

## **LIMESTONE COUNTY WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES RATE INCREASE**

Limestone County, Alabama (February 5, 2009)-Customers of the Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority will see a rate increase effective immediately. The rate increase will be reflected in the February bill and will result in an estimated \$3.76 increase to the average residential customer's bill. Residential minimum use customers will see a rate increase with their monthly rate going from \$17.03 a month to \$20.00 a month.

The increase was recommended to the authority's board by Tammy Smith the Interim General Manager during a special meeting on Thursday. "This rate increase was a last resort," said Smith. "We have cut expenses in all departments and reduced our number of employees but our costs continue to rise and we must pass some of those increases on to our customers." Smith continued "Our electricity costs have increased over \$15,000 a month when compared to our 1<sup>st</sup> quarter last year and the costs of all materials required to provide safe and reliable water service have increased over the past year."

The Limestone Water Authority serves over 18,000 customers in Limestone County that are not served by municipal water systems. The Authority maintains over 1,000 miles of pipe in their service area. The Authority's customer base is largely residential with only 175 commercial rate customers. The large size of the service area means higher maintenance costs with few large commercial customers to offset these costs.

Tammy Smith also said the rate increase was essential for financial health of the authority. "I have spent hours cutting costs and trimming our budget but due to increased costs and a tremendous drop in revenue from tap fees due to the economy we had no good options. We must raise rates to cover our operating costs, maintain our current bonds and continue to provide safe and reliable water service to Limestone County."

If customers have any further questions or comments please call 256.233.6444 or write to: Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority, Post Office Box 110, 17218 Highway 72 West, Athens, AL 35612 or visit: [www.limestonecountywater.com](http://www.limestonecountywater.com)