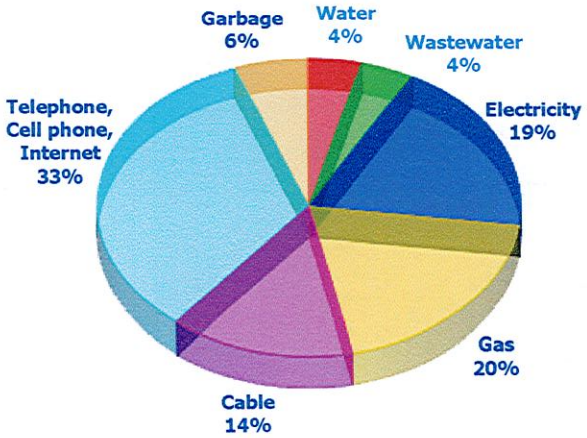
YOU SHOULD KNOW...

- Drinking water and wastewater services are not free.
- There may be miles and miles of underground pipes in your community delivering water and removing waste.
- Much of our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure is old and deteriorating.
- Water and wastewater main breaks and other disruptions are becoming increasingly common and increasingly expensive to address.
- Significant reinvestment is necessary to prevent:
  - Degraded environmental health and drinking water quality, threatening consumer's health and increasing industrial costs; and
  - Insufficient water for households and industries threatening property values, the communities' economy, and our quality of life.

Average U.S. Household Monthly Utility Costs



Which one can't you live without?

STAY INFORMED

Water and wastewater services are a vital part of life. Learn more about your system, and support critical reinvestment in water and wastewater infrastructure by:

- Obtaining a copy of your local water utility's Annual Water Quality Report
- Contacting your local health department
- Reading information provided by:
  - New York State Department of Health
    health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/
  - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
    dec.ny.gov/chemical/8464.html
  - US Environmental Protection Agency
    water.epa.gov

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Water and Wastewater Education and Outreach Committee partners, and funding for water and wastewater systems and utility management, visit:
efc.syracusecoe.org/WWEOC

Interested in a rewarding environmental career? Contact a WWEOC Member for more information.

This brochure was produced as a project of the Water and Wastewater Education and Outreach Committee, a partnership of public and private organizations formed to protect public health and the environment by ensuring that water and wastewater systems in New York State are operated and maintained to be viable and self-sustaining. Special thanks to the Environmental Finance Center at Syracuse University for their support in brochure design.

April 2013

The Value of Water

What's it worth to you and your community?

Invest in the future of your water and wastewater systems

WATER IS ESSENTIAL FOR LIFE

Water in the U.S. is accessible and convenient. Can you imagine a day without water? Every 24 hours, 4,000 children die worldwide from unsafe water.

Our health has improved over the years because of the quality of drinking water and wastewater sanitation provided in the U.S. One hundred years ago, life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years; now it is 78. An important contributing factor is clean water.

WATER SUPPLY & CONSUMPTION

Water is essential to our everyday lives, but its supply is limited. Our bodies need water to survive, farmers need water to grow food, and the environment needs water to keep recreation and wildlife thriving. Businesses and industry need water to provide goods and services in order to keep the economy functioning.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, per year, the average American household spends $707 on soft drinks and other beverages but only $523 on water and wastewater charges.

Every day, in the U.S., about 408 billion gallons of water are used for all types of purposes (drinking, bathing, farming, business, industry, power generation, etc.).

WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Drinking Water

Do you know...

- Where your drinking water comes from?
- How much it costs to maintain your community's drinking water system and who pays for it?

In 2010, NYS local governments spent $136 million on drinking water systems. However, they will need to invest $39 billion by 2030 to ensure that safe drinking water services continue.

Wastewater

Do you know...

- Where your wastewater goes?
- How much it costs to maintain your community's wastewater system and who pays for it?

In 2010, local governments spent $224 million on wastewater systems. However, they will need to invest $36 billion by 2030 to ensure that safe wastewater services continue.

Drinking Water and Wastewater

Do you know...

- Who runs and maintains your drinking water and wastewater system?
- What training is required for drinking water and wastewater personnel?

By 2020, over 30% of U.S. drinking water and wastewater professionals are expected to retire. Currently, there are not enough workers being trained to replace them in this highly skilled profession.

AGING & IMPAIRED INFRASTRUCTURE

Do you know...

- How old your drinking water and wastewater system is?
- If your local officials are planning for repairs, infrastructure replacement, and water emergencies?

Over the next 20 years, New York will need over $75 billion to address aging water and wastewater infrastructure.

Natural disasters can wreak havoc on water and wastewater systems. The effects of hurricanes and major storms highlight the value of water. In the wake of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee:

- 126 systems were issued boil water orders.
- 2.2 million customers were potentially affected.
- Five weeks after the storm, approximately 12 systems had boil water orders still in effect.

THE VALUE OF WATER

Water and wastewater services are delivered to you 24/7/365. A day without water can mean:

- No drinking.
- No flushing.
- No brushing.
- No showers, laundry, or dishwashing.
- No putting out fires.
- No watering lawns and gardens.
- Increased risk of waterborne disease.