

Commissioners' Corner



Don Miller

As I write the Commissioner Corner article for the first newsletter of 2018, a glance at the calendar reveals that today is December 7th, the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. President Franklin Roosevelt famously called it “a date which will live in infamy”. This day has always been particularly important to me as I recall the great sacrifices made by those who have served to protect our country.

My personal connection to this historic day comes from the fact that my father was in the Navy and stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He served as an Ordnance Officer on the minelayer “Oglala”. Our family home was located just a few miles away from the naval base. Despite being very young at the time, I still remember the loud noise coming from outside on that otherwise tranquil first Sunday morning in December. Along with many neighbors, we went outside to see the squadrons of planes flying above with Japanese military insignias on their wings.

My dad returned to the base that morning to find that an exploding torpedo had sunk the Oglala. With his ship on the bottom of the harbor, my dad and his shipmates went to work assisting in the recovery efforts, which lasted for many weeks. With a curfew and restriction on nighttime lights, we would huddle in a neighbor's basement to listen to the radio to find out what was happening to our country.

We sailed back to the mainland in April of 1942. My father continued his service throughout the war and for the remainder of his career. We later ended up in Seattle and have lived in the area since then.

Along with a sense of the historical importance of the event, I think witnessing the attack helps me understand the importance of planning for emergencies. I have long been an advocate for the use of emergency generators. With guidance from other Board members, and the help of a very dedicated staff of employees, we have installed generators throughout the network of facilities to provide more reliable water and sewer service to you and your neighbors during times of power outages.

Continued...

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

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

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
After Hours Emergencies:
253-941-1516

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

www.lakehaven.org

Commissioners' Corner, cont.

I do want to remind you that colder weather in the winter months can have an impact on your water service lines and home plumbing systems. Frozen pipes will often break before they thaw, leaving you with expensive property damage and/or high water bills. One thing my wife and I do when traveling away from the area for a significant amount of time is to have a friend or family member check our home periodically. Let them know to turn your water on for a short time to clear the pipes and look for any trouble spots or leaks. When you return home, be sure to do the same.

Wishing you all the best in the New Year!

Customer Responses – Utility Tax

In the Commissioners' Corner article in the September/October Newsletter, Commissioner Ron Nowicki let you know that the City of Federal Way had discussed earlier whether to seek to impose a utility tax on water and sewer rates within the City. He also asked for your input on whether the Board should challenge such an attempt if it occurred. Over 40 responses overwhelmingly favored a challenge.

We appreciate the many customers that took the time to respond to give us their insights and opinions on this issue. This feedback helps the Board function as your representatives on the utility you own.

King County Seeks to Charge Right-of-Way Rent

In November 2016, the King County Council passed Ordinance No. 18403, which seeks to impose a rental charge on certain utilities with facilities located in County streets and roads. The County has since adopted draft rules to implement the rental charge. More Information about the Ordinance and the draft rules can be found at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/facilities-management/real-estate-services/public-rule-proposal.aspx> (note: the public comment period has ended).

The District has a significant number of water and sewer mains within King County right-of-way. The impact of a rental charge will be to increase water and sewer rates within the unincorporated areas. At present, the County is looking to require utilities seeking new franchises to agree to pay the rental charge. While the District's water and sewer franchises are not up for renewal until 2025 and 2030, respectively, it is anticipated that the County will seek to levy the charge on utilities with existing franchises as well.



The District is participating with other water/sewer districts within King County to challenge the rental charge. You may want to contact the County and let your opinion on the matter be known.

Board Approves Small Rate Increase

At its regular meeting on December 15th, the Board of Commissioners adopted water and sewer rates for 2018 through 2022. The new rates provide for an increase in water rates of 1.75% each year. Sewer rates are scheduled to go up by 2.75% per year. Because the Board typically reviews rates every two years, rates adopted for years beyond 2019 will likely be studied further before implementation.

The Board spends a great deal of attention making sure that rate increases are conservative, yet adequate to cover the costs of maintaining and upgrading the systems. Investing in new infrastructure is necessary to ensure that the District will be able to continue to provide reliable service well into the future. The small increases will undoubtedly result in District water and sewer rates continuing to be among the lowest in the region. Once the final rates of other agencies in the area are published after the first of the year, we will update our rate survey and include it in the next newsletter!