**Member News and Notes…Summer 2023**

Some of you may have noticed some BIG changes going on around these parts! Well, we have some important news and developments coming down the pipe (no pun intended!) here in the TWA that we wanted to share with you…

Earlier this year the Association constructed a new water tower along Star Road, north of the McLaurin Schools at the intersection of Star and Thomasville Roads; we are in the process of drilling a new freshwater well to supply this tower and provide water distribution even during emergencies. The well setup is going to take some time, though, so be patient as our contractor mobilizes equipment and starts on this important project. Also, starting this month we will be running new water lines throughout our geographic area to replace worn out pipes and improve water distribution to our members. We have other long-term projects we are currently reviewing to better serve everyone, and we will keep you informed of these improvements in due time.

As you may have already guessed, these long-overdue improvements to our water system do not come without a cost. The good news is that the majority of the cost of these projects will be funded as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) passed last year in Congress. The ARPA funds represent grant money that we do NOT have to repay as long as we continue to meet program requirements. We will need to borrow some funds to cover approximately one-third of the cost of the projects but we will be utilizing low-interest programs thru the State of Mississippi for these purposes. The state funds will require us to make debt-service payments once those projects are completed.

We have been working with the MS Rural Water Association on our fiscal budget over the next 5 years, and with the addition of this debt-service requirement we will be required to raise our water rates to pay for the improvements. We have proudly kept our rates in check for over a decade, with zero increases! But effective with our September bills, we will be increasing the base rate for our residential customers by $2.50 monthly – this includes the first 2,000 gallons of usage - and also increasing the cost for usage over 2,000 gallons for all customers by $8.50 per thousand gallons, billed monthly. See our new website - **Thomasville.myruralwater.com** - for a breakdown of the revised rates for all of our members, and revisions to our water deposit structure, new construction, etc.

Finally, with all these changes, we are working hard to make paying your water bill and communicating with the Association a stream-lined process. We are rolling out a new bill pay system on our website, this will allow you to see your usage and pay your bill electronically, so be on the lookout! We are also starting to utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) to communicate water outages and issues, so please find us and give us a follow or like.

In closing…our Association holds our annual meeting every fall at the Dry Creek Church. This meeting is scheduled to be held on October 27 at 6:00. Please make plans to attend as we will be voting on your board of directors and reviewing our finances and answering any questions you might have. Thank you for letting us serve you here in the Thomasville/South Rankin community! Be blessed!

**The Board of Directors**

**of the Thomasville Water Association**