

NEW SEWER AND GAS RATES TO TAKE EFFECT OCTOBER 1

Upcoming rate changes will impact your utilities bill this fall. The Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is increasing service charges and rates for sewer service and natural gas service starting in October. Residential sewer customers will see an increase of \$1.14 per month. Typical natural gas customers will see a \$0.76 increase on monthly service charges and a \$0.02 per therm increase on the fixed portion of the commodity rate.

For a full overview of rates, visit ladpu.com/rates.

Why are rates going up?



Large cost increases due to inflation and supply chain shortages have negatively impacted current gas fund balances. The proposed adjustments are intended to generate revenues needed not only for current operations but also to build cash reserves necessary for future infrastructure.



Due to Los Alamos topography, DPU must maintain and operate two wastewater treatment plants as well as 27 lift stations. The White Rock plant, built in the 1960s, is currently being replaced. While DPU has secured a low interest loan for that replacement project, DPU must demonstrate adequate revenue to pay back the loan. Additionally, DPU has planned future capital projects to keep the systems that collect and treat wastewater resilient and sound.

DPU's financial policies, adopted in 2016, require the department to build cash reserves for each utility fund to ensure DPU's ability to meet operational needs, handle aging infrastructure and meet debt service requirements. These reserves are also collected in preparation for unanticipated system failures or external disruptions.

What if I can't afford higher rates?

DPU has a Utility Assistance Program. Funded by DPU customer donations, the program is available to qualifying low-income customers during the months of October through March and qualifying low-income customers over age 65 year-round. Additionally, customers who demonstrate a financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances may qualify for a single, lump sum credit.

To apply or donate, contact the Customer Care Center: 505 662 8333 or CustomerCare@lacnm.us.

Other programs available to assist with customers' utility bills are LA Cares (505 661 8105) and Self Help, Inc. (505 662 4666). Also, the State of New Mexico offers the NM Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist with energy bills (505 753 2271).

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