

# Tiny Nevada town faces 240%-410% rise in monthly water bills

By Frank X. Mullen, Reno Gazette-Journal

CHERRY CREEK – This mining town has welcomed booms and endured busts for 140 years, but many of the hamlet's 31 residents said Cherry Creek might become a ghost town again if a proposed 410 percent increase in water rates is approved by state regulators this month.

"We're about to get dried up and blown away," said Marie Jardine, who said the mostly elderly residents of the town 60 miles north of Ely can't afford anything close to the proposed increase.

The increase initially requested would boost flat-rate water bills from \$20 to \$102 per month. Using the utility's reported annual water use for 2010, that's a cost of about \$10 per 1,000 gallons, as compared to the \$3.85 per 1,000 gallons paid by Reno-Sparks customers under the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

On Thursday, the water company filed a document stating that a \$48 increase in the water rate to \$68 per month would be acceptable. The Public Utility Commission is scheduled to consider the case April 25.

PUC officials were unable to cite any historical water rate requests rivaling the 410 percent initially proposed in Cherry Creek. If the full amount were granted, rate surveys indicate Cherry Creek residents would pay among the highest monthly water bills in the nation.

**Read the whole story**