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Commissioners' Corner



Laura Belvin

As school starts up again, and we begin to come into the cold and flu season this fall, all of us will ramp up on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

The past two years the cleaning industry has made cleaning easier by creating all sorts of disinfecting and cleaning wipes. Many of them are labeled as disposable, and many people assume that means that they are flushable, but that is not the case.

What happens when a disposable wipe gets into the sewer system? They aren't designed to break down like toilet paper. If they get to the treatment plant we need to physically remove them from the water before treatment (yuk!). Often they get stuck with other things that don't belong in the pipes and can create expensive backups and maintenance issues.

Lakehaven is grateful that Washington state enacted legislation in July that put "Do Not Flush" labels on certain cleaning products. Please look for this new labeling. In general, unless it is toilet paper or human waste, please do not flush it down the drain.

I asked John Barton, our Wastewater Operations Manager, about the impact of wipes on our sewer system. He related the significant labor, equipment, and maintenance costs associated with these wipes. To process this garbage, we have to have special equipment to screen or chop it up at our pump stations and treatment facilities. It skews the biological testing results, making the operator's job more difficult. We also have the cost of disposing of this garbage; if our biosolids have too much of this product in them we have to dispose of it as garbage at a huge cost instead of sending it to farms for soil amendments.

Just remember that toilets are not trash cans. Besides disposable wipes there are many other things that do not belong in the sewer system. Diapers and feminine products should never be flushed. Medicines and pharmaceuticals upset the biological processes in the treatment plant and are not good for the aquatic environment. Fats, oils and grease also should not go down the drain. As people cooked more

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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
Don Miller, Vice-President
Laura Belvin, Secretary
Peter Sanchez, Commissioner
Jeremy DelMar, Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at 6:00 p.m the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month. Please check the website for meeting information.

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 4:00 p.m.

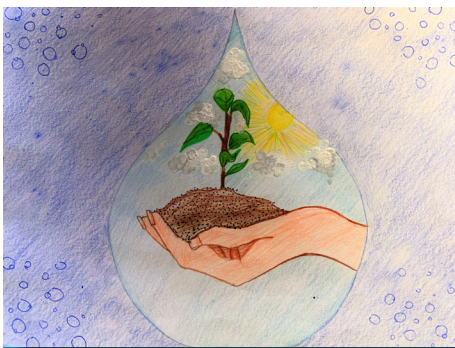
www.lakehaven.org

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at home during Covid, we experienced significantly more grease at our treatment plants. Other items that are garbage that we don't want to process are latex products, paint and automotive fluids, paper towels and cotton balls, coffee grounds, produce stickers, excess food waste and hair.

I'm sure that you wouldn't like the job of removing this garbage from the sewers. Please help out our maintenance personnel by keeping it out in the first place. Thank you for your valuable cooperation!

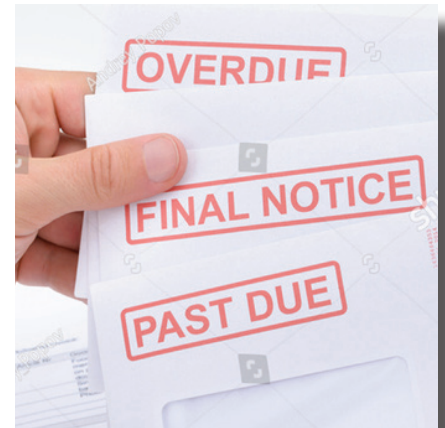


Water Conservation Poster Contest

The District's 25th annual Water Conservation Poster Contest winner was 4th grader Praskovia I. from Mirror Lake Elementary.

Customer Service Update

September 1st marked the end of the District's special rules for managing delinquent accounts during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the return to regular processing of customer accounts. Despite the change, our Customer Service staff remains available to help you with any questions you may have about your bill and to respond to difficulties you may have paying your bill. While we understand that paying bills is not always the easiest job we face every month, we ask that you avoid rude or hostile communications with the Customer Service staff about your bill. Their job has not been easy during the Covid-19 period and courteous and civil discussions about your bill is always preferred. On another note, the District has funds remaining in the Customer Assistance Program to help customers in need. We also anticipate that some additional assistance will become available in the coming months from funds allocated for utility bills by the State Legislature earlier this year. Lastly, the Board voted in August to increase the delinquency threshold for shutting off water service from \$60 to \$100. The threshold for filing liens was increased from \$120 to \$200.



COVID in the Wastewater

Not long after SARA-CoV-2 (COVID) began invading our lives, Lakehaven was approached by researchers at Arizona State University who were putting together a Wastewater Based Epidemiology study to monitor for COVID at wastewater treatment plants. The idea was to explore the development of large area-wide monitoring networks as early warning systems for community level infection trends. Like many viruses, COVID is shed from humans into the waste stream. While it does not survive long without a host, remnants of the virus and other pathogens can be detected in wastewater treatment plant influent by laboratory sampling. The results of periodic sampling can provide early trends indicating whether local infections are increasing or decreasing within a community. The results of weekly sampling from our local treatment plants tend to support this concept when compared to other trends produced by our local health department based on confirmed cases. This type of work is now being done in many states within our country and in other countries around the world. While Wastewater Based Epidemiology is still in its infancy, Lakehaven is pleased to be a part of these early efforts. With greater understanding, the information gained can help better inform and protect our local communities.

