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PRESS RELEASE

RE: UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL OF FRINGE AND LOWER SOUTH RIVER AND AREA WATER RATES

Date: 9 November 2015

On Tuesday, June 23, 2015, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) approved an application by the Municipality of the County of Antigonish to amend the rates charged to customers of both the Fringe Area and Lower South River and Area (LSR) water utilities.

Budgets are prepared for each utility annually and are reflective of the revenues collected from customers using UARB approved rates and the costs of making available and delivering water to those customers. Water rates were last approved for the Fringe Utility in 1995 and for the LSR Utility in 2008.

In recent years it has become clear that the current rate structure is not producing sufficient revenue for the utilities to cover the cost of providing water to customers. After a consultant's review of accounts and operations, Municipal Council approved an application to amend rates in December 2014. A public hearing was held in April 2015.

Tables 1 & 2 outline the changes approved for residential connections. Residential connections in the Fringe are currently billed by "tap-count."

Table 1

Fringe Area Water Utility 1128 Residential Connections				
Fixtures	Current Rate (\$)	UARB Approved Rates (\$)		
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
First Tap	29.5	39.04	42.17	43.23
First Toilet	6.08	4.19	4.95	5.47
First Bathtub/Shower	6.08	4.19	4.95	5.47
Each Additional Tap/Toilet/Tub	3.04	2.09	2.48	2.74

Table 2

Lower South River and Area (includes St. Andrews and St. Josephs) 284 Residential Customers	
Current Rate (Quarterly)	\$128.43
2015/16 Rate (Bi-Monthly)	100.59
2016/17 Rate (Bi-Monthly)	109.94
2017/18 Rate (Bi-Monthly)	119.97

Residential customers in the LSR utility are billed at a flat rate. The new rate structure will see residential bills in the LSR utility increase by approximately \$7/month this year. The billing cycle has also changed from quarterly to bi-monthly billing.

Table 3 outlines the new rates for metered customer in both the Fringe and LSR utilities. There are a total of 95 metered customers in the Fringe, 63 of which have a 3/4 inch meter. There are 23 metered customers in the LSR utility. The Municipality has no 4, 6 or 8 inch meter customers.

Table 3

Metered Accounts						
Meter Size (inches)	Fringe Base Rate (\$)			LSR Base Rate (\$)		
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
5/8	34.85	37.76	37.76	58.24	65.4	71.12
3/4	51.67	55.99	55.99	86.89	97.55	106.06
1	85.31	92.46	92.46	144.18	161.86	175.92
1.5	169.41	183.63	183.63	287.43	322.61	350.58
2	270.33	293.04	293.04	459.32	515.52	560.17
3	539.45	584.79	584.79	917.71	1029.94	1119.09
4	842.21	913	913	1433.39	1608.66	1747.87
6	1683.2	1824.72	1824.72	2865.85	3216.22	3494.48
8	3028.8	3283.46	3283.46	5157.78	5788.32	6289.06
Consumption Rate / 1000 gallons	2.43	2.88	3.16	4.24	4.45	4.89

A universal water metering program is also a component of the approved rate structure. This program would see all residential customers of the Fringe and LSR utilities receive water meters by 2017 with a transition to metered billing by 2018.

The new rates for both utilities come into effect on July 1, 2015. Water bills based on those rates will be circulated shortly thereafter.