

NEWSLINE

ELECTRICITY • WATER • NATURAL GAS • WASTEWATER • TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Fort Valley

Utility Commission

Since 1891

500 Anthoine Street

Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

(478) 825-7701

(478) 825-7704 FAX

www.fvutil.com

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811 or (800) 282-7411

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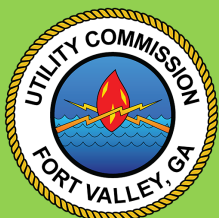
Vice Chairman

Rose Marie Huff-Thompson

Stephen Lindsey

Mayor Barbara B. Williams

*The Commission meets the second
Monday of each month at 6:00
p.m.*



October 2020

Editor: Martha McAfee

Avoiding the Dangers of Downed Power

Severe weather happens year-round. Tornadoes, hurricanes and other storms that bring high, strong wind and torrential rain can seriously damage power lines and other electrical equipment. Unfortunately, many electrical safety hazards remain long after the storm has passed, even if the power is out in that area.

When you see power lines on the ground following a storm, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility. Please know that lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines sagging or down could be in contact with an energized power line making the lines also very dangerous, so stay away from all of them.

Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. A downed power line can energize things around it, such as chain link fences and metal culverts.

Keep in mind that a line that's indeed "dead" could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.

If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or the electric utility. Also, if you are in a car that has come in contact with a downed power line, stay in the vehicle and wait until the utility has arrived and de-energized the line. If you must leave your car, only in the case of fire, jump free from the car and hop away from it with both feet together.

Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down. Be careful not to stand under damaged tree limbs or power lines and be especially cautious near metal fences around the area.
Be careful and cautious!

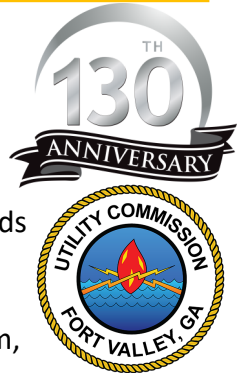


Photo by Danny Gilleland

From the General Manager's Desk.....



Continuing to Conduct Business in a COVID-19 Environment

COVID-19 is still here. The pandemic remains prevalent in our everyday lives and it remains relevant in all that we are doing at the Commission. As I previously stated, throughout the world, COVID-19 has forced businesses to reevaluate methods by which goods and services are provided. The Commission is not immune to the situation. Much effort is put into staying abreast of the latest industry standards as it relates to COVID-19 as well as all of the other rules and regulations that are involved when dealing with the multiple facets of the Commission. As we evaluate and operate in this environment, we are continually cognizant of the safety and

health of our customers and employees and give it our top priority.

At the early onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the Commission quickly moved to implement and follow several measures to facilitate a safer environment for our customers and employees. As we continue to monitor Federal, State, and Local regulations as well as CDC guidelines, we are keeping these measures in place and in some instances adjusting and enhancing these measures as the Commission's needs change.

- ♦ **Closing the lobby at our Customer Engagement Center.** Our lobby remains closed to the general public to help mitigate COVID-19 exposure for our employees and customers. Although we miss the personal interaction with the 60% of our customers who have traditionally chosen to conduct business with us in person, we must remain diligent about protecting everyone. We have been able to limit the number of persons entering and exiting our buildings but please reach out to us for an appointment if you desire an in-person interaction. Our drive thru window has seen a vast increase in traffic and has so far proven to be able to accommodate most of the needs of our customers.

"Our staff remains committed to providing our customers with top-notch, reliable service even during the COVID-19 pandemic."

- ♦ **Work Crew Adjustments.** We continue to make every effort to keep our workforce healthy. Our employees are continuing to work adjusted shifts that have been strategically designed to reduce close interactions with each other, when possible. Implementing multiple reporting areas, practicing social distancing, tailoring our work assignments, teleworking when appropriate, and providing all employees with the appropriate personal protection equipment has been invaluable in reducing our incidents of employee related COVID-19 issues.
- ♦ **Training and Travel.** Our staff is actively engaged in making sure that we stay abreast of recent trends and best practices in the industry. Virtual training has become prevalent and all non-essential travel is still on the back burner.

As always, our staff remains committed to providing our customers with top-notch, reliable service even during the COVID-19 pandemic. We implore you to remain diligent in these times when we all are getting weary.

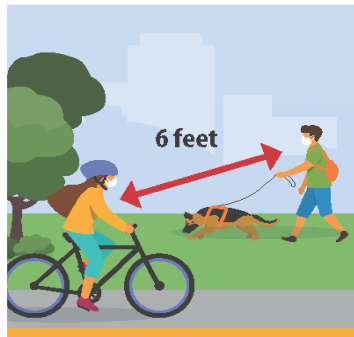
Information on how to protect yourself and your loved ones against the COVID-19 virus can be found at www.cdc.gov. Rest assured that we are committed to continuing to provide you with the reliable services that you have come to expect.

Meeting Friends? Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19

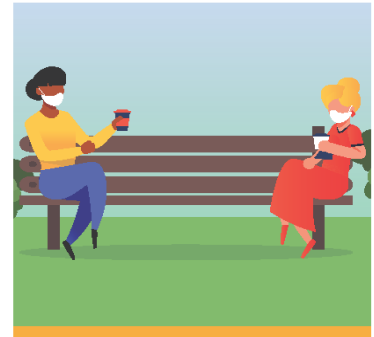
Wear a mask



Stay 6 feet from others



Meet outdoors if possible



Protect yourself and your friends the most by doing all three



cdc.gov/coronavirus

317369-A | October 8, 2020 9:17 AM



Prepared June 2020
Water System ID# 2250001

2019 Annual Water Quality Report

Fort Valley Utility Commission Water Quality Excels

The Fort Valley Utility Commission is committed to providing customers with safe, healthy, and reliable supply of high-quality drinking water. Water tests conducted over the past year using sophisticated equipment and advanced procedures show that Fort Valley's water continually meets or surpasses state and federal standards for drinking water. This annual water quality report details where our water comes from, what it contains, and other information.

Important Information About the Safety of Your Drinking Water (A Message from Craig Mims, General Manager)

We are pleased to report to you that the drinking water supplied by the Fort Valley Utility Commission is safe. Drinking water in Fort Valley consistently exceeds safe drinking water health standards. As health scientists learn more about our environment and the effect of substances in the environment on human health, new standards will continue to be set for drinking water. Fort Valley continues to add new technology in order to be able to meet further standards. All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some substances. All water sources pass over the surface of the land or through the ground. The water dissolves naturally occurring minerals and materials and can pick up substances relating to the presence of animals or from human activity. Substances that may be present in source water:

- Biological - may come from human, agriculture, or wildlife sources
- Inorganic - can be natural, from storm run-off, or from industrial or domestic wastewater discharges.
- Pesticides and herbicides - may come from agriculture, storm run-off or residential use.
- Organic chemicals - may come from industrial or domestic processes, storm run-off, and septic systems.
- Radioactive materials - can be naturally occurring or the result of mining or other human activities.

To ensure tap water is safe to drink, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain substances in water provided by public water systems.

Where does our water come from?

The Fort Valley Utility Commission gets its water from the Tuscaloosa aquifer, which is approximately 500 feet below the surface. This aquifer has, so far, provided the City with a safe and dependable supply of water even in the driest years. For information on the Well-Head Protection Plan, contact the Utility Commission's Water Plant at (478) 825-5482 or Clay Walker at (478)-825-7701 ext. 228

Treatment Process:

The water is disinfected with chlorine to make it biologically safe. The pH is adjusted by adding sodium hydroxide. Fluoride is added to help prevent dental cavities. Phosphate is added to enhance corrosion control.

What is in our water?

More than 7,500 tests are conducted annually at the Fort Valley Utility Commission's Drinking Water Lab. These tests monitor tap water for micro-organisms, minerals, and organic substances that could cause disease or other adverse health effects. Testing is done for contaminants, including coliform bacteria, metals, nitrates, and pesticides.

The water in the distribution system is tested on a regular basis. Five water system samples are collected each week. A total of twenty samples are tested each month as required by the EPD to ensure that the drinking water is safe for consumption.

The data presented in this report is from the most recent testing done in accordance with State and Federal regulations. **The table on the next page lists only the regulated substances that were found. Our test results are below the levels allowed by EPA in public drinking water.**

Terms and Abbreviations:

- **Definitions:** The following contain scientific terms and measures, some of which may require explanation.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG):** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLG as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL):** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbiological contaminants.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG):** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
- **Action Level (AL):** The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirement that a water system must follow.
- **N/A:** not applicable.
- **PPM:** Parts per million or milligrams per liter (mg/l) – one part per million corresponds to one minute in two years or a single penny in \$10,000.

- **PPB:** Parts per billion, or micrograms per liter – one part per billion corresponds to one minute in 2,000 years or a single penny in \$10,000,000.
- **Avg:** Regulatory compliance with some MCL's are based on a running annual average of monthly samples.
- **NA:** Not applicable
- **Mrem:** Millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body).

Drinking Water Analysis

Lead and Copper

Definitions:

Action Level Goal (ALG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected health risk.

ALGs allow for a margin of safety.

Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements with which a water system must follow.

Additional Lead Information

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Fort Valley Utility Commission is responsible for providing high quality drinking water but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791 or at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Cryptosporidium

Cryptosporidium is a protozoan parasite that is common in source water. Cryptosporidium can cause symptoms including diarrhea, nausea, and/or stomach cramps. Cryptosporidium has never been found in the drinking water that goes to your tap.

Notice to Immuno-compromised People

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population.

Immuno-compromised people (such as those with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune disorders, some older adults, and infants) can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about the drinking water from their healthcare providers.

EPA and the Centers for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791 or www.epa.gov/drink.

Additional Testing and Research

The EPA has required the Utility Commission and hundreds of U.S. water systems to participate in a major testing program Information Collection Rule (ICR). The ICR is intended to provide EPA information about the occurrence of chemical by-products used in disinfecting, plus information about disease-causing pathogens (microorganisms). The data on how public water supply systems control the chemical by-products and pathogens will be used to revise drinking water standards.

Additional Information Sources:

Web sites with information about water quality: www.epa.gov/ow www.awwa.org www.gaepd.org www.amwa.net

Please join us in making our decisions.

We encourage and invite public interest and participation in the decision-making that affects drinking water. The Fort Valley Utility Commission holds regularly scheduled meetings at 6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of every month. The meetings are open to the public and are held at 500 Anthoine St. The Fort Valley Utility Commission business office is open daily except for weekends and holidays. Lobby hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Customer Service telephone number is (478) 825-7701, option 3. The Drinking Water Quality Lab, and emergency after hours, telephone number is (478) 825-5482.



We have been notified of scammers contacting customers advising them that their account is past due and that they will be turned off immediately unless they pay immediately over the phone. THESE CALLS ARE NOT COMING FROM US! We will on occasion make courtesy calls as reminders for payment, but we will NEVER request you to pay in this manner.

If at any time you receive a call concerning your FVUC bill and you have concerns as to whether or not it is authentic, please hang up and call our customer service number to ensure that you are speaking to a FVUC representative. The number is 478-825-7701 - Option 3..

CUSTOMER SERVICE

ORNER

Lighting the way
to a brighter future

The Fort Valley Utility Commission
is proud to provide electric, gas,
water, wastewater, fiber optic, and
wireless telecommunications to
its customer service area in
Central Georgia.

Chat with us



THANK YOU MGCAA and DFACS for your partnership
with the COVID-19 Payment Assistance Program!
We appreciate YOU!

For COVID-19 payment as-
sistance call 800.525.4972
or 478.825.6025

Check out our chat feature on our website!

Visit www.fvutil.com.



Up
to **60 MONTHS**
FINANCING AVAILABLE
MONTHLY PAYMENT ADDED TO YOUR BILL



+

0%

FINANCING AVAILABLE

on qualified natural gas appliances

Ask Customer Service about our Main Street On-Bill
Finance Program

478-825-7701

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem. They can cause damage and impact land hundreds of miles from the shore.

During a hurricane, you may need supplies to keep your family safe and healthy. Remember a hurricane can cut off your water and power supply. Planning and preparing can make a big difference in safety and resiliency in the wake of a hurricane.

BE READY FOR HURRICANE SEASON

Protect your home by decluttering your drains and gutters to prevent flooding, installing check valves in plumbing to prevent backups, and considering hurricane shutters. Also, clear your yard to make sure there is nothing that can blow around during the storm to damage your home. Move bikes, lawn furniture, grills, propane tanks, and building material inside or under shelter.

It's best to be prepared - stock up on everything you might need now. Be sure to prepare the following:

- An emergency food and water supply
- An emergency medicine supply
- Emergency power sources such as flashlights (Remember to pick up extra batteries as well)
- Safety and personal items
- Important items, including medical documents, wills, passports, and personal identification
- A fire extinguisher (Be sure that everyone in your family knows where it is and how to operate it)



An Important Message About Damage Prevention Prior to Excavating

This message is brought to you by **Fort Valley Utility Commission**. There are thousands of dig-in damage incidents in the United States every year. Striking an underground pipeline may lead to expensive fines, serious injury or death. Gas pipelines are built with safety and reliability as top priorities. Over the past 20 years, risk exposure has been rising through increased populations, energy consumption and pipeline miles. At the same time, the number of serious pipeline incidents involving death or injury has declined by 50%. Natural gas leaks do happen and may result in fire, explosion, and/or asphyxiation. Natural gas is a colorless, odorless gas; however, a chemical that smells like rotten eggs is added to help detect a possible leak. It's a bad smell. That's good!

Some of the signs of a gas leak include seeing bubbling water, hearing a hissing or blowing sound from a pipeline or appliance, dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area, or dirt or dust blowing from the ground, or the smell of rotten eggs.

If you smell gas, or just think you might have a gas leak:

- **Leave** the area immediately; **Do Not** congregate around natural gas facilities.
- **Call 478-825-7701 or 911** from a neighboring home or business
- **Never** turn on or off switches, open or close garage doors, use a flashlight or phone/cellphone in the presence of the gas smell, as these devices may be a source of ignition, causing an explosion.

Stay in a safe location until the Emergency Responder arrives and gives you clearance to return to the area.

Here are five easy steps to damage prevention:

Survey and Mark – Survey the proposed excavation area and mark the dig sites in white paint.

Call Before You Dig - 48 hours prior to digging, call 811 and get free staking of underground utility lines which helps reduce the chance of injury and unneeded expense. It is the law in Georgia.

Wait! Wait the required time to allow utility owners to locate and mark the lines.

Respect the Marks! Maintain visibility of the marks and safely follow them when digging.

Dig – Dig with care. Hand excavate within 24-inches of each side of the locate marks. If you plan to dig anywhere near a marked area – especially when using mechanized equipment – use a shovel and carefully hand dig to expose the lines.

If your equipment contacts a gas line:

- **Leave** the equipment; jumping clear and shuffling away – **DO NOT** turn off the engine.
- **Warn other and leave** the area quickly.
- **Do Not operate** any gas pipeline valves or stop the flow of gas or try to fold over plastic pipelines.
- Leave the **excavation open**.
- If gas is escaping the pipeline, **call 911**, then **Fort Valley Utility Commission at 478-825-7701**

If the line is nicked, scraped, gouged, dented or otherwise damaged but not leaking, call **Fort Valley Utility Commission at 478-825-7701**; these may appear to be minor but can lead to future leaks if not properly repaired.

Natural gas is America's most popular home heating fuel and is increasingly popular for use by homeowners, schools, businesses, factories and electric power-generation plants. Natural gas is efficient, clean, reliable, and a relative bargain compared to alternative energy sources. Natural gas flows through a network of underground main lines that serve approximately **3891** customers in our system. These main lines are typically 2-inch in diameter and branch into household service lines which are typically half-inch to three-quarter-inch in diameter and buried 12- to 18-inches below the surface. The service lines end at each customer's meter where gas is delivered.

This message is brought to you by Fort Valley Utility Commission as a part of our Public Awareness Program. For additional information regarding this message, call 478-825-7701.

Ways to Improve Your AC Efficiency



Your air conditioning system could account for approximately 12% of your total annual home energy expenditures and up to 70% during the hotter summer months. The HVAC is probably the biggest energy user in your entire house. If you are like most, you are probably searching for a way to improve air conditioner efficiency and reduce your costs. There are some tips that can help you.

Signs Your System May Not Be Operating Efficiently

Increased Costs: One of the most obvious signs of AC inefficiencies is if your utility costs are going up. When an AC isn't operating efficiently, it requires more energy. If you notice a significant jump in your usage and costs, then it's a good idea to

have the system inspected and cleaned.

Frequent Cycling: Your thermostat is the "brain" behind your AC system. If you notice it starting to cycle on and off too often, it may be an indication the thermostat needs to be replaced. Everyday use and dust can wear on the internal mechanism of the thermostat.

Ice on the Compressor: If ice starts to build on your AC unit, it's a definite sign that you need professional repairs. Ice can begin to build-up due to a leak in the coolant line or there may be damage to your coils. A dirty filter may also cause this problem. If there is ice, you can feel confident that your unit isn't operating as efficiently as it should.

Unusual Sounds: Each appliance in your home is going to have its own set of unique sounds. Chances are you have gotten used to some of the sounds that occur due to the regular operation of your unit. If you notice something unusual, then it's a good idea to shut everything down, to prevent the issue from getting worse and book a service call.

Effective Ways to Increase Air Conditioner Efficiency

- 1. Unblock and Vacuum Your Vents:** One of the best ways to boost the efficiency of your air conditioner is to keep the vents free from debris. Take some time to remove any debris from your indoor air supply vents and that they are not blocked by furniture or other items
- 2. Close All the Doors and Windows:** The conditioned air in your home may escape to the outside easily if you leave your home's doors or windows open.
- 3. Keep All Heat-Producing Appliances Away from Your Thermostat:** The location of your thermostat plays a huge role in the overall efficiency of your air conditioning unit. If your thermostat is installed in a particularly hot part of your home, like next to a sunny window, lamp, or appliance, it may not gauge your home's temperature properly.
- 4. Fix Any Leaks in Your Attic, Around Your Windows, or Under Your Doors**
- 5. Increase the Temperature on Your Thermostat:** Just push up the temperature on your thermostat a few degrees. In most cases, making an adjustment in the temperature of five to eight degrees (up in the summer and down in the winter) can help you save both energy and money.
- 6. Cover Your Windows:** Pull your curtains or close the blinds to block out the heat of the day.
- 7. Change Your AC Filter:** When your AC system achieves maximum airflow, it means it is going to operate at maximum efficiency rates. However, a dirty filter can impact this significantly.
- 8. Schedule Regular, Preventative Maintenance:** One of the best things you can do for your AC system's efficiency is to schedule regular preventative maintenance with a professional technician. They will make sure that everything is working properly and that there are no serious efficiency problems.

Improve Your AC Efficiency with the Tips Here

If you are ready to improve your air conditioner efficiency, then be sure to implement the tips and advice found here. Doing so will help you save money while extending the life of your unit.

Just For Fun!

Water/Wastewater

D C W E B C I R C P A T D P C N B F K F
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ABSORPTION
 ACIDITY
 AERATION
 ALGAE
 ALKALI
 AQUIFER
 BACKFLOW
 BACTERIA
 BROMINE
 BUFFER
 CALCIUM
 CHEMICALS
 CHLORAMINE
 CHLORINE
 COLIFORM
 CONCENTRATE
 CONTAMINANT
 CORROSION
 DISINFECTION
 DISTILLED
 DRAIN
 EFFLUENT
 FEED
 FILTER
 FILTRATION
 FLOW
 FLUX
 HARDNESS
 HYDROGEN
 INFLUENT
 ION
 LIME
 MEMBRANE
 MINERAL
 OSMOSIS
 OXIDIZING
 OZONE
 PARTICULATE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Who do I call to report a power outage, water leak, sewer backup, or gas leak?** During normal business hours, call customer service at 478.825.7701, option 3. After hours, please call 478.825.5482.
- When is my bill due?** Customers are assigned a billing cycle based on service location. Your bill will identify your due date. General dues dates for each cycle (subject to change depending on holidays or weekends):
Cycle 1: 7th of the month Cycle 2: 13th of the month Cycle 3: 19th of the month Cycle 4: 25th of the month
- Where can I make payments?** Payments can be made at the Customer Engagement Center, 902 Knoxville St, via phone, mail, online (www.fvutil.com), Roberta City Hall or at one of the following drop box locations: AP Mini Mart (702 Orange St), City Hall (204 West Church St), Community Plaza (1200 State University Dr.), Jason's Mini Mart (402 S. Camellia Blvd) or Neighbors Food Mart (412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.)
- Who do I contact regarding my trash pickup?** The Utility Commission bills sanitation on behalf of the City. Any questions regarding trash services should be directed to City Public Works, 478.825.2615 or Advanced Disposal 478.746.7230 for county residents.

****Condolences****



Dr. Linda D. Johnson, Commissioner

Sincerest condolences are sent to the family of the late Dr. Linda D. Johnson. Dr. Johnson passed away on September 1, 2020.

Dr. Johnson was appointed to the Fort Valley Utility Commission in 2014 to fill a vacancy created by the death of Commissioner Billy Jones. She subsequently ran unopposed for the Fort Valley Utility Commission East Ward seat and was duly elected by the voters. She faithfully served on the Commission for six years, most recently serving as the Commission's Corporate Secretary.

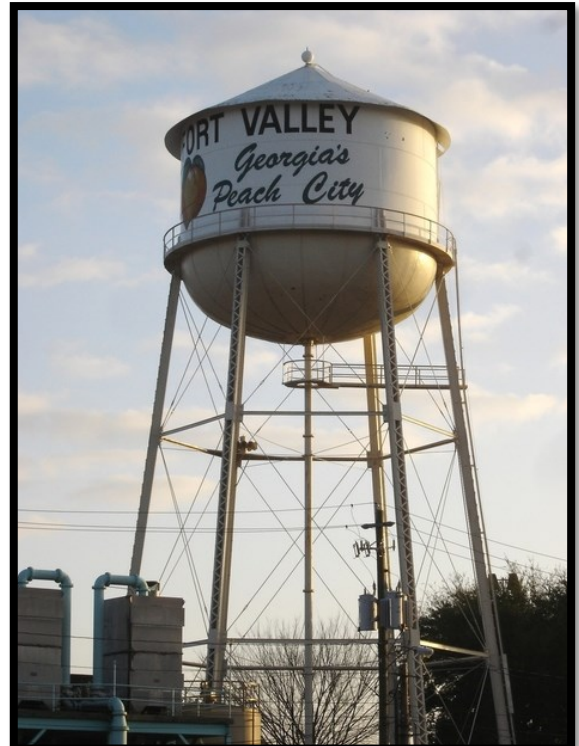
Dr. Johnson consistently expressed her compassion and concern for all of the customers of the Commission, placing special emphasis on her belief in the importance of being good stewards of funds.

Her selfless leadership and dedicated service to the community will be long remembered.

New Water Tank Planned

The Utility Commission is preparing to secure funding for the USDA Water System Improvement Project to serve Fort Valley State University. This project has been in the works for several years and we look forward to beginning construction on the new water tank.

We received bond financing through USDA with a 43% grant reimbursement to cover the project cost of \$4,235,000. In order to meet the requirements set forth by USDA, the Utility Commission was served a letter of conditions. One of those conditions requires the Utility Commission to recover a minimum fee of \$12.70 for services. At the August public meeting, the Utility Commission approved a \$.40 base rate fee increase for water and waste water. Base rate increases began on 9/1/2020. (Previous Fee 12.30, New Fee 12.70)



NEWSLINE

Published by the
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P.O. Box 1529
Fort Valley GA 31030

Emergency Service

Nights and Weekends
478-825-5482

Office Hours

8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Monday - Friday
(6:00 pm on Payment Due Dates ONLY)



Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:



Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2–14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.