

## Commissioners' Corner



Len Englund

One might think providing water and sewer service in a community would be routine. Water production is not glamorous and sewer treatment doesn't exactly make exciting front page news very often. These processes seem fairly routine, but in reality; the local water and sewer provider (whether a special purpose district like Lakehaven or a local city or county) literally allow our communities to be the thriving places they are.

I would like to dive a little deeper into what Lakehaven sees when it looks to the future. One important priority is to ensure we use technology and science to provide water and sewer service on the most environmentally sound and efficient basis possible. One such challenge to our staff is that of improving the quality of the wastewater effluent discharged into Puget Sound.

As any of you that have toured a wastewater treatment plant know, wastewater plants do an amazing job of cleaning up our wastewater. Our sewer plants remove solids and pathogens every day, but they are not designed to remove nitrogen. With an ever-growing population in the area, the levels of nitrogen being emitted by all the sewer plants that discharge into Puget Sound have increased.

One might ask what the big deal is about nitrogen? It occurs naturally in Puget Sound and marine life needs some amount of nitrogen to survive. The answer is that, just like anything, too much of a good thing can actually be harmful. While it is true that marine life needs nitrogen to survive, too much nitrogen also displaces the oxygen that marine life needs as well.

The Washington State Department of Ecology has been mandated under the Federal Clean Water Act to study and monitor the levels of nitrogen in Puget Sound. Currently there is no federal mandate that sewer plants discharging into Puget Sound remove nitrogen. It is believed, however, that this could change and nitrogen removal could become a requirement in the future.

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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

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

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](http://www.lakehaven.org)



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At Lakehaven, our staff is currently exploring ways of removing nitrogen from the wastewater stream. While projects like this are "long lead" items, they are best implemented with careful analysis of the alternatives at the outset. Ultimately removing nitrogen will require major, and, I might add, expensive upgrades and process changes to our two sewer plants. We will be keeping our eyes and ears open for new technologies that will help us meet the challenges of keeping our environment safe and healthy for marine life (and to do all that in the most efficient manner possible).

The next time you see our vehicles out in the community, rest assured that Lakehaven is looking to keep ahead of the curve and plan for changes before the law requires them. Our goal continues to focus on providing reliable, efficient and affordable water and sewer services and to make our community part of the solution to a brighter future for the Puget Sound.



The best way to manage Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) is to keep it out of the plumbing system in the first place!

The following useful tips for reducing problems with FOG are intended for commercial customers (but may also apply to residential customers as well):

- Train all kitchen staff for grease disposal and the impacts of grease accumulation in the sewer.
- Do not pour, scrape, or otherwise dispose of fats, oils, or grease into the sink or drains.
- Collect fryer oil and store in barrels for recycling.
- Dump mop water only to drains connected to your grease treatment system.
- Use absorbents to soak up spills containing fats, oils, and grease (FOG).
- Do not put food (including liquid food) including milk shake syrups, batters, and gravy down the drain.
- Use strainers on sinks and floor drains to prevent solid material from entering the sewer.
- Post "NO GREASE" signs near sinks and drains.
- If you have an automatic grease recovery device (GRD), empty the collection pan before it becomes full.
- Wastewater generated from duct/range filter cleaning must be routed through the grease treatment system.
- Provide regular refresher training/discussion for proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease for all employees.
- Inspect grease abatement devices/interceptors after pumping to ensure adequate cleaning was performed.

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## District Rate Update

Included with your newsletter is the District's 2019 Rate Survey. The survey shows District water and sewer rates in comparison with the rates of neighboring jurisdictions. The rates reflect what an average single-family residential customer would pay per month.

District rates include a 1.75% increase in water rates and 2.75% rate increase in sewer rates over the rates charged in 2018. Rates within Federal Way include the 7.75% excise tax imposed by the City of Federal Way (the actual rate is slightly higher to include additional public utility taxes owed to the State of Washington on City taxes).