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BIRMINGHAM WATER WORKS TO RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS

UTILITY TO REACTIVATE COLLECTIONS PROCESS- WAS AMONG THE NATION'S FIRST TO STOP DISCONNECTIONS DURING COVID

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (December 21, 2022) – Birmingham Water Works (BWW) announced today it will reactivate its shutoff policy for delinquent accounts beginning February 15, 2023. The collections process was paused in January of this year as the utility worked through billing challenges. Throughout this year, customers were asked to continue making monthly payments of approximately their normal bill.

Mass estimation of bills was a temporary need to cope with the system's staffing shortages in meter reading and billing departments earlier this year. The BWW is now fully staffed in both areas, and nearly all BWW customers (99%) are now receiving timely bills.

Now, customers are urged to bring their accounts current as soon as possible to prevent any service disruptions. Customers with low and moderate incomes or those currently experiencing hardships are urged to contact Customer Service to make billing arrangements on outstanding amounts due.

"We don't want anyone to be without water, period," says Rick Jackson, BWW Public Relations Manager. "We were one of the first utilities in the country to stop service disconnections for nonpayment during the COVID crisis, and our concern is for low and moderate income customers to maintain their services. We want to hear from anyone who has problems with payments. Customers can call the Birmingham Water Works Customer Service department via phone 205-244-4000 or go online at www.bwwb.org."

Birmingham Water Works has a Aa2 Rating from Moody's and AA Rating from Standard & Poor's which designates the system as having a stable outlook on its operations and finances. BWW Assistant General Manager of Finance & Administration Iris Fisher says the move to resume collections is necessary to reduce delinquencies which have increased from \$7,297,924.00 to \$19,675,659.26 since the start of the year. "This helps maintain the utility's healthy financial position which is a benefit for ratepayers," says Fisher.

As a reminder, the average residential customers will see a \$1.55 per month increase in the bill effective January 1.

“Our increase, though extremely modest compared to the recent rate increases of other area utilities, helps enable us to continue bringing the highest quality drinking water to nearly 800,000 people in five counties every day of the week. That’s why we must take this step. Our hope is for no interruptions to that service at all,” says Jackson.

Some agencies assisting customers with bill payments are:

H2O Foundation	205-244-4390
Birmingham Urban League	205-326-0162
Community Action Agency	1-855-287-1730
Greater Birmingham Ministries	205-326-6821
United Way	205-323-0000

ABOUT BIRMINGHAM WATER WORKS BOARD: Founded in 1951, the Birmingham Water Works Board serves 770,000 people in Jefferson, Shelby, Blount, St. Clair, and Walker counties. The BWWB operates four filtration plants, a certified testing laboratory, and has more than 4,000 miles of pipe in its distribution network. For more information about the Birmingham Water Works Board, media inquiries, or tours of our museum, please call 205-244-4225 or visit www.bwwb.org.

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