

Commissioners' Corner



Len Englund

About once a year, each commissioner takes a turn highlighting various activities, projects or interesting tidbits of information about your water and sewer district. In my last "Commissioner Corner", I wrote about the future of personnel challenges.

As I mentioned then, we anticipate that District employees will be retiring (and moving on to post-employment life) at an accelerated rate in the coming years. While it is exciting to see the new faces this brings to our workforce, it is also sad to say goodbye to the

loyal faces who put their heart and soul into keeping the water and sewer systems operating smoothly and efficiently.

Gene Yoder, our Field Operation's Manager, is retiring. Gene began his career in 1978 as a utility worker and worked his way through the ranks to head our Field Operations Department. Up until his retirement, he managed a crew of over twenty dedicated individuals who work to repair and maintain the water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

An expression Gene is known for is "betcha a buck". This was used when there was a friendly divergence of opinion amongst crew members about how to complete a task. Gene's office wall was decorated with dollars bills, demonstrating his abundant wisdom in these matters (Gene readily concedes that there was likely an equal number of dollar bills in circulation that came from his wallet).

One of the signs of a great manager is the number of people who attend their retirement party. The entire truck repair bays at the Lakota treatment plant were converted for a luncheon to celebrate Gene's career. The large group attending enjoyed stories from the past 40 years about Gene, his crew, the legacy he leaves and the giant shoes that will be left to fill here at Lakehaven.

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

Federal Way Excise Tax

On March 20th, the Federal Way City Council voted to approve a 7.75% excise tax on the “gross income” from the District’s provision of water and sewer services to utility customers within the boundaries of the City of Federal Way. In response, the District’s Board of Commissioners voted, on March 22nd, to challenge the tax.

The District has filed a lawsuit seeking to declare the tax illegal under state law. Pending a court decision regarding the legal validity of the tax, the District Board of Commissioners will be amending water and sewer rates inside the City of Federal Way to add the tax to existing rates (at the time this article was written, it was unknown whether the tax will be included in the rates Federal Way customers are receiving with this Newsletter). An explanation of the rate impacts for customers inside the City of Federal Way will be available on the District’s website, probably beginning sometime in May or early June. Until the legality of the tax is resolved in court, it is anticipated that the tax will be collected and deposited into a separate holding account.

While litigation can be a slow process, the District will keep you informed as the court challenge to the tax progresses through the legal system.



Water & Wastewater Industry Career Opportunities



The District participated in the Federal Way Public Schools’ second annual STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics) Exploration Event at Todd Beamer High School in March. The District’s goal for the event was to introduce students to possible careers within the water and

wastewater industries. District staff presented information to students and parents on the many STEM career opportunities at the District. These opportunities include jobs as engineers, facility operators, lab technicians, computer specialists, finance personnel, and more. This event follows an earlier collaboration with the School District last October in which District staff provided informational sessions promoting careers in water and wastewater to a group of over forty high school students. That event included a tour of the Lakota Wastewater Treatment Facility.

If you would like more information on a career in the public water and wastewater industry, please email our Human Resources Manager, Carrie Peters at cpeters@lakehaven.org.

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It is always nice to have such a dedicated and respected employee for over 40 years! It is equally nice to see those folks enter the next phase of their lives. They have given so much of their life energy to the District. The years of knowledge that walks out the door is incalculable. Gene has probably touched every pipe and every valve within the Lakehaven infrastructure in the past 40 years at least once.

The last large project Gene worked on is the project to convert our water meters to an Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system. AMR will help Lakehaven become more efficient and accurate when water meters are read. The automated collection of data will also allow Lakehaven to pinpoint water consumption on a daily basis and give us better data about when leaks occur for our ratepayers. This technology has the potential to save both water and ratepayer money.

I want to wish Gene all the best in his retirement and extend my heartfelt thanks to him for his dedicated service to the ratepayers.

