

# Nampa sewer bills could double

By MIKE BUTTS [mbutts@idahopress.com](mailto:mbutts@idahopress.com) © 2011 Idaho Press-Tribune |

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NAMPA – A major upgrade of Nampa’s wastewater treatment system could double sewer utility bills for Nampa residents.

City officials will not know when the fee increase will come until next year. Nampans will have to pitch in for about \$200 million over time for the upgrade, which will bring the facility up to the new standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

City officials want as much public input on how best to make the improvements and how best to pay for them. A new wastewater advisory group made up of community members will meet from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday at the Nampa Civic Center and each month for the rest of the year.

“We want to make sure we’re involving the community,” Nampa spokeswoman Sharla Arledge said.

City officials want to make upgrades to the wastewater treatment system that can support growth and meet future regulation for 20 to 25 years.

## **When and how much will sewer fees increase?**

That depends on what the wastewater advisory group decides. The changes would have to be approved by the city council after a public hearing.

How much is the average sewer bill in Nampa now?

Monthly sewer costs average \$18.62. Customers are billed every other month.

## **What about Caldwell?**

If the anticipated new EPA standards are implemented “there’s no question it would impact the (sewer) rate payers,” Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas said. “It’s got us

really, really concerned. The cost to comply is way beyond our capacity to just pay for it ... It's just another unfunded mandate from our federal government.”

### **Why is the upgrade needed?**

Nampa officials anticipate the EPA will require higher purity standards by 2018 for wastewater discharged by the city into Indian Creek. The main concern is phosphorus – a nutrient found in detergents, fertilizer, agricultural runoff and human waste. Too much phosphorus in lakes and rivers can cause excessive algae blooms, which can kill fish and threaten recreational uses.

### **Why increase utility rates to pay for the upgrade?**

The city's sewer service is set up to pay for itself, so fees from users must pay for projects.

### **How can residents get involved?**

To serve on the wastewater advisory board, which requires about two hours a month for the rest of this year, call Karla Nelson in the Nampa Public Works Department at 468-5523 or e-mail [nelsonk@cityofnampa.us](mailto:nelsonk@cityofnampa.us). Other members of the public are also welcome at the meetings. So far more than 20 people have said they want to be part of the advisory group, Nelson said.