



the Pipeline

Growing Pains: How Growth Impacts Your Water System

For most of us, growth is exciting. We love to see progress and know that our community is the “happening place”—a community with such an attractive lifestyle and culture that others want to live here. But, as recent news stories attest, this growth also has its challenges.

In this issue of our newsletter, we hope to remind you of various ways growth impacts your water system that are not readily apparent. Some of the areas that you may automatically associate with growth are traffic concerns, school expansions, residential and commercial development, and maybe even your landfill filling up.

However, the extent to which growth also impacts water and sewer systems is largely overlooked by the general public. Inside this newsletter we hope to provide a clearer picture of this impact. Our goal is not to scare you, nor alarm you—it is simply to keep you better informed so that the community as a whole may move forward in a knowledgeable manner. We believe that better understanding leads to better decisions. Getting involved in your community is something everyone should consider and contribute the best way that you can. When a place grows as fast as Powdersville, everyone needs to get plugged in!

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IMPACTS OF GROWTH:



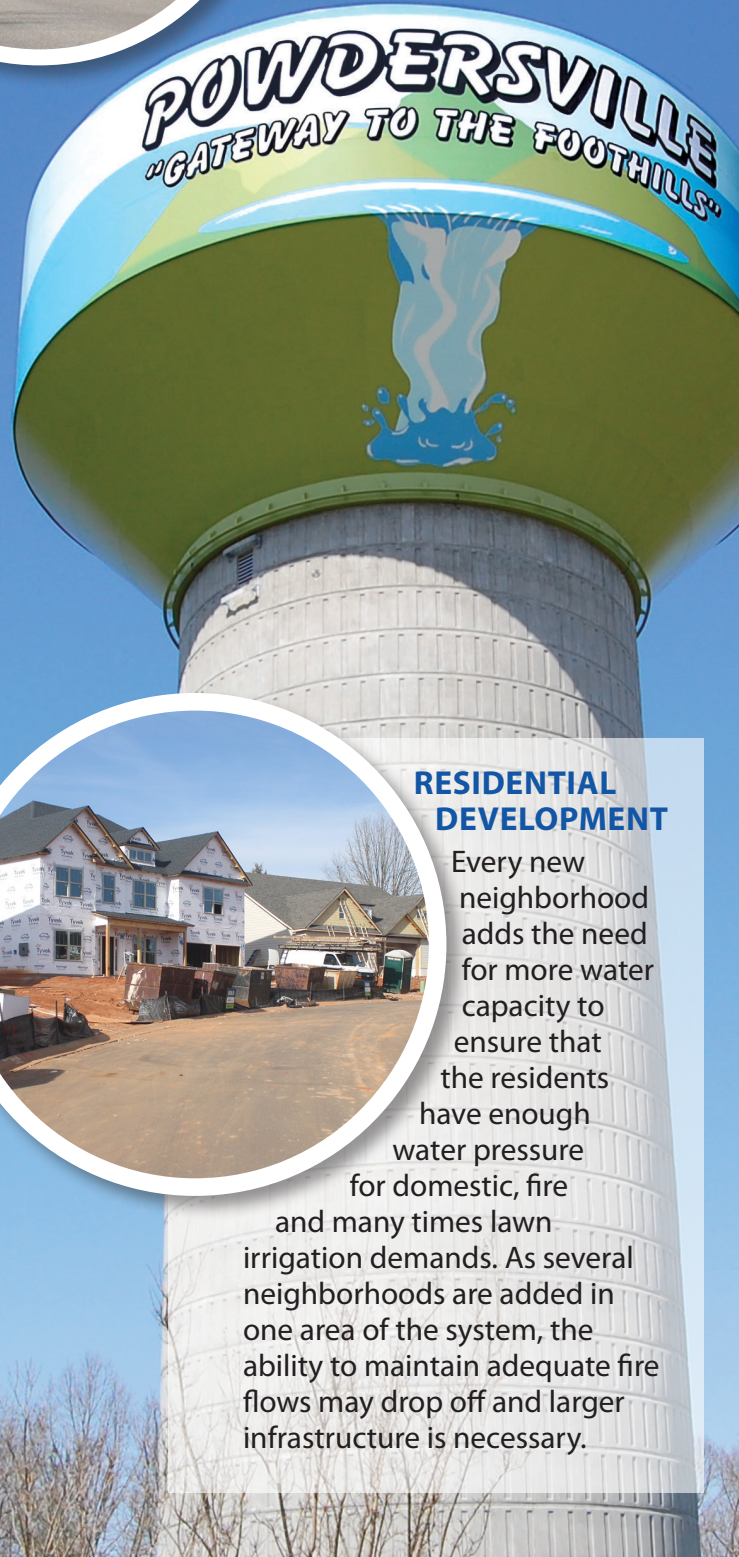
ROAD WIDENING / ROAD PROJECTS

Waterlines are usually in a SCDOT or a County right-of-way. When roads are widened or realigned to improve traffic patterns, water mains typically have to be relocated. This can be very expensive and many times, the construction does not lead to serving new customers. One such project cost Powdersville Water over \$200,000.



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Large commercial buildings usually require additional water capacity to meet minimal fire protection demands. This often leads to a need for increasing the size of the water infrastructure serving the new development. Many times this requires a significant expenditure.



NEW OR EXPANDING SCHOOLS

New schools usually bring with them road improvements or road realignments as well as an increased need for capacity to support domestic and fire flow needs. Again, this results in larger infrastructure.



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Every new neighborhood adds the need for more water capacity to ensure that the residents have enough water pressure for domestic, fire and many times lawn irrigation demands. As several neighborhoods are added in one area of the system, the ability to maintain adequate fire flows may drop off and larger infrastructure is necessary.



SEWER SYSTEMS

Sizable developments that are large water users typically cannot be developed unless sewer is available to the site. This includes most large commercial establishments and any high density residential development. Sewer is very expensive to install and many times growth has to drive the installation of new sewer lines. Building additional capacity in the sewer mains for future development requires even more investment. Time has shown that regional utilities that handle the sewer for a large area with dense population can provide affordable rates for this service. Many times the lack of this service can thwart development in an area that is trying to grow. The construction of new sewer mains will typically lead to water main improvements as well.

CAPACITY FEES: Growth Paying for Growth

The capacity fee is a charge (per gallon) that all new Powdersville Water customers pay for water capacity in the system before service is established. It is based on the maximum amount of water (in gallons) that the new connection is likely to use on any given day. This fee is not part of the tap fees and is collected solely to replace capacity in the system that is used up by any new residential, commercial or industrial customer. Fees of this type are common among growing water and sewer utilities throughout the country and are often referred to as impact fees or various other names. The purpose of the fee at PW is to ask new customers to share in the cost of the system infrastructure required to provide them with adequate domestic and fire flows. Every time a new tap is added to the PW system, a small portion of the water distribution system's capacity is used up that ultimately has to be replaced. Therefore it is reasonable to ask new customers to pay for the capacity that they plan to use, which will in turn go towards the cost of replacing that capacity.



COUNTY/STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Our county and state are aggressively marketing the Upstate of SC to out-of-state businesses in order to provide jobs and more opportunities to its citizens. As the water provider in a high impact area, we must work closely with the county and state governments to ensure that the properties being marketed have the necessary water infrastructure in place before the recruited companies relocate. Therefore, it makes good sense for the water and sewer provider to communicate well with those that are recruiting development to the area.



Powdersville Water receives another prestigious safety award from the American Water Works Association for man-hours without a lost time accident.

Powdersville Water honors long-term Board member, Freddie Zink. Freddie Zink served on the Powdersville Water Board of Directors for seventeen years. Vice Chairman of the Board, Towers Rice, congratulates Freddie for his years of dedicated service.

Who We Are

Powdersville Water is a special purpose district operated by an accomplished team of professionals. We are dedicated to serving our customers in the most efficient manner.

Mission Statement

The mission of Powdersville Water is to provide a safe and dependable supply of drinking water to the community, and to all customers within our service area. In providing this service, we seek to provide abundant and affordable drinking water in a manner that promotes efficient and reliable service.

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER



As you can see, growth in population affects many areas of our lives. My staff has been challenged for the past couple of years with a 3% annual growth rate in Powdersville—this exceeds the growth experienced anywhere else in the county. Fortunately, our Board of Directors and staff have done a great job over the past 14 years preparing for this moment. During this time, we have invested nearly \$20 million in the expansion of our water system to accommodate this rapid growth. The capacity fees explained in this newsletter are one of the tools we use to continue financing upgraded infrastructure, while at the same time mitigating the water rates that you pay as a customer. This is a delicate balancing act that we seek to maintain: providing for rapid growth, while at the same time improving our service to the faithful customers that have been connected to our system for many years. As your manager, I will tell you that we are well positioned for the future—your water provider has planned well. Thank you for your business—we are glad you are part of our growing community!

Thank you,
Dyke Spencer,
Executive Director