

# PARKS OF DUTCHTOWN

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**We would like to offer the availability to advertise business' owned by Parks of Dutchtown residents (or the business' you work for..) . You can "sponsor" the newsletter for \$75.00 and we can have up to 4 sponsors per newsletter. The \$75.00 per spot will be used for the printing of the newsletter and for social events held in the subdivision for our homeowners. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to advertise. Spots will be filled on a first come first serve basis.**



## Hefty Sewer Rates Hike Asked

By: David J Mitchell  
*The Advocate*

Two interrelated sewer companies that serve subdivisions in fast-growing parts of Ascension Parish are seeking sewer rate increases from the Louisiana Public Service Commission that would as much as double monthly residential bills.

Ascension Wastewater Treatment Utilities Inc. and Wastewater Treatment Utilities Inc. each want to raise monthly sewer rates to a \$41 flat fee for residential and commercial users, according to a PSC rate application filed May 25. The companies also are separately asking the PSC to allow them to consolidate.

Both companies are in Prairieville and owned by Tom Pertuit. Combined, they have 9,960 customers, according to PSC staff. If approved by the PSC, the increase would mean customers of Wastewater Treatment would see their residential rates rise 101 percent, up from \$20.42 per month, and commercial rates rise 52.4 percent, up from \$26.90 per month.

Customers of Ascension Wastewater would see residential rates rise 70.8 percent, up from \$24 per month. Commercial rates would rise 20.6 percent up from \$34 per month, according to the request.

The requests would put the two companies' monthly bills in line with rates of East Baton Rouge Parish but would be far more than Gonzales though the city subsidizes that system more than \$1 million a year.

The companies' requests follows a 349-page consent compliance order the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality filed in January to bring the two companies' plants within their water quality permit limits.

The order requires upgrades to 151 of the companies' sewage treatment plants, which are primarily in Ascension Parish, but also to a lesser extent in East Baton Rouge and Livingston parishes.

Among the improvements anticipated are new sewer treatment equipment

and lift stations, a network of telemetry equipment to track how plants are working and a major sludge removal program.

The proposed rate increases support the implementation of those upgrades, which would stretch over about 30 months, and require an estimated \$6.3 million, according to the DEQ order and the rate request.

According to the request, the increase would also pay for need staff, backup natural gas-powered generators, a backup inventory of pumps and other equipment and could also eventually help retire more than \$550,000 in past debts taken out to cover prior repairs.

The rate request affects at least 165 subdivisions or businesses, including ones in Prairieville, St. Amant, Dutchtown and areas outside of Gonzales city limits, although a complete listing was not immediately available Friday.

Some sewer plants serve more than one subdivision.

PSC staff attorney Melanie Verzwylvet, who is assigned to the rate case, said commission staff are still reviewing the request. PSC staff have not made a recommendation, which will eventually be brought before the commission.

Verzwylvet said the companies are seeking an emergency increase to \$41 per month while the rate increase is pending. She said sewer companies officials have asked to have the emergency increase for as early as the commission's July 28 meeting in Crowley.

Robert Rieger Jr., an attorney representing the two companies in the rate case, said Ascension Wastewater and Wastewater Treatment are requesting the interim increase so company officials can attract capital while its rate case is in progress.

"I think it would be a fair statement to say that financing is a challenge. You know I think that would be very fair to say," Rieger said.

He said Pertuit is dedicated to doing the right thing, has had to personally

finance improvements in the past and has been working to find financing for the upgrades.

If the emergency increase were granted, the commission would still reserve its rights in the rate case, Verzwylvet said.

DEQ has ordered the companies to start upgrades no later than the second quarter of 2011. The companies are under threat of tens of thousands of dollars in daily civil penalties for past noncompliance.

Lourdes Iturralde, administrator for DEQ Enforcement Division, said penalties have not been determined. She said DEQ is in the order's compliance phase and wants the companies to come into compliance first.

Paul Dicharry, one of the companies' attorneys on the DEQ side, said Pertuit has been working in good faith with the department to develop a plan to come into compliance.

For years, Ascension Wastewater and Wastewater Treatment have provided required sewage treatment in fast-growing parts of Ascension Parish where no municipal sewer exists. Developers have built subdivisions and then donated their sewer systems to one of Pertuit's companies, which then own and maintain the systems.

The DEQ order details series of permit violations for many sewer systems dating back to 2004 and documents, in a few instances, residents' complaints of past sewer overflows due to improperly maintained or operated equipment.

Other plants did not exceed permit limits but had more technical reporting errors that were still violations, the order says.

Ascension Parish government officials are watching Pertuit's systems as a key customer base for a regional sewer system that the parish will likely decide on late this fall. Parish officials have set a limit of \$45 per month for its future customers.

Dicharry said parish government's planned development of a regional system has no bearing on the timing of the upgrade plan



*Amie:*

*225-933-9407*

*12038 Central  
Park Dr*

*Have all your plants  
taken over during the  
warm weather and the  
idea of cleaning it out  
leaves you with chills?  
Then call Amie! I am  
your neighbor and I  
love to garden so I am  
offering fall cleanup  
help to my neighbors.*

## *IS YOUR YARD A FRIGID?*



*Call for a free quote and you will not look like the  
haunted house of the subdivision!*

***Be  
knowl-  
edgeable  
about the  
covenants  
to avoid  
fines and  
maintain  
the prop-  
erty value  
of your  
home!***

## **COVENANT ENFORCEMENT**

The Home Owner's Association has received many thanks for the recent efforts to try and enforce the covenants. This is one of the leading requests of homeowners along with complaints about neighbor's maintenance of lawns and properties. Additionally this is the number one complaint of realtors selling homes in the subdivision. There has been progress, however, this process is time consuming and tedious and is imperfect as the volunteers currently appraising the

neighborhood have full time jobs and the inspections are not performed regularly. In an effort to strive for consistency and regular enforcement and appraisal it has been decided to hire a contractor to perform these services. This third party is responsible for regular inspection of the neighborhood and reporting of covenant violations, they shall remain anonymous so they can appraise the condition of the neighborhood fairly, without influence, and without preju-

dice. As this contractor must be paid, there will be no more negotiation of covenant violation fines.



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# YOUR HOA DUES

Currently our dues are \$345 per year. In the past two years the HOA has tried to tend to the most common complaints and issues such as security at the pool and the maintenance of the covenants. The dues are now being collected from over 95% of the residents, with the remainder currently in lien, judgment, and/or garnishment. The emergency fund is now 100% funded. With the major investments in pool security and the establishment of the emergency fund, two very difficult obstacles have been overcome.

Currently we are operating near or at budget. At the current pace of existing bills and collecting 95% of funds all the bills will get paid and we will have nearly \$1500 left over at the end of every fiscal year. This does not include emergencies and unexpected repairs and the like.

The next largest complaint your HOA hears is about the landscaping. The current con-

tract is tailored to be the bare minimum so it would stay in budget; it has been the same contract for 3 years. Many residents would like to see more frequent mulching with higher quality mulch, some would like to see more flowers and more frequent color changes with the seasons. There is much more that can be done with the landscaping but it does take money to do it, and we currently get what we pay for. Landscaping is not a onetime expense and is a recurring cost.

Other improvements mentioned are benches at the common areas at the corner of Canterbury and Central park. Also benches in the pool and play ground areas. These too cost money that is beyond the HOA budget however should be onetime costs, with eventual replacement considered in the future or yearly maintenance. These are two of the more common requests. What

your board needs to know is how you feel about the improvements that need to be made and how to pay for them? We are finally fully solvent and operating at budget for once instead of trying to float the checks until dues payments come in. What do you feel about raising dues to cover recurring costs due to better mulching or more flowers? If so how much? For example the red mulch cost is approximately \$2500 more per year, and we have 164 residences. Please comment on what you would like to see done, and how you envision paying for recurring and onetime costs thru dues increases or special onetime assessments? Please email the board and let them know, this decision will be made at the October HOA meeting and your input is important.



**Your input and opinions are important to us—please email the board before the October meeting**

**CORPORATE GREEN, LLC**  
THE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT FIRM

## Pool Hours



There have been some recent requests to modify the pool operation hours to adults. We have some residents that participate in Iron Mans and Triathlons and this opportunity to swim and train would be helpful, additionally swimming burns more calories than any other fitness activity and should be encouraged. Currently the suggestion is for adults only beyond the current hours of 7am and 9pm as this should reduce the incidence of un-necessary noise. As usual any violations of the

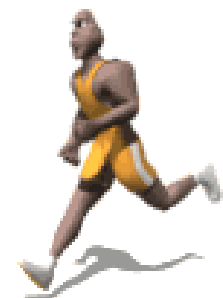
local noise ordinance are prohibited and are subject to enforcement by the Ascension Parish Sheriff's office.

We want to know your opinion, what hours, what times, what days do you feel could be allocated beyond the current posted hours, some residents want to swim laps before they go to work, some after they put their children to bed...we want your input. This will be decided upon at the October HOA meeting so please email the board and let them know your opinion.

## Attention: Runners

Training for your next 5K, Marathon or just to keep in shape? Want to team up with other runners in the neighborhood? If so, send me an email, Shane at [bellan34@cox.net](mailto:bellan34@cox.net), and I will be happy to coordinate an informal email list. If you hesitate because you think you may be too fast or too slow, send an email

anyway. Knowing your neighbors are getting out for a run might just be the motivation for you to lace up.



# Mark Your Calendars!

October Social ..... Saturday, October 23rd 5PM–until

## Halloween Decorations Contest!

Think your house is the best-decorated house in the neighborhood? Judging for the Halloween decorating contest will be made the Friday before Halloween and awards will be made for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place.



### Board of Directors\*

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\*Please note, board members are volunteers and have their own full time jobs and families. Please be courteous to them and utilize email as your primary communication with them. If you must speak to a board member in person please respect their privacy and make an appointment to meet with them at a mutually agreeable time and place to avoid unnecessary



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# The Bug Man

## Professional Pest Control

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