

Commissioners' Corner



Peter Sanchez

Since March, things have not been “normal”, and it doesn’t look like things will be “normal” again. As outlined in Commissioner Nowicki’s Commissioners’ Corner in the May/June Newsletter, the District took actions to keep our employees and our customers safe (see www.lakehaven.org). We expect to keep most of these practices in place in the months to come.

The District is moving forward with plans to bring most of our employees back to work. Currently, as I write this in mid-June, we have about 90% of our people back on the job, with 75% of them working on site and the rest working remote from home. Our treatment plant and field operations staff are working on a rotating basis so that we can have a “strategic reserve” of personnel in case of a resurgence of the virus that is predicted in the summer or fall.

We also are working on plans that will allow limited face to face interaction with our customers following guidelines from the Governor and the Health Department. We hope to be able to resume in-person Board meetings soon. All of these things will take place with proper social distancing, masks and enhanced sanitations protocols. We also recognize that some people will face economic challenges for some time to come, so we are working on ways to address that.

Following government regulations and by direction of the Board of Commissioners, the District established a supplemental leave bank to cushion the economic impact for our employees during the shutdown. One employee donated unused sick leave to help with the supplemental pay for other employees. I’d like to thank that person for their generosity. Overall, our staff has stayed healthy. One employee and his wife were hospitalized after a non-work exposure to the virus. Both of them recovered and that employee is now back to work.

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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

Peter Sanchez, President
 Ron Nowicki, Vice President
 Len Englund, Secretary
 Don Miller, Commissioner
 Laura Belvin, Commissioner

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

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I learned two things from Lakehaven's participation in the Greater Federal Way Emergency Management Oversight Committee which shares information with regional jurisdictions: Federal Way Schools have been distributing breakfast and lunch meals to students since schools have been closed. The last figure I heard was over half a million meals served, and undoubtedly the number will be much higher when you read this. South King Fire & Rescue (SKFR) responded to the lack of medical gowns (PPE) by designing and making them out of TYVEK, which is used as a house wrap in new construction. As word spread, they received requests regionally, nationally and internationally on how to make the gowns. Recently, Lowes started supplying medical grade TYVEK to SKFR, who contracted with the women's prison in Purdy to make the needed gowns. My thanks to everyone involved in these efforts to keep our children fed and our first responders safe.

I'd like to assure you that your tap water quality remains as high as ever and that your sewer service continues to function normally. Lastly, I'd like to thank all of Lakehaven's employees for the outstanding job they have done to keep each other and the public safe, and to continue to keep your water and sewer service functioning.

Please stay safe and healthy.

COVID 19 Update

As spring has turned into summer, the impacts of the Covid-19 Emergency continue to evolve and re-define "normal" operations at the District (making it difficult to reflect the status of operations over the two-month cycle of this Newsletter). Where the early period of the virus spread resulted in a shift to minimal on-site staffing to prevent the spread of the virus, the recent trend has been to restore most of the field and plant operations to on-site work. The Administration Department continues to operate fully, but a number of staff members are working remotely as jobs will permit. Following requirements set by the Governor, the Board has been conducting Board meetings remotely using the Zoom web platform (this may have changed by the time this Newsletter reaches you). The one constant throughout the Covid-19 Emergency is that the water and sewer systems have remained fully operational, allowing the District to provide uninterrupted service throughout the period.

With the phased re-opening of the state, the situation continues to change. Management staff has completed Safe Return to Work Plans for all departments in anticipation of the return of all staff to on-site work. The Plans include detailed provisions to comply with CDC and local health guidelines to enhance worker safety and protect others from the spread of the coronavirus by District employees.

As of the beginning of July, the main office remains closed to the public. This means that you will still need to pay bills on-line, over the phone, by mail, or by using the drop-box across from the main office entrance. We also are following the Governor's restrictions on shutting water service off to customers who are unable to pay monthly rates for water and sewer service. The District has developed a "Delinquent Account Payment Plan" that allows customers the opportunity to pay delinquent bills in installments while making partial payments on current bills. For further information on the plan, please go to the [District's website](#).

Court Upholds Utility Tax

The Washington Supreme Court ruled that the City of Federal Way may lawfully impose an excise tax on the District. In its' decision, issued June 18th, the Court sustained an earlier King County Superior Court ruling upholding the City's tax ordinance that was challenged jointly by the District, Highline Water District and the Midway Sewer District. The District had also challenged an excise tax ordinance adopted by the City of Edgewood. That challenge remained on hold in Pierce County Superior Court pending the decision in the Federal Way matter. The details of the full implementation of the excise tax were not known at the time of publication of the Newsletter. More information on the excise tax will be posted on the District website (www.lakehaven.org) as it becomes known.

What's In Your Water

Lakehaven Water and Sewer District's Annual Water Quality Report is available to view at www.lakehaven.org/CCR