

Rate increase

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tary Sharon Wilmarth, the PUC has received 72 letters protesting the rate increase from NUI customers.

"National Utilities has quite a history of noncompliance with us," she said.

Part of the rate increase may pay for installing new pumps at Midway Manor, Wilmarth said. The PUC can later visit the company to verify that new pumps have actually been installed.

"Ordinarily, a water company is given a specific time to make the improvements it told us it planned," said assistant PUC legal counsel Stan Brown. "They must file an affidavit with us stating they made the improvements, but it may be several months before we find out whether or not the work was actually done. In 90 percent of the cases, the work is

done."

Site checks and customer complaints are often the PUC's only way of verifying the work, he added. Not doing the promised work can result in fines against the company.

In the past year, customers of all four area divisions have complained about leaks in the system, sloppy repairs, low water pressure and too much chlorine in the water, resulting in spoiled laundry, skin irritation and digestive problems.

At Worden Place, "temporary" water lines strung through streets, culverts and a creek bed have been there for nearly nine years. Summer residents went without water for 2 1/2 months in 1995, while water ran down the street from a leak in a pipe leading to a winter resident's home.

Greco

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for the 12 to 14 shows is about 3,000."

He contends the amphitheater's EDU's are two or three times those of any restaurant around the lake.

"I believe one EDU for the restaurant and one for the bar is reasonable," Greco said. "When the Hansons operated their amusement park here they had a lot more usage than we do. We run only 14 events a year. We're a lot less of a burden on the system than the original amusement park was. I wouldn't mind paying the same number of EDU's that Hanson's paid for - four or five."

He added that he sent payments to the municipal authority through last August, based on what he thought was a fair sewer assessment.

"They didn't apply our payments as we directed," he said. "They applied it against our old balance. They were very arrogant and forceful in their attempts to collect the money."

Boice said the authority charged the Hansons three EDU's for the dance hall and seven more for the amusement park.

"We lowered Greco's EDU's to one per concert and three for his other businesses located on the property," Boice added.

If the municipal authority gets a judgement against Greco and he doesn't pay his bill, it can cut

"He thinks we're overcharging him and we think we're undercharging him."

Rick Boice
Harveys Lake Mayor

off his sewer service.

Greco has 20 days to contest the lien, which he has done.

"Contesting it will hold it up until we can get to court," Greco said. "We have a reason why we didn't pay the bill. Everyone must pay the rates - all we ask is that they be uniform, fair and go according to the code."

This summer he plans to expand the Cajun festival, which he said was very successful last year, and to add a seafood and jazz festival. He also wants to bring more country, oldies, current rock and classic rock shows to the amphitheater and plans to discuss a summer "Pops" series with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

"It's too early to discuss specific names," Greco said. "Harveys Lake is a very small venue and we won't have concerts lined up until we get closer to the start of the season."

Bug bill

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Mundy counters that many county officials have had to become experts in the caterpillars because of the widespread defoliation inflicted last spring. In areas where the pests have established themselves, outbreaks can be predicted, she added.

Counties must contract with spray contractors by early February and are locked into contracts by March, even if the infestations aren't as severe as they had been predicted, Leslie said. The state must still pay for spraying, even if it's not needed.

House Bill 1766, which passed the first approval before the full House, is tabled. Before it can be passed on to the Senate for a vote, it must pass two more votes in the House.

The Senate doesn't have any similar legislation pending, according to a spokesperson for Senator Charles Lemmond, who said Lemmond received many requests for help with the caterpillars last spring.

Representative George Hasay, who co-sponsored the bill, said he will support it when it comes before the House for a vote.

All hope isn't lost if the state doesn't fund a spray program, however.

A program coordinated by the county and another by a Back Mountain township supervisor are still in the works for the spring.

As he has in the past, Dallas Township supervisor Frank Wagner plans to coordinate a private spraying program, which will cost property owners \$25 per acre, and is available for smaller lot sizes. Neighborhoods may join the program, but residents should know their lot sizes so a price can be computed. For more information call Wagner at 675-2325.

Luzerne County's office of special environmental projects will also coordinate a spraying program, which will cost \$14 per acre for a minimum of 10 acres. Residents must call Director of Special Environmental Projects Ron Rugletic at 825-1840 as soon as possible for a contract.

People who don't own 10 acres may group their properties together to get the lower cost, as long as the properties adjoin one another.

Rugletic's staff will provide spraying information, the contractor's name and telephone number and a contract. Residents must fill out the contract, collect the money and pay the sprayer on their own.

Waiting until the nasty little critters appear is much too late to call for a sprayer, Rugletic said. The spray must be applied before the bugs grow to a certain size. Larger caterpillars require stronger chemicals, which can be hazardous to the environment.

BACK MOUNTAIN BRIEFS

Harveys Lake Women to host health program

The Health Women 50+ Project, breast and cervical cancer screening program will be presented to the Harveys Lake Women's Service Club on February 1, 7 p.m. at the Harveys Lake Elementary School cafeteria. Charlene Frial, Project Assistant for Maternal and Family Health Services, will discuss program services and eligibility requirements.

The public is invited. For more information call 823-7057.

BMT Republicans will meet Feb. 7

The Back Mt. Republicans will hold a meeting Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 7:30 p.m. at the Kingston Township Municipal Building, Carverton Road, Trucksville.

Sweet Valley Aux. to sell homemade soup

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Sweet Valley Fire Co. will feature homemade vegetable beef soup on Wednesday, Feb. 14 at the Fire Hall, Main Rd., Sweet Valley. Ham and bean soup will also be available.

The price is \$2.50 a quart. You must bring your own containers. To order, call 477-5502 or 477-2176. Orders must be made by Friday, Feb. 9. Pick up is at the Fire Hall between noon and 5 p.m.

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