



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 2007

Commissioner's Corner

Beverly J. Tweddle



After the fall and winter we went through this year, I'm sure many of you will share my sentiments that spring can't get here soon enough. The extreme weather, and particularly the widespread and prolonged power outages in December, created many challenges for the operation of the water and sewer systems. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our staff, the District was able to keep the services running without interruption.

In December, we adopted a biennial (2007-08) O&M budget and an aggressive capital program budget. This is the time that we normally review and update our rates and capital facilities charges for the upcoming year. This year, however, the Board decided to hold off on making any changes until we could put our rate and capital facilities charges through the most comprehensive and detailed analysis possible.

In the general sense, the water and sewer rates are the charges that we collect from customers to recover the costs of operating and maintaining the water and sewer systems. Like many water utilities, the District rate includes both a base charge, which covers the connection to the system, and a commodity charge, which corresponds to the actual use of water. The commodity rates increase as higher amounts of water are consumed. This reflects both the goal to create an incentive for conservation and the fact that the extra units of capacity are more expensive to provide.

Single family residential sewer rates are charged on the basis of water consumed by a customer during the fall and winter months, when irrigation uses are typically dormant. This isolates water used for irrigation, which doesn't flow to the sewer system, from the calculation of sewer demand.

Because use patterns vary by type of customer, the cost to provide water and sewer service differs between customers in different classes of use, such as between residential and commercial customers. The key is to match the cost of service with the rate. This requires a considerable amount of research and data analysis to ensure that the allocation is appropriate. There is also a significant amount of interest in revenue stability, particularly for the water system, where demand, and thus revenues, tends to follow weather patterns.

For a number of years now, we have been paying considerable attention to how we charge customers for their share of the capital costs of the water and sewer systems. In order to be fair, the charge, which we have designated as a "Capital Facility Charge", must reflect the demand that a particular parcel of property places on the facilities of general benefit to the respective systems. One of the difficulties in administering these charges fairly is that many times the use of the property, and correspondingly its demand on the water and/or sewer system, changes over time.

The Board is confident that our current system of rates and charges is fair and balanced. There is, however, a shared belief among the Board members that there may be different and better ways to achieve the desired result of equitably spreading the cost of water and sewer service among our customers. To assist us in our review, we have retained consultants highly respected in the business of establishing utility rate and charges. With the additional assistance of staff, we hope to complete our review in May.

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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Thank you for your interest in the District.

DISTRICT ENCOURAGES CAUTION!

The District was informed of an incident in which a homeowner in our service area was contacted by an individual claiming to be a District employee and asking to be allowed into the residence to check for a water leak. Fortunately, the homeowner did not allow the person entry into the home and contacted the District to advise us of the incident. We confirmed that the person was not a District employee and contacted the police.

If you are contacted by a person representing himself or herself as a District employee, please do not let the person in your home until you have checked their identification. All District field employees wear uniforms consisting of a green shirt and blue coat, both of which bear the District's logo. These employees also carry a Lakehaven Utility District picture identification card. District vehicles are primarily white with a blue logo on the driver side.



If you question whether a person, or persons, claiming to be a District employee is actually a District employee, do not allow the person or persons into your home and call Lakehaven Utility District Customer Service at telephone number 253-941-1516 or 253-927-2922.

LONG-TIME EMPLOYEE TO RETIRE

The District's Human Resource Coordinator and Board Clerk, Linda Mogensen, will be retiring at the end of April after more than twenty eight years of employment with the District. Linda, a Federal Way resident for many years, began her career with the District in April 1979. She began her career as a Customer Service Representative and was appointed as the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Finance in 1984. In 1992 Linda added the role as Clerk of the Board of Commissioners to her job duties, a position she continues to hold. In 2002, she began her service as the District's HR Coordinator.

Linda will be greatly missed by all at the District. With her willingness to tackle any assignment with enthusiasm and dependability, she has been an invaluable asset to the Board and staff during her tenure. Linda and her husband

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Gary, a longtime teacher in the Federal Way School District, plan to spend more time with grandchildren and at their vacation home in Eastern Washington.

BIO-SOLIDS DRYER PROJECT

Due to a number of factors making the plan to dry bio-solids less feasible than originally planned, the Board voted earlier this year to approve the cancellation of the Lakota Bio-Solids Dryer Project in January. The dryer would have permitted the District to “cook” bio-solids produced at the Lakota and Redondo Wastewater Treatment plants. Once processed through the dryer facility, the composted bio-solids would be safe for use in landscape applications. With the large amounts of fuel energy required to dry the bio-solids, the rising cost of natural gas, as well as increases in equipment and construction costs, made the project less viable as an alternative to the current method of re-using the bio-solids at agricultural sites in Eastern Washington. The District has retained some of the equipment manufactured for the project which can be used to dry bio-solids if the project becomes feasible in the future.

2006 WINDSTORM

The December windstorm had a tremendous impact to both the people of this community and the public and private facilities that serve them.

The storm, with the resultant power failures throughout the area, posed significant challenges to the operation of the water and sewer systems that are so vital to the health, safety and convenience of our residents.

The Board of Commissioners wishes to recognize the great contributions of those employees who worked long hours in demanding conditions to ensure that the water and sewer systems remained operational.

The contributions of the employees to the effort to ensure that the District’s ratepayers were not without water and sewer service during the storm, and its prolonged aftermath, serve as a great example of the way teamwork and commitment can overcome a great challenge.



DECEMBER '06 WINDSTORM
District Employee Paul Stoermer with uprooted tree in French Lake Park

KIDS CORNER



The month of April is earthquake preparedness month. Remember to “Drop, Cover, and Hold” wherever you are if you feel the ground start to shake. Go under a desk or sturdy table and stay away from windows or objects that could fall. Hold onto the desk or table. And remember; do not run, stay where you are and “Drop, Cover, and Hold”.

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WATER FESTIVAL

The 8th annual regional Water Festival was held at Highline Community College on March 28th & 29th. The Festival is held each year to teach students about water quality. This year, 71 students from Federal Way Elementary Schools attended the event and the District paid for their transportation in addition to hiring a consultant to teach some of the classes.

TIPS TO SAVE/CONSERVE WATER

- Repair a dripping faucet by replacing the washer. A faucet dripping at the rate of one drop per second wastes many gallons per year.

WATER CONSERVATION ACTIVITY

The District is offering a new program for Federal Way elementary school teachers to educate the children about the importance of water conservation. Please call 253-946-5446 if you are interested in scheduling a class.

Your Board of Commissioners

Don Miller - President
Ron Nowicki - Vice President
Chuck Gibson - Secretary
Beverly J. Tweddle - Commissioner
Ed Stewart - Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.
These meetings are held at the Lakehaven Center at:

Lakehaven Center
31531 First Ave. S.
Federal Way at 6 p.m.

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