

Hiawassee announces new Policy for collecting delinquent City Utility Bills

In June 2013, Hiawassee will begin an aggressive, ongoing campaign to collect unpaid utility bills. This includes any and all unpaid water and sewer accounts.

“A collection program will begin on June 1, 2013, with a penalty and interest abatement offer” stated Mayor Barbara Mathis. “This one-time offer will end July 1, 2013. We plan for Notice of this policy and the City’s offer to be included in the Hiawassee June Billings. Under the offer, all past due penalties and interest would be waived if the June bill is paid in full in June. Past Due Customers may contact the Hiawassee Billing Department at 706-896-2885 to receive a quote (usage less penalties and interest) to bring their account current. The City asks every customer to please check their bills to make sure there are no outstanding charges.”

The City also announced that Utility users with past due amounts in excess of \$1,000.00 would also be offered an additional option – to sign a contract with the City under which the utility user would pay each 2013 utility monthly bills - as received in full - and in addition, customers will have six (6) months to pay current past due amounts. Under the proposed contract, the customer would admit personal liability and personally guarantee the debt. If the contract is fully adhered to, all past due interest and penalties would be waived. However, all unpaid amounts, including interest and penalties, would be deemed immediately due and payable if the utility user defaults on the repayment plan or fails to pay in full a current monthly bill.

“Please be aware, the City has made arrangements to turn over delinquent accounts over to a collection agency” stated Rick Stancil, City Manager. This would apply to accounts which are past due amounts on July 1, 2013, and where no repayment plan has been signed. Additionally, arrangements will be made to immediately disconnect service. Accounts will have to then be fully paid to reconnect service.

Stancil further stated, “The City regrets this aggressive approach; however, it is not fair for some utility users to pay and others to receive free service. Failure to timely pay accounts drives up the costs of water and sewer to all users. The City understands that many of our customers have faced difficult times and the City has been very patient with outstanding bills. However, the water and sewer departments are required by law to break even and we are hoping that an aggressive collection action will prevent additional increases in utility rates.”

For further information, please contact the Hiawassee Billing Department at 706-896-2885.