *Utility Talk* carefully, and you may be the next big winner of a \$25 credit on your bill!



50021-0074941

## Rain Barrel Winner

*Irene Jennings of the Northside won the rain barrel drawing during National Drinking Water Week last May. Congratulations, Irene!*

## Get ready for winter with a furnace tune-up

An annual safety inspection of your gas furnace by a licensed heating contractor is always recommended, but there are some things you can do yourself to ensure your home and furnace is ready for winter.

Test your carbon monoxide detector. Replace the battery. Every home should have one.

Check the furnace area for any combustibles stored nearby. Move these out of the furnace room. Remove anything that could restrict airflow to the furnace. Check all supply and return air vents for blockage. Clothing, lint and furniture are common obstructions.

Check for black soot on and around the furnace. Black soot is a sign of improper combustion caused by a defect in the furnace or vent system. If you find black soot, don't operate your furnace until it has been inspected and repaired by a licensed heating contractor.

Disposable fiberglass filters should be replaced and electrostatic filters should be washed at least every three months. Clogged air filters can significantly restrict airflow and hurt the performance of your heating system. Starting the heating season with a brand new filter is a great idea!

You can also check your ductwork for leaks when the furnace is running. Slowly run your hand around the outside of an entire duct run to feel for escaping air. Check the return duct by running a piece of tissue along the sides. If you feel the tissue being sucked in, you have a leak. Use ductwork-approved foil tape to seal those leaks. (Source: hubpages.com)



## DID YOU KNOW...?

▲ Gas leaks can be recognized by sight: dying vegetation over buried lines; blowing dirt, bubbling water; corrosion on the gas meter; or piles of dead insects.

▲ Gas leaks can be recognized by smell: Since natural gas is odorless, Mercaptan is added to it, which smells like rotten eggs, a strong, sharp, unpleasant odor.

▲ Gas leaks can be heard: Hissing from meters, connections or the ground.

▲ If you suspect a gas leak, DO NOT turn on a light or appliance, use a flashlight, lighter, telephone or cell phone, pull a plug from the electrical outlet, or smoke or light a match until you are well away from the suspected leak. Call 644-3000 or 911 right away.

▲ Call 8-1-1, Miss Utility, before you dig. It's the law. One of the greatest risks to underground gas pipelines is accidental damage during excavations.