



PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

"Bringing Opportunities Home"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 21, 2015

CONTACT: Doug Tobin

Public Information Officer

Phone 727.815.7177

dtobin@pascocountyfl.net

Clerk of Courts, Inspector General Report on "Pasco Utility Water Bills" Released

~Report available online see link below~

PASCO COUNTY, FL – The Pasco County Clerk and Comptroller, Dr. Paula S. O’Neil, published an audit of the Utility Billing System on Tuesday, August 18, 2015. The audit was conducted independently by the Clerk’s Inspector General (IG) in response to increasing customer complaints of higher than normal water bills.

Pasco County has reviewed the report received from the Inspector General.

“We appreciate the work of the Inspector General,” said Pasco County Administrator Michele Baker. “We will use the findings to continue to improve our utility meter reading and billing practices and processes. We will review the accounts of the customers who contacted the IG immediately. We are very sorry for the confusion and anxiety experienced by our customers. Based on the IG Report, we will continue to rely upon the accuracy of the water meters as the basis for consumption and measurement of water delivered to the customer.”

“We were pleased to see that the investigation determined that our meters are very accurate,” said Bruce Kennedy, Pasco Utilities Assistant County Administrator. “The metering system is the basis for billing customers for consumption. The Inspector General’s team was very thorough in their review of our meter reading processes and procedures, and they did identify opportunities for improvement.”

“While some inaccuracies regarding meter reading information printed on the bill were noted, this did not have a direct impact on the billing amount, but did cause some confusion,” said Kennedy. “We are very sorry for the confusion that may have been caused for our customers. Staff has compiled a priority action plan for meter reading and billing process improvements and will incorporate the Inspector General findings into that list. We have been working on making improvements during the course of the audit and we plan to complete the improvements to the system, procedures, and training by March of 2016.”

In June of 2014, Pasco County converted from an old legacy system to a new computerized Customer Information System. This was a big change in billing presentation and information provided. Due to problems with data conversion, new software and processes, there were some customers who had missed readings. The new billing system, combined with the missed readings, caused the next billing cycle to show two months of consumption for some customers, during the peak water use season. Obviously this perceived “doubling” of consumption caused concern for our customers.

2-2-2 INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT ON WATER UTILITIES

“Pasco County Utilities will continue to work with customers who have billing concerns,” said Craig McCandless, Pasco County Customer Service Administrator. “We continue to compare the electronic bills back to actual meter register readings and will issue billing adjustments to customers where appropriate. We will go back through the accounts of the 337 customers who reached out to the Inspector General and contact them individually to diagnose their situation and make appropriate adjustments on their account.”

The Inspector General estimates customers with these billing issues (337) represent a very small percentage of our approximate 100,000 Utility customers, or one-third of one-percent (0.34%).

“Pasco Utilities goal is to have these customer’s bills credited where necessary by mid-September,” said McCandless. “Although we just received this list of customers from the Inspector General, we have been in contact already with some of these customers, and some may have already received a credit.”

A copy of the final audit can be found at the following link:

<http://fl-pascocounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/20837>

A video link of the Pasco County Clerk and Comptroller’s presentation can be found at the following:

<http://pasco.siretechnologies.com/sirepub/redirect.aspx?type=event&id=130>

Customer inquiries regarding the audit can be made through our Utilities Customer Service Center via telephone or email:

- 727-847-8131
- 813-235-6012
- 352-521-4285
- utilcustserv@pascocountyfl.net using the subject of AUDIT.