



Customer Pipeline

Emerald Coast Utilities Authority

Premium Rebates & Safe Employees: A Double Win!

Many factors impact the budget or the bottom line of an organization's operation: labor costs, prevailing market conditions, business overhead, claims, and employee turnover, just to name a few. However, one often-overlooked factor is the impact of accidents, and their associated costs, which include: downtime or decreased productivity; the expense of training new employees; the replacement or repair of vehicles or equipment; decreased employee morale from the loss or injury to a co-worker; loss of customer goodwill; and last but not least, higher insurance premiums.

Accidents are a "lose-lose" situation, and ECUA strives to reduce or eliminate the number of workplace accidents annually. Since ECUA is self-insured for claims of less than \$300,000, each accident directly affects our operating costs and our ability to keep our utility rates as low as possible. Just as important, our employees' safety and welfare while on-the-job, are the driving factors of our safety initiatives. Accident prevention is in the hands of both the employee and the employer, and ECUA takes safety very seriously. We strive to do everything possible to prevent an injury or accident before it happens.



ECUA Executive Director, Stephen E. Sorrell, left, accepts check from Florida League of Cities' Tom Conley, right.

Over the last seven years, ECUA has made great strides in achieving a reduction in property claims, vehicle accidents and employee injuries. As a result of this improved performance, our property insurer, the Florida League of Cities, recently issued a premium rebate check in the amount of \$100,094 for the 2013-14 policy year. Rebates had also been issued to ECUA for the previous seven policy years, resulting in over \$1,445,569 in total return of premium over the 8-year period. Wow!

This continuous improvement effort was possible due to the support and commitment of all ECUA staff. As you can see, there is not only an impact on the employee's well-being, there is also a major impact to the overall budget.

ECUA strives for continuous improvement by conducting all our operations and activities in a safe and responsible manner.



Mark Your Calendars!

ECUA offices will be closed on **Monday, February 15** in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday.

Sanitation Schedule for the Presidents' Day Holiday

There are **no changes** to the collection schedules for any Residential and Commercial customers.

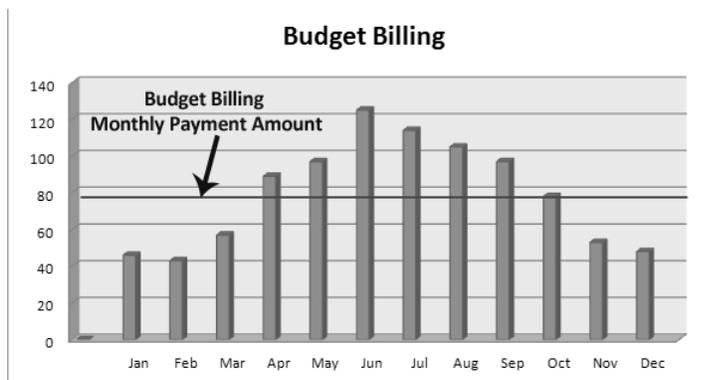
All garbage, yard trash, recycling and commercial dumpster collections will be made on their regularly scheduled days.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday!

Make Life Simpler This Year!

The time of year and weather conditions typically have a big impact on the quantity of water you use, affecting the amount you pay each month for water and sewer services. For most customers, the highest bills are in the summer when water usage is at its peak due to irrigation combined with typically lower levels of precipitation. Perhaps you have a swimming pool to fill, and wash the car more often-- these fluctuating conditions lead to highs and lows in your monthly billing cycles.

You can say goodbye to those monthly peaks and valleys, and simplify your monthly budgeting-- and with a new year, it's a great time to start! The Budget Billing program allows residential customers to pay their ECUA bill at a similar amount each month, based on a monthly average of the previous year's water usage.



To be eligible to participate in this program, ECUA customers must have current accounts and a billing history of at least 12 months at the same location. Each customer's Budget Billing Plan payment amount is calculated based on the total bill charges over the 12 months prior to the sign-up date, and divided by 11, leaving the twelfth month as the "settle-up" month. The Budget Billing payment is then made monthly until the settle-up month, at which point any credits or balances due are "settled-up." Then, the process begins again, perhaps with a newly-determined monthly Budget Billing amount, based on the latest 12-month period. Our aim is to make the Budget Billing amount as accurate as possible, and effectively even out the highs and lows of your monthly utility bill.

For more information, please visit our website at www.ecua.fl.gov, or call the ECUA Customer Service Department at 850-476-0480.



**United Way
of Escambia County**

We're pleased to help spread the word that you can maximize your money by filing your taxes for free, online or in-person! United Way of Escambia County offers two programs for individuals and families with an annual income of \$62,000 or less.

Online: File your taxes anywhere, anytime at www.myfreetaxes.com. If you have questions, call the MyFreeTaxes Helpline at 1-855-698-9435.

In-person: Go to a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site and have an IRS-certified volunteer prepare your taxes one-on-one. Dial 2-1-1 or visit www.unitedwayescambia.org/taxhelp for locations and times closest to you! All VITA sites will be open during the first week of February.