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# The Great Life News

MONTHLY CITY NEWSLETTER

## Your Utility Bills

The City of Gretna has a prescribed process for billing customers. We have held to that process, but unfortunately, when the bills leave our office around the 15th of every month, we do not have any control of when you might receive the bill in your mail. Last month we had an issue with utility bills being held up at the United States Postal Services processing center in Omaha. All mail, including local mail, goes through this processing center before it is then delivered to the homes and businesses.

The City does offer an alternative way to receive your bill. You can sign up at the office to receive your bill on line to your designated email address. Another alternative is to have the City debit a bank account designated by you. This can be a checking or savings account. You will still receive a copy of the utility bill in the mail or in you email for your records. This is a great way to know that your utility bill is being paid without the worry.

This calendar year, the City will be offering some other payment methods including the use of a credit card. We are working with our software company to offer this service.

### The Utility Billing Process

The City Utility Billing Department works with a very strict monthly billing process. Our process is similar to other communities who bill on a monthly basis.

- ⇒ Water Meters are read on the last work day of the month.
- ⇒ Utility bills are sent to the post office around the 15th of the month.
- ⇒ ACH payments are made around the 25th of the month.
- ⇒ A penalty is applied to the utility bill after the due date as printed on the bill.
- ⇒ Shut-offs for lack a payment take place after the 5th of the month.

You may call 402-332-3336 with any questions you might have concerning your utility bill.



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## Water Hardness

The City receives calls every year asking what for the hardness level of our water. Our water comes from deep wells which tends to create harder water than other sources of water. Because of this our water is at 17 grains. The quality is very good, but the water tends to be hard. If we treated surface water or shallow wells, the hardness level would be lower, but the quality would require a water treatment plant. Some people have water softeners in their homes to lower the hardness of the water.

## WHAT ABOUT ZONING

The zoning ordinance for the City of Gretna has been developed in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Plan. The zoning ordinance promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The zoning regulations implement the goals, policies and procedures of the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Codes apply to everyone within the City limits and the one mile Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) surrounding the City. This jurisdictional responsibility of one mile is set by state law and gives the City the ability to plan and develop these areas for orderly growth of the community.

By definition, zoning helps lessen congestion of the streets; secures safety from fire and other dangers; provides adequate light and air to encourage the most productive use of urban land through development areas or zoning districts. Zoning applies to both land and buildings and separates uses into residential, commercial, industrial and other purposes. This separation can regulate and restrict heights; regulate and restrict the percentage of the lot that may be occupied by buildings and structures; regulate the size of lots and open spaces; guard against loss of life and damage to property due to flooding; promote the conservation of natural resources; protect property values; and protect against blight and depreciation of lands and structures.

Zoning actions can include but are not limited to: platting/subdivisions, zoning changes, conditional uses, and text amendments. The process for these actions include an application, fees paid, and a public hearing set by the Zoning Administrator for the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission makes a recommendation, on the request, to the City Council. The City Council also conducts a public hearing on the request. The total time for these actions from submittal to final hearing takes approximately eight to twelve weeks depending on how complicated the action might be.

The Zoning Ordinances as adopted can be located on-line at the City website [www.gretnane.org](http://www.gretnane.org). For any project, change of use or questions, please contact the Development Services Department at 402-332-3336 x 202.



204 North McKenna Ave.  
Gretna, Nebraska 68028  
402-332-3336 ph  
402-332-5631 fax  
[www.gretnane.org](http://www.gretnane.org)

Sheriff's Department  
402-593-4111 ph  
**Emergencies 911**

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## Water Usage

Periodically, we have water customers with excessively high utility bills. The water meters that we use are extremely accurate. If the meter fails, it will slow down or stop, therefore, it is designed not to give an inflated usage number. There are many factors that can create a large water usage. Irrigation systems are the largest users of water. If you have yours programmed, the water usage can go up dramatically. It's always a good idea to check your irrigation system for leaks also, especially in the valve box. Toilet stools will leak water from the tank into the bowl. This causes the valve to open to keep the tank at the desired level. Typically, you can hear the water running, but sometimes you can't. Put some food coloring in your tank and wait a few hours. See if the color is in the bowl. If this happens, it needs to be repaired. Dripping faucets are another problem. That small drip adds up quickly. It's a good idea to replace the valve system inside of your faucet. Purchasing water efficient items for your home can reduce your water consumption. Many items such as washing machines, dishwashers, and toilets indicate their water usage. Running water unnecessarily adds up. Please be mindful to watch your consumption. The cost can add up quickly.



Go to the following link to find more helpful hints on the City of Gretna's web site.

<http://gretnane.org/DocumentCenter/View/106>