



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Snow Storm Forces Town To Estimate Some Utility Bills

Last week's massive snow storm caused more headaches for town officials than just pushing massive amounts of snow from town streets and parking lots.

Snow plows working round the clock trying to make roads passable piled snow along the edges of roads in four-foot tall snow banks. Those piles of snow cover water meters used to determine customer usage. Town meter readers will not be able to take actual readings until they can access those meters buried in the ground and under feet of plowed snow.

"We will have to estimate the readings until we can actually read the meters," said Town Treasurer Ron Mabry.

To a lesser degree, electric meters may be unreachable for meter readers as well. Although not underground, they may be inaccessible due to deep snow. Electric bills will also be estimated when snow depth prohibits taking actual readings.

"It will all balance out when we can read the meters," said Mabry.

Meter readers will attempt to read meters starting next week for the upcoming cycle. The areas immediately affected are businesses along Madison Road, the south part of town — including the hospital — Meadowbrook Shopping Center and Friendship Heights apartments.

Another problem is the town's utility billing and payment computer server crashed Monday. The cause of the crash is unknown, but the operating system was corrupted.

Technicians must come to Culpeper next week to examine the system and repair any damage before it can be placed back online.

“The extent of the corruption is key,” said Mabry.

However, customer service representatives in the treasurer’s office can still take payments and manually print out receipts for utility bills until the system is fixed. The customer service representatives will not be able to answer questions or access accounts until the system is back online.

The server outage does not affect personal property or real estate tax payments or bills since that information is stored separately from the utility accounts.

Anyone with questions may contact the treasurer’s office at 540-829-8220.

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