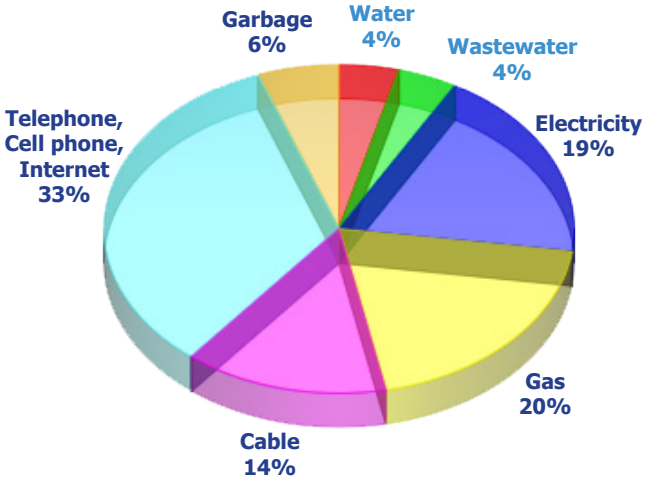
YOU SHOULD KNOW...

- Drinking water and wastewater services are not free.
- There may be miles and miles of underground pipes in your community delivering water and removing waste.
- Much of our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure is old and deteriorating.
- Water and wastewater main breaks and other disruptions are becoming increasingly common and increasingly expensive to address.
- Significant reinvestment is necessary to prevent:
  - Degraded environmental health and drinking water quality, threatening consumer's health and increasing industrial costs; and
  - Insufficient water for households and industries threatening property values, the communities' economy, and our quality of life.

Average U.S. Household Monthly Utility Costs



Which one can't you live without?

STAY INFORMED

Water and wastewater services are a vital part of life. Learn more about your system, and support critical reinvestment in water and wastewater infrastructure by:

- Obtaining a copy of your local water utility's Annual Water Quality Report
- Contacting your local health department
- Reading information provided by:
  - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
    www.colorado.gov/cdphe/wqcd
    (see Tab: Public Education Material)
  - US Environmental Protection Agency
    http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/

MORE INFORMATION

For more Colorado information about safe drinking water, water quality protection, discharge permitting, and funding for drinking water and wastewater treatment systems, visit: www.colorado.gov/cdphe/wqcd

This brochure template was produced as a project of the New York State Water and Wastewater Education and Outreach Committee, a partnership of public and private organizations formed to protect public health and the environment by ensuring that water and wastewater systems are operated and maintained to be viable and self-sustaining. Special thanks to the Environmental Finance Center at Syracuse University for their support in brochure design.

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May 2013

The Value of Water

What's it worth to you and your community?

Invest in the future of your water and wastewater systems

WATER IS ESSENTIAL FOR LIFE

Water in the U.S. is accessible and convenient. Can you imagine a day without water? Every 24 hours, 4,000 children die worldwide from unsafe water.

Our health has improved over the years because of the quality of drinking water and wastewater sanitation provided in the U.S. One hundred years ago, life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years; now it is 78. An important contributing factor is clean water.

WATER SUPPLY & CONSUMPTION

Water is essential to our everyday lives, but its supply is limited. Our bodies need water to survive, farmers need water to grow food, and the environment needs water to keep recreation and wildlife thriving. Businesses and industry need water to provide goods and services in order to keep the economy functioning.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, per year, the average American household spends $707 on soft drinks and other beverages but only $523 on water and wastewater charges.

Every day, in the U.S., about 408 billion gallons of water are used for all types of purposes (drinking, bathing, farming, business, industry, power generation, etc.).

WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Drinking Water

Do you know...

- Where your drinking water comes from?
- How much it costs to maintain your community's drinking water system and who pays for it?

Over the next 20 years, Colorado's public water systems will need to invest over $3 billion to ensure their ability to provide safe drinking water.

Wastewater

Do you know...

- Where your wastewater goes?
- How much it costs to maintain your community's wastewater system and who pays for it?

Over the next 20 years, Colorado's wastewater systems will need to invest over $4.5 billion to ensure their ability to protect the water quality of receiving streams.

Drinking Water and Wastewater

Do you know...

- Who runs and maintains your drinking water and wastewater system?
- What training is required for drinking water and wastewater personnel?

By 2020, over 30% of U.S. drinking water and wastewater professionals are expected to retire. Currently, there are not enough workers being trained to replace them in this highly skilled profession.

AGING & IMPAIRED INFRASTRUCTURE

Do you know...

- How old your drinking water and wastewater system is?
- If your local officials are planning for repairs, infrastructure replacement, and water emergencies?

Over the next 20 years Colorado will need over $7 billion to address aging water and wastewater infrastructure.

Natural disasters can wreak havoc on water and wastewater systems. The aftermath of major storms, tornadoes, drought or wildfires can be significant and may result in complete service outages, or the need to boil drinking water for extended periods.

Is your system a member of the Colorado Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (CoWarn)? For more information visit: http://www.cowarn.org/

THE VALUE OF WATER

Water and wastewater services are delivered to you 24/7/365. A day without water can mean:

- No drinking.
- No flushing.
- No brushing.
- No showers, laundry, or dishwashing.
- No putting out fires.
- No watering lawns and gardens.
- Increased risk of waterborne disease.