

Sewer authority may raise rates by 80 percent

By: **DANNY ADLER** (Mon, Dec/18/2006)

Yardley residents opened their mailboxes to some bad news last week.

Inside was a letter from the Yardley Borough Sewer Authority informing them of sewer rate increases beginning the first day of the new year.

Rates could rise by as much as 80 percent to pay for a \$6.4 million bond to repair damage to the sewer system from major flooding in June, according to township Manager Bill Winslade. The letter, which was obtained by the Courier Times, a sister paper of The Intelligencer, states that the average customer's bill will go up to \$736.20 from \$407.04.

The sewer authority will hold a meeting at 7:30 tonight at Borough Hall, 56 S. Main St., to answer questions and discuss concerns about the rate increase. The meeting is open to the public.

Although officials from the sewer authority could not be reached Friday, authority Chairman Robert White wrote in the letter, "None of us want sewer rates to increase. The Authority, acting in the interest of the health and safety of the community, has raised the sewer rates, not because we want to, but because we must. The extensive damage to portions of the sewer system caused by flooding must be repaired, and the cost of such repairs must be paid. The sewer system is an important asset of the community that must be preserved."

The authority's letter states the Federal Emergency Management Agency will chip in \$201,661.57 for the repairs. White called this figure "disappointing," and is exploring whether to formally appeal FEMA's decision, according to White's letter.

The rate increase will cover the cost to fund repairs on more than 16,000 feet of sewer lines between the canal and the Delaware River, Yardley Manager Bill Winslade said.

The borough has received non-stop calls from residents angered after receiving the letter.

Since the council and the sewer authority are separate entities, the council doesn't have any say in the authority's decision to raise its rates, Winslade said.

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