

Commissioners' Corner



Tim McClain

As I sit here in my office in the middle of October, the sun is bright, the sky is blue and the forecast in the newspaper is talking about the “Big Dark”, a series of rainstorms projected to last for the next few weeks. My first thought when reading this article was that I had better get our grandson up on the roof today to make sure the gutters are clean. The fact that the leaves are falling, and a typical Puget Sound winter is just around the corner, leads me to the first of the thoughts I would like to discuss in this column.

Just as you prepare your homes and businesses for winter, you can rest assured that our employees are out there every day preparing the water and sewer systems for any operational challenges that might come with inclement weather. On a different preparation front, a group of local representatives, including two District commissioners and six managers, attended a weeklong program of intensive emergency management training in Emmitsburg, MD aimed at preparing local agencies to respond and recover from a natural disaster (see attached article). As events in the southern region of our country in late August and September amply demonstrated, the ability to respond effectively to a natural disaster is vital to any community.

The second subject I want to discuss with you today is the matter of educating the future operators and managers of our utility systems. In October, the District had the privilege of hosting Federal Way School District Superintendent Dr. Tammy Campbell and approximately forty scholars and teachers from the School District for a tour of our Lakota Wastewater Treatment Plant. While at the plant, these scholars toured the various facilities and were able to see firsthand how wastewater is “treated” before being returned to the Puget Sound. They also attended presentations on other aspects of the utility systems, including the operation of the wastewater collection systems that transport the wastewater to our treatment plants and the water production and distribution systems that provide drinking water to our customers.

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Lakehaven Links

Our Mission

The Lakehaven Water and Sewer District is committed to the continued delivery of safe, reliable and high quality drinking water and environmentally responsible sewer service to our customers.

Board of Commissioners

Len Englund, President
Tim McClain, Vice President
Don Miller, Secretary
Peter Sanchez
Ron Nowicki

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at 6:00 p.m the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at the Lakehaven Center at 31531 1st Ave South, Federal Way.

Contact Us

Federal Way: 253-941-1516
Tacoma: 253-927-2922
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253-941-1516

Business Hours:
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

www.lakehaven.org

Commissioners' Corner, continued...



One of the important benefits of this experience, we believe, is that it will help inform students about career opportunities that currently exist in the water and wastewater industries. We, along with many other water/sewer districts in the region, are experiencing the need to hire a large number of new employees to meet workload demands. Jobs in this industry are very rewarding and provide extremely competitive pay and benefits. Because of the need for a trained workforce, students were also provided information about the options they have to take college classes to prepare them for careers in the industry. Fortunately, Green River Community College, located just across the valley, offers many classes that can lead to certifications that are highly sought in the industry.

Not surprisingly, many of the students were not aware of the variety of challenging jobs that we offer and came away with a better understanding of the opportunities for employment here at the District. The overall experience for all involved was positive and we look forward to having the chance to collaborate with the School District again on this program in the future.

Redondo Cold Creek Project

The District recently discovered that two sanitary sewer mains that flow to the Redondo Wastewater Treatment Plant had become exposed due to natural erosion within the Cold Creek drainage area. In order to protect the pipes, located just upstream from the Plant, it was necessary for the District to undertake a project to replace the natural fill materials that had washed out over time.

Before work could begin on the project, permits were required from the City of Federal Way, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Because the exposed areas are environmentally sensitive and difficult to access (due to the steep slopes of the ravine and the creek that runs through the area), the contractor used a "spyder" excavator (see photo) to access the site and place boulders and wood in the creek channel. The "spyder" was able to move to the location of the work more easily than a conventional excavator because its four "legs" move independently. This resulted in less disturbance to the sensitive areas as the contractor accessed the creek and delivered the fill materials. Construction activities, which cost just under \$300,000, were successfully completed in September of this year.



Integrated Emergency Management Course

In August, sixty-four members of the Greater Federal Way Emergency Management Team attended a four-day Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The group included Lakehaven Commissioners Miller and Sanchez, along with six managers from various departments within the District. Others participating were the City of Federal Way, City of Des Moines, South King Fire & Rescue, Federal Way Public Schools, St. Francis Hospital, Federal Way Community Emergency Response Team, and the Federal Way Amateur Radio Club.

The training, funded by FEMA, focused on the local area's recovery from a regional earthquake disaster. By placing the participants in simulated exercises to recover from an earthquake disaster, the instructors sought to test the skills of personnel within the local agencies and evaluate the effectiveness of existing emergency policies, plans, and procedures in the event of an earthquake disaster. During the training, specific attention was paid to orienting personnel from multiple agencies of the need to maintain the coordination of human and physical (i.e. equipment) resources during and after a real emergency.



The primary responsibility of the Greater Federal Way Emergency Management Team is to provide community services during and after a disaster strikes. We all hope that we don't have a disaster, but let's be thankful that we have a team of community responders that have planned for it just in case!