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## Camden water hook up fee jumps to \$4,000

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Camden County has more than doubled its fee to hook up to the county water supply, from \$1,500 to \$4,000.

The increase will go toward future expansion of the water system and the reverse osmosis plant on Chantilly Road, said David Credle, Camden's water system manager.

Most affected will be people building new homes in Camden County in large numbers.

"We're trying to let the new growth pay for new growth," Credle said Friday.

From July 2003 to July 2004, Camden County was the eighth fastest-growing county in the nation by percentage, increasing in population from 7,867 to 8,437, a rate of 7.2 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The county declared a moratorium on new subdivisions two years ago that has been extended until at least May 2006.

Before the moratorium was set, several developments were approved in a short time, amounting to about 1,000 home lots. About 500 of those lots are still available for building .

Residents could have signed onto the system for \$100 beginning in 1996, six years before the Camden reverse osmosis water plant opened . The rates went up to \$1,500 in 2002. With the new \$4,000 rate, a \$750 impact fee is no longer charged for new water customers, said Dave Parks, chief inspector for the county. The plant's current capacity is 720,000 gallons per day with space to double that if necessary, Credle said.

The plant currently serves 1,830 customers who use an average of 200 gallons per day. The county will need more water production by 2009, Credle said. Currituck County buys 200,000 gallons per day.

The South Mills Water Association, a private, nonprofit company in Camden County, raised its fee last year from \$1,450 to \$4,000 in large part because of heavy residential growth. The South Mills system has about 1,000 customers in Camden County and about 1,000 customers in northern Pasquotank County.

There are still many residents using well water who will also have to pay new tap fees, Credle said.

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