



LAKEHAVEN UTILITY DISTRICT

31627 1st Ave. S. | PO Box 4249 | Federal Way, WA 98063-4249
Federal Way: 253-941-1516, Tacoma: 253-927-2922 | www.lakehaven.org

March - April 2005

Commissioner's Corner

Ed Stewart



A number of positive comments were received in response to the Board's decision late last year to hold off on water and sewer rate increases for 2005. The fact that our customers pay among the lowest combined rates in the region for water and sewer service is a great source of pride at Lakehaven. If finances allow, we plan to make every effort in the future to hold on to our spot at the bottom of the rate ladder.

While holding rates to the lowest levels possible is a commendable goal, we continue to recognize that foregoing additional rate revenue at the expense of adequate maintenance and upkeep of the water and sewer systems would not be in the best interests of the utility. In the world of utility operation, being too "penny wise" can sometimes be "pound foolish".

Towards the goal of prudent management of the systems, the Board adopts a Capital Improvement Plan each year for both utilities to identify infrastructure needs and plan for the financing and construction of the improvements. The current Capital Improvement Plan budgets approximately forty million dollars for infrastructure improvements and system upgrades over the next ten years, including projects such as the:

- Redondo Wastewater Treatment Plant Outfall Replacement Project (\$2.8M)
- Various Water Main Replacement Projects (\$4.5M)
- Lakota Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge Dryer Installation Project (\$2.8M)
- Wells 17,19, 21 & 23 Iron and Manganese Filter Installation Projects (\$2M)
- Emergency Generator Installation Projects (\$.95M)
- Various Pump Station and Force Main Upgrade Projects (\$5.3M)

With the considerable size of the systems the District maintains, it is not possible to eliminate system failures, such as water main breaks and pump failures, altogether. These and the many other improvement projects, however, will ensure that the systems continue to provide reliable service to you into the future.

Another large, ongoing project has been the replacement of numerous sections of water main along Pacific Highway as part of the City of Federal Way's project to widen and improve the highway. One of the ways we have been able to improve efficiency on this and other water main replacement projects has been to work with the City of Federal Way to coordinate the design and bidding of main replacement jobs required in conjunction with road improvement projects. Hiring one engineer to design, and one general contractor to install both facilities, can reduce overlap and improve coordination of the work. We thank the City for its assistance and cooperation on these projects.

I would also like to congratulate our staff on the recent award from the State Auditor's office (see the article in this Newsletter). We are indeed fortunate to have a dedicated and professional staff serving you.

Thank you for your continued interest in the District!

Leonard D. Englund
Commissioner

Charles I. Gibson
Commissioner

Timothy A. McClain
Commissioner

Donald L.P. Miller
Commissioner

Ronald E. Nowicki
Commissioner



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DISTRICT RECEIVES AUDIT AWARD

Representatives from the Office of the State Auditor were in attendance at the February 10th Board meeting to present the District with an award for completing five consecutive years of audits without an audit finding. The District, like all municipal corporations in the state, is audited annually by the Office of the State Auditor for compliance with a variety of legal and accounting regulations governing public agencies. The most recent clean audit was for calendar year 2003. The audit of year 2004 will likely begin in the late summer or fall. State Auditor Brian Sonntag noted in the letter presenting the award that "Our office views its relationship with the District as a model for other entities in our state".

FIRE DEPARTMENT OBTAINS CLASS 2 RATING

The Federal Way Fire Department, which serves a territory nearly coincident with that of Lakehaven in the greater Federal Way area, recently announced that effective April 1, 2005, its fire protection classification will improve from Class 3 to Class 2. This new classification is on par with the rating held by Seattle and Bellevue, the only other departments to hold a Class 2 rating (no fire agency in Washington State holds a Class 1 rating).

This reclassification followed an evaluation process conducted by the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau. The evaluation considered fire department staffing levels, fire prevention programs, fire suppression equipment and training. The evaluation also considers the capabilities of the water supply (approximately 40% of the "score") to provide reliable service to meet fire suppression needs.

It's been reported that the new classification may mean lower fire insurance premiums for businesses owners, perhaps by as much as 5% to 20%. Premiums for homeowners are not expected to change, however, as a classification of four or better generally results in the same premiums. You may wish to check with your insurance provider to see how this improved classification may impact you.

Congratulations to the fire department on this accomplishment! We are extremely fortunate to be served by this capable agency.

WAYS TO CONSERVE WATER:

- Take shorter showers.
- Repair dripping faucets
- Check for toilet tank leaks.
- Don't let water run while brushing teeth.

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WATER PRESSURE/QUALITY

If you happen to experience a problem with the water pressure in your home or business, or you have a problem related to water quality or a water quality question, please contact our office as your first step in trying to resolve the issue.

Lakehaven Utility District has a professionally trained staff that is available and ready to assist you with these kinds of concerns!



BIO DRYER FOR LAKOTA TREATMENT PLANT

Lakehaven Utility District has recently entered into a contract to purchase a Biosolids Dryer System for the District's Lakota Wastewater Treatment Facility. Currently the biosolids produced at the District's Lakota and Redondo Wastewater Treatment Facilities, contain 80% water and are either hauled to Eastern Washington for application on farm lands or to Kent Washington for composting. Drying the biosolids will produce an exceptional quality class A reusable product containing less than 10% water, reducing trucking costs and truck traffic currently associated with the biosolids.

To offset the amount of natural gas used in the drying process, methane gas produced at the Lakota Wastewater Treatment Plant, currently being flared will be used in the biosolids drying process. Exceptional quality class A biosolids contain Nitrogen, Phosphorous, and Potassium which can be used to enrich lawns, gardens, and landscaping soils. It is anticipated that the drying system will be in operation in early 2006. The District is conducting a survey of Lakehaven ratepayers for those interested in purchasing the dried biosolids at a nominal cost for home use; please contact Terry at (253) 946-5439.

KIDS CORNER – WATER FACTS OF LIFE

The following are some fun facts about water:

- A person can live about a month without food, but only about a week without water.
- Water expands when it freezes. Frozen water (ice) is lighter than water, which is why ice floats in water.



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

At the time this Newsletter was prepared (mid-February), the legislative session was in full operation. HB 1417, which would require a vote in cases where a city assumes the jurisdiction of all but the smallest water/sewer districts, was alive in the House of Representatives. Another bill, HB 1992, which would allow a city to levy a tax on the revenues of water and sewer district collected within city boundaries, was introduced on February 14th.

Things change quickly in Olympia. For current information on bills or to find a contact for a legislator, you can log in at <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature>.

Your Board of Commissioners

Ed Stewart - President

Beverly J. Tweddle - Vice President

Don Miller - Secretary

Tom Jovanovich - Commissioner

Dick Mayer - Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at:
Lakehaven Center
31531 First Ave. S.
Federal Way at 6 p.m.

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