

Fall 2012

*In Memoriam*

## Honoring John R. Byers

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Board Member John R. Byers on July 29, 2012. Mr. Byers was appointed to the Fairfax Water Board in June 2011 as the Mount Vernon District representative.



**John R. Byers**

Prior to serving on the Board, Mr. Byers served as a member of the Fairfax County Planning Commission and the Planning and Zoning Committee of the Mount Vernon Council. He was instrumental in the development of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, and Mount Vernon Hospital.

Mr. Byers was a graduate of the United States Military Academy and served in the United States Army for 31 years. He was awarded the West Point Society of the District of Columbia Distinguished Member Award in 1999 for service to his alma mater and his community. Mr. Byers was honored as the Citizen of the Year by the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations in 1995. In 2007 the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution commending his community service.

Mr. Byers' contributions to Fairfax County will long be remembered and he will be missed by many. We extend our sincere condolences to Mr. Byers' loved ones.

*(We regret that, due to our newsletter publication schedule, we were not able to provide this tribute to Mr. Byers in a more timely way.)*

*Board to Hold Public Hearing*

## Important Rate Information

On Dec. 13, 2012, the Fairfax Water Board of Directors will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on the proposed revision to the commodity charge from \$2.16 to \$2.29 per 1,000 gallons, effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2013. The public hearing will be held at Fairfax Water's main office at 8570 Executive Park Avenue in Fairfax. A copy of the proposed changes and directions to the main office can be viewed at [www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm). To speak at the hearing or obtain a hard copy of the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges, call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.

The proposed changes to the commodity charge and service charge, if approved, would increase the average household quarterly bill by \$3.97. Even with this increase, Fairfax Water's rates will remain the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. To see a comparison of regional water rates, visit our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org](http://www.fairfaxwater.org), click on Customer Service, and then click on Rates.

As a non-profit public utility, Fairfax Water is mandated to charge only for the actual cost of providing water service to our customers. We conduct Cost of Service studies to evaluate this cost and look closely at population projections, average per capita water usage, and projected inflation rates. For example, one of the major challenges we face is probably familiar to you - the ever-rising cost for fuel and power.

*(cont. on page 2)*

## In This Issue

### Page 1

- ◆ Honoring John R. Byers
- ◆ Important Rate Information

### Page 2

- ◆ Attention Landlords and Renters
- ◆ Are You Prepared?

### Page 3

- ◆ New Board Member
- ◆ Summer Memories!

### Page 4

- ◆ Kids' Corner
- ◆ Mark Your Calendar

## Important Rate Information *(cont.)*

Fairfax Water also has a Strategic Financial Planning Model and we ensure that any proposed increases in rates, fees, and charges are consistent with this model. Most importantly, we evaluate the proposed increases against these guiding principles:

- Are the proposed increases fair and reasonable?
- Were they derived from empirical data?
- Will they be applied equitably to our customers?

For more information about Fairfax Water’s rates, fees, and charges, visit our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org/customer/index.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/customer/index.htm) or call us at 703-698-5600, TTY 711. 💧

**The following table compares the existing rates, fees, and charges with the proposed revisions.**

Charge	Current	Proposed
Availability Charge	\$3,700	\$3,850
Local Facilities Charge	\$9,000	\$9,500
Service Connection Charge	\$1,000	\$1,050
Account Charge	\$33	\$35
Quarterly Billing Service Charge	\$8.35	\$9.20*

Charge	Current	Proposed
Commodity Charge (per 1,000 gallons)	\$2.16	\$2.29**
Peak Use Charge (per 1,000 gallons)	\$3.20	\$3.45
Turn Off/Turn On Charge	\$46	\$50
Sewer Use Meters Charge	\$41	\$44
Returned Payment Charge	\$16	\$17

\* Charges reflect fees associated with standard 5/8 " residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges available on our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm).

\*\* Fees for the use of Fairfax Water fire hydrants would also change to include the proposed increase in the commodity charge and peak use charge.

## Attention Landlords and Renters

Recently changes were made to the sections of the Code of Virginia that govern how water and sewer systems may place liens against landlords for tenants’ unpaid bills. Due to these changes, Fairfax Water was required to make changes to the process for establishing water service for renters **only** on accounts initiated on or after **July 1, 2012**. If your Fairfax Water account was established before July 1, 2012, you do not need to take any action. If you are a landlord or prospective renter and would like more information, visit our Web site [www.fairfaxwater.org/customer/tenant\\_changes.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/customer/tenant_changes.htm), call Customer Service at 703-698-5800, TTY 711, or send an e-mail to [customers@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:customers@fairfaxwater.org) with “Lien Law” in the subject line.

## Are You Prepared?

Winter weather is just around the corner, so keep these tips in mind to protect your plumbing from freezing temps.

- Locate and tag your main-line water valve so you can shut off the water in an emergency. The valve is normally located where the water line enters your home through the foundation. Make sure everyone in your household knows how to turn off the water. To make it easier, print the main-line water valve tag on our Web site and attach it to the valve. (See Web address below.)
- Never try to thaw frozen pipes with an open flame or torch.
- If you’ll be away from home for an extended period, keep the thermostat at a reasonable temperature to protect pipes from freezing.
- Insulate pipes in unheated spaces. Hardware or building supply stores carry insulation designed to keep pipes in these areas from freezing.

You can find more winter safety tips and print the main-line valve tag at [www.fairfaxwater.org/customer/youplum.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/customer/youplum.htm). Call 703-289-6019, TTY 711, to request the tag by mail. 💧

## And the Winner is . . .

In May the Virginia Municipal League (VML) awarded Fairfax Water the Risk Management Leadership Award for innovative, active, and effective employee safety and risk management programs.

The VML is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of city, town, and county governments established to improve and assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education, and other services. 💧



Fairfax Water Risk Manager George Hoke (l) and Safety Specialist Brian Miller accept the Margaret A. Nichols Risk Management Leadership Award from the Virginia Municipal League.

# New Board Member Appointed



Anthony (Tony) H. Griffin has been appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to serve on the Fairfax Water Board of Directors. Mr. Griffin will serve as the At-Large Member.

Mr. Griffin is the former county executive for Fairfax County, serving in that position from 2000 until his retirement this spring. During his tenure, Fairfax County was named one of the best managed jurisdictions in America by *Governing* magazine.

He also received the Stone Practitioner Award from the American Society of Public

Administration for his commitment to improve intergovernmental cooperation, especially in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, the anthrax incidents in 2001, and the regional sniper attacks in 2002.

Mr. Griffin is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1967. He is a graduate of Hobart College and holds master's degrees in Urban Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. ♦

# Glad You Asked!

**Q.** Can you explain the differences between drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater?

**A.** Great question and one we hear often. First, an important clarification. Your drinking water comes from Fairfax Water and providing safe drinking water is all we do. Fairfax Water is a financially self-supporting, non-profit organization with all revenues dedicated to the drinking water system. Stormwater and wastewater are managed by Fairfax County's Public Works and Environmental Services.

**Fairfax Water** Drinking water is water that has been treated and is safe to consume. Fairfax Water operates two treatment plants and both plants use a six-step treatment process, including ozonation and granular activated carbon filtration. We treat an average of 153 million gallons of water a day, which is distributed through 3,276 miles of water main. To learn more about your water quality, visit our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org/water/index.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/water/index.htm).

 The water that drains from your tub, sink, and toilet is wastewater. It goes through a series of pipes to wastewater treatment plants where it is cleaned and returned to local waterways. Through interjurisdictional agreements, wastewater flow collected in the system is conveyed to five regional treatment facilities, including the Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control Plant owned by Fairfax County. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater) or call 703-550-9740, TTY 711 for more information.

 Stormwater is the water that drains from the roads, driveways, sidewalks, yards, woods, roofs - any outdoor surface - into the storm drains in our streets. Stormwater runoff from hard surfaces cannot soak into the ground and flows into the storm drains carrying sediments, nutrients, toxic substances and disease-causing microorganisms. This polluted runoff makes its way to the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay through our many watersheds. For this reason, it is critical that we manage what flows down our storm drains. For more information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/) or call 703-324-5500, TTY 711. ♦

If you have a question, concern, or compliment, contact us at [pr@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:pr@fairfaxwater.org) or call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.

# Summer memories!

Again this year, Fairfax Water had a booth at Celebrate Fairfax! - the county fair held in June. In the post-event visitor survey, our booth was rated as the most popular at the fair - most likely because we gave away 34,000 cups of ice cold water! That's more than 34,000 plastic bottles kept out of the trash! To all of you who visited our booth, a great big thank you for helping us keep our county green! ♦



Our Water Quality Laboratory hosted the Reston Association Science Camp this summer. Laboratory analysts worked with the budding scientists to explore how water is treated and tested. ♦





**We Want to Know . . .**

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, please e-mail us at [pr@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:pr@fairfaxwater.org), call us at 703-698-5600, or write to the address below:

*Straight From the Tap* Editor  
Fairfax Water  
8570 Executive Park Ave.  
Fairfax, VA 22031

**Important Numbers**

**Fairfax Water Services**

Questions about water service:  
703-698-5800

After Hours/Emergencies:  
703-698-5613

To report a water main break:  
703-698-5613 or send an e-mail to [watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org).

Questions about billing:  
703-698-5800

All other Fairfax Water departments: 703-698-5600

**Fairfax County Services**

24-hour trouble-response center for sewer back-ups or sluggish flow in a sink, toilet, or tub: 703-323-1211

Sanitary sewer back-ups and line maintenance: 703-250-2003

**Dig with C.A.R.E.**

Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001 or 811

Use TTY 711 (Virginia Relay) for all numbers unless otherwise stated.

**KIDS' CORNER**

**COLORING FUN!**



Source: [www.Edupics.com](http://www.Edupics.com)

Turning off the water while you brush your teeth saves up to four gallons of water every time you brush!



The Science Guy

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Mon., Sept. 3**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Labor Day

**Sat., Sept. 29 & Sun., Sept. 30**



Fall for Fairfax; Fairfax County Government Center;

[www.fallforfairfax.com/](http://www.fallforfairfax.com/) or 703-324-3247, TTY 711

**Mon., Oct. 8**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Columbus Day

**Mon., Nov. 12**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Veteran's Day

**Thurs., Nov. 22 and Fri., Nov. 23**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday

**Mon., Dec. 24**

Fairfax Water offices close at noon for Christmas Eve

**Tues., Dec. 25**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Christmas Day

**Tues., Jan. 1**

Fairfax Water offices closed for New Year's Day



Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water authority serving 1.7 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, and Alexandria.



**Water-Saving Tip**

If you're installing a new lawn this fall, select a turf mix or blend that matches our climate and your site conditions. Ask your cooperative extension agent (<http://offices.ext.vt.edu/fairfax/> or 703-324-5369, TTY 711) or favorite garden center what is best for your yard. 💧