

Idlewood Water Control & Improvement District

732 Edgewood Circle, Lufkin, TX 75904
936-671-2653 Call or Text
Office Hours MWF, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm



www.IdlewoodWCID.com
IdlewoodWCID@gmail.com

December 15, 2023

Dear Customer,

Your Directors of the Idlewood Wastewater Conservation and Improvement District (WCID) are pleased to inform you that the monthly sewer rates for 2024 will **NOT** be increased. Idlewood WCID's rates are determined annually after the Angelina and Neches River Authority (ANRA) has approved its budget and determined an amount to charge the neighborhood for sewage treatment and sewer plant maintenance. Your Directors will continue to evaluate the budget each operational year to determine the best way to approach the annual deficits.

IDLEWOOD WCID'S OFFICE HOURS: We are operating Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1-5 p.m. but closed on observed Federal holidays. Idlewood WCID's office doors are currently closed to the public but you can make a payment in the green drop pole located by the mailbox. For assistance with specific account questions, please call or text the office during office hours, or send an email to idlewoodwcid@gmail.com.

- **NEW ONLINE PAYMENT METHOD:** Want the convenience of paying online? A new **online payment portal** will be available **January 1, 2024**, for those who choose to use it. We will still take personal checks, cashier's check, money orders, ACH draft, and E-checks over the phone, but remember, no cash. To make a payment online, go to our website at **IdlewoodWCID.com**. The view/pay your bill link provided will take you to your sewer account. Your name and total balance will be there for you to pay. You can pay the entire balance or partial balance. There will also be a check box to pay homeowner dues (hopefully up by Jan 1 as well). We will be able to take **PayPal, credit cards, debit cards, Venmo, and PayPal's Pay Later** option. Even though the payment screen says "PayPal" at the top, you will **not** need a personal PayPal account to pay us with Venmo, debit, or credit card. However, you will need a PayPal account if you try to pay through the PayPal option or the Pay Later option. The Pay Later option allows PayPal to pay Idlewood in full and lets you pay PayPal back in installments. In order to be able to pay online, you will need to have an email on file with this office. The log in is through your email and it must match the one on file at the office. If we have emailed each other, then there is no need to email the office unless you want that email changed. If you are not sure if we have your correct email, please email IdlewoodWCID@gmail.com and state the sewer account holder's name and the service address as well as the email that you want on file to pay under. Also, if there is any chance your email is tied to more than one sewer account, please let us know as there can be **ONLY** one email per sewer account to be able to pay through the portal.
- **WATER CUT OFF:** Idlewood reserves the right to cut off water service once a customer's outstanding sewer balance is \$100 or greater. Sewer service cannot be discontinued without cutting off your water. If your sewer balance due reaches \$100 or greater, a cut off letter that will be served by Central Water, which incurs a \$40 fee (placed on front door usually), with an actual cut-off date and your sewer past due balance attached. Typically, but not always, cut-offs are done the **last Wednesday of the month**. Since this office works MWF, you will need to make physical payments in the drop pole on Mondays no later than 4:45 p.m. to ensure zero water interruption. If you need to make a last minute payment, then you will need to pay online to ensure no water interruption. The office will check for payments through the online system on cut off times/days. The office will automatically get notified of the payment (an

email is sent to Idlewood when a customer pays online) and your water shouldn't be interrupted. As soon as the office opens on cut off days, the pole is checked, water payment is verified and Central Water is notified to turn your water back on. If you do get cut off and just made your payment, the water will most likely be turned back on before 4:00 p.m. on the same day. Additionally, you may be required to bring your total sewer deposit on file to \$300.

- **E-CHECKS:** E-Checks using your bank routing and account number are accepted over the phone. There is a \$1.00 processing fee each time this service is used. Office hours available for payments are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 1:00-5:00 p.m. If we miss your call, please do not leave a message asking us to call you back so you can pay your bill. The call must be initiated by the customer. Do not leave your information on voicemail. If you call the office to do an e-check, we may be assisting another customer. Please try your call again later and we will give you the same attention we gave them.
- **BILL PAYMENT POLICY:** Idlewood WCID mails out paper bills each month to every account, even if your account is on automatic draft (ACH) or Bill Pay (set up through your own bank). Due to mail being unpredictable, whether you receive a printed bill or not, the sewer bill is due on the 10th of each month. All online payments and all physical payments through mail or delivered by 5:00 p.m. in the drop pole by the office mailbox on the 10th of the month, are considered on-time and are not charged a late fee.
- **ACH DRAFT:** Registering for Automated Clearing House (ACH) allows Idlewood WCID to automatically draft the payment from your bank account on the 10th of each month, or the following business day, thereby eliminating concern for late fees. You can find the form on our website: IdlewoodWCID.com or email the office requesting an ACH form. There is a \$1.00 processing fee each month for this service. Upon completion of the ACH Draft Form, drop it in the drop pole. Forms must be received 10 days before a bill's due date in order for the draft to be active for that billing cycle. Cancellation of an ACH Draft must be delivered in **writing** (email is acceptable) 10 days before a bill's due date for the cancellation to take effect prior to the account draft. Note: Idlewood residents have the option of choosing to draft Home Owner's Association dues in conjunction with their bill. If you are already on ACH draft, your draft will continue at the same rate starting January 10th.
- **LATE PAYMENTS/FEES:** A late payment describes any payment not received by the 10th of the month. A \$20 late fee will apply for each late payment. If you are charged a late fee and believe you should not have incurred one due to unforeseen circumstances, you must attend the next scheduled board meeting, currently through conference call, to have your late fee reviewed with the Board of Directors. The office manager is not authorized to waive late fees. You must contact the office manager through phone or email to get the dial in number and date and time of the next conference call. If you write a letter or call the office to get a late fee removed, you will be directed to join the conference call at the next board meeting. If you believe the late fee was generated in error because you did pay on time, the office manager can look over that issue with you on the phone.
- **RETURNED PAYMENTS:** When Idlewood WCID receives notice from a bank of an account with Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF)/returned check, a \$30 fee is applied to the customer's account. After one NSF payment has occurred, the customer will not be allowed to pay the office through ACH draft, E-checks, Venmo, or Debit cards since these are directly linked to the insufficient bank account. Customers will be required to pay by money order or cashier's check, credit card, or PayPal's Pay Later option for a period of one year. Accounts already on ACH will be taken off ACH. You will receive notice in the mail of any NSF's. After a period of one year with continual on-time payments, the customer can file a request with the board for all payment options to be reinstated. The Idlewood WCID board reserves the right to make each decision on a case-by-case basis.
- **DEPOSITS:** The current required sewer deposit amount is \$200. Many customers have less than a \$200 deposit on file as their accounts were opened prior to this requirement. Effective January 1, 2019, if an

account has a deposit less than \$200, AND either has an NSF check or ACH draft with insufficient funds, the customer will be required to pay the additional amount necessary to bring their total deposit on file to \$200. The board believes this policy will benefit everyone by helping keep future sewer rates as low as possible.

- **READING YOUR BILL:** Please pay the amount on the line that says: "Balance Due". This amount is the full amount due by the 10th by 5:00 p.m. If this amount is under your regular rate, then you may have made an overpayment; likewise, an amount over the regular rate means you may have incurred other fees, such as late fees. If you have a credit balance, there is a small negative sign with the amount on the "Balance Due" line. If you have any questions about your bill, please contact the sewer office.
- **FOR IDLEWOOD ONLY:** For HOA/neighborhood concerns/complaints such as street lights, dog problems, solicitor's permits, and neighbor problems, please call or email one of the **HOA Board members** for the quickest response. Street light concerns, please contact David Fenley at 936-676-3015 and email at DavidOFenley@gmail.com. Other HOA concerns, please contact President Garland Hawk at 936-671-3774 and email at ghawk@consolidated.net or Greg Fair at 281-615-7295 and email gregfair1@aol.com. A copy of the covenants/bylaws are on the website at IdlewoodWCID.com./ipoa. The sewer office still collects homeowner dues for your convenience. If you wish to pay homeowner dues with your sewer bill, you will need to add the extra fee as stated on the bill. Currently, the dues are \$10 and are voluntary to pay. Dues pay for streetlights, fire hydrants, dumpsters, beautification of the neighborhood, and the newsletter. Any amount is graciously accepted. Every dollar helps keep your neighborhood safe and beautiful. IPOA meets every February to discuss any changes in homeowner dues. We are working towards allowing homeowner dues to be able to be paid with new our online system.
- **EMPTY HOUSE RATE:** If you move and still want the water to your house turned on in order to clean it and get it ready to sell or rent, it is the responsibility of the owner to call Idlewood WCID and request to be put on vacant house billing which is \$25 per month. Receiving vacant house billing takes 30 days to activate since water usage must be verified by Central Water.
- **WEBSITE:** You can access our website at IdlewoodWCID.com. Documents available on the website will include sewer service applications, ACH draft forms, current and updated policies, the plumber decision tree (see below), etc. The website will also be set up to view or pay bills.
- **PLUMBING ISSUES:** The neighborhood has experienced several stoppages that have required a plumber to be called out to resolve the issues. There has been some confusion about who is responsible for calling the plumber, and who is responsible for the plumber's bill. To clarify the related policy, the board has developed a decision tree to aid our customers in understanding everyone's responsibilities. Please review the decision tree that is included at the bottom of this newsletter. Here is an overview of the decision tree:
 - If you have a sewer issue call a licensed plumber. This office does not staff a licensed plumber.
 - The plumber will determine the nature and location of the issue.
 - If the issue is on the customer's side of the sewer main, the plumber's bill is the responsibility of the customer.
 - If the issue is determined to be with the main line, the plumber must contact an Idlewood WCID board member before leaving the job. A board member will come and speak with the plumber and evaluate the situation. Idlewood WCID will not be responsible for work not approved by a board member. If the board member agrees with the plumber, the plumber's bill will be the responsibility of Idlewood WCID.
 - Idlewood WCID will not be responsible for any expenses related to work performed by an unlicensed plumber.
 - Additionally, we ask that you continue to strive to practice sound water and sewer conservation practices throughout the coming year. Following these practices allows us to operate more efficiently, and not add to the annual operational cost. Here is a reminder of those practices. We ask that you

refrain from placing foreign objects into the sewer system. Foreign objects can clog the lines and are very expensive to remove. Items such as tampon dispensers, condoms, syringes or needles, medicines, etc. should be disposed of properly and not in the sewer system. Grease, petroleum-based products, and chemicals, such as paints and pesticides, should be disposed of through proper means. Think conservation when washing clothes, showering, etc. Check to ensure the caps for the sewer cleanouts around your home are in place to avoid unnecessary processing of rainwater runoff. Every gallon conserved reduces our processing costs.

On another note, the annual audit for 2022 was received in May of this year and is available for review by contacting the WCID office.

In closing, Idlewood WCID’s Board of Directors and office manager, Stacy Coats, wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe Holiday Season. We look forward to serving you in the upcoming 2024 New Year.

Regards,



Greg Fair,
President



Stephen Morton,
Vice President



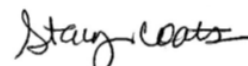
Jonathan Puckett,
Investment Officer



Mike Hartman,
Treasurer



Rick Watkins,
Secretary



Stacy Coats,
Office Manager

Plumber Decision Tree

