

Pine Bluff, AR Rate Update



Fast Facts

- Approximately 15,000 customer connections served in Pine Bluff
- The Arkansas Public Service Commission (APSC) issued an order approving rates on August 15, 2023.
- A residential water customer using approximately 6 CCF of water per month will see an increase of \$8.67 per month.
- New rates will take effect August 16, 2023.
- The Commission also approved Liberty's Water Infrastructure Improvement Rider ("WIIR"). This Rider will allow for ongoing and necessary investments in the Pine Bluff water system. The WIIR will take effect January 1, 2024.

On Tuesday, August 15, 2023, the Arkansas Public Service Commission (APSC) issued an order approving new rates for Liberty customers in Pine Bluff. New rates will take effect August 16, 2023. The new rates reflect the Company's efforts to better serve customers through investments to strengthen and modernize its infrastructure for improved reliability and quality water service.

Since the last rate update in 2014, and through December 2021, Liberty has invested \$27.2 million in improvements and upgrades to the Pine Bluff water system.

Under the APSC order, a Liberty Pine Bluff residential customer using approximately 6 CCF (approximately 4,500 gallons) of usage per month will see an increase of \$8.67 per month.

The order also includes Liberty's Water Infrastructure Improvement Rider ("WIIR"). This Rider will allow for ongoing and necessary investments in the Pine Bluff water system. The WIIR will take effect January 1, 2024.

Key Investments Included in the Rate Update:

> System Safety and Reliability

- Implementing Advanced Meter Reading (AMR) technology that allows Liberty to read meters without having to access a customer's property. This improves efficiency and safety. It also decreases the need to estimate bills, which improves billing service.
- Upgrading old and undersized water mains to increase reliability for fire protection and to allow for future growth.
- Replacing supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system, providing more accurate data for real-time monitoring of our system.
- Increasing capacity to the Jefferson Industrial Park, which supports economic growth in our area.
- Adding generator backup supplies at Liberty water plants to help ensure reliability during extreme weather conditions and emergencies.

> Increases in Operating Costs

Costs for materials, supplies, and labor continue to increase. The Company has seen a significant increase in operating costs; approximately 48% since the last rate update in 2014.

> Customer Service Enhancements

We've invested to improve our customer experience. Customers have new options when paying their bill, initiating service requests, and new technology for when a customer chooses to dial into our service department.

What is a rate request?

A rate request is a public regulatory review process in which a utility must demonstrate to its state public service commission why a proposed change in rates is needed. This independent public process helps ensure transparency and fair rates based on the costs to serve customers.

Who sets the rates customers pay for Liberty's water?

Liberty is required to provide every customer in our service area with reliable and quality water at rates approved by the public service commission of each state. In exchange, the utility is allowed the opportunity (not a guarantee) to earn a fair return for investors. Even though our regulators will ultimately determine any changes to customer rates, we pledge to do our part to keep rates as reasonable as possible.

What is Liberty doing to help customers who may be struggling to pay their water bill?

Liberty works with agencies to assist limited-income customers. Liberty also provides flexible payment options to customers who may be experiencing financial hardship. These are available on Liberty's website and can be referred to customers by our Customer Care Representatives.

We also encourage customers to check for leaks and practice smart water use. A leaky toilet, faucet, or showerhead will increase your water usage which ultimately increases your bill. Our website has conservation tips to help you save.

