



Len Englund

## Commissioners' Corner

I wrote in this column last year (May/June) about the final touches underway on the plans for the District's new Headquarters Building. As shown in that issue, the building was just a steel frame at that time. As I write in the first part of February 2023, some of our staff are just days away from moving into the building. The Headquarters Building brings Lakehaven into the 21st century and is large enough

so that all of our important departments will be located together. It has modern efficiencies and is ergonomically friendly. The customer-friendly lobby provides a convenient place for staff to interact with customers to answer questions, receive payments, and review development plans. It also has a well-organized Boardroom for Board and other meetings (staff and industry training, etc.).

This state-of-the-art building will serve Lakehaven for the next 100 years or more. One very nice feature is the large clock in the lobby. The clock was originally part of the "Old World Square" – located in the first Federal Way Shopping Center. The clock is the property of the Federal Way Historical Society, who have graciously allowed it to be permanently displayed in our building. Eventually there will be information displayed that will explain the history of the clock and show pictures of where it was originally located.

Lakehaven plans to have an open house this spring to show customers their new building. Current plans are to offer a monthly public tour of the new building, beginning towards the first part of the summer. Watch our website for more information.

One of the things the commissioners are most proud of is that Lakehaven received an AAA rating from Standard & Poor's on our last bond issuance. We are the only local government entity in the area, and one of the few water/sewer districts in the state, to have this rating, the highest attainable by a municipal borrower. By lowering our borrowing costs, achieving this rating saves you money, which helps to keep our rates one of the lowest in the area.

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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  
Laura Belvin, Vice-President  
Peter Sanchez, Secretary  
Jeremy DelMar, Commissioner  
Len Englund, 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](http://www.lakehaven.org)

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We also saved money by selling the bonds before the recent hike in interest rates. Combined with the rating, the timing literally saves millions of dollars in debt service costs.

After over a year and a half of site work and construction, our staff and Commissioners are excited to move in! For the first time in our history, we will have the majority of our staff consolidated in one place. Additionally, the Board of Commissioners will now be meeting in the same building that houses the rest of our staff. We trust that you too will enjoy this new, modern, energy-efficient, ergonomically friendly building.

Keep an eye out for information on opportunities to tour the Headquarters Building. We are proud of it and hope you will be too!



## Note to Auburn Water Customers

The last District Newsletter (Jan/Feb) includes an article on the “City of Auburn Utility Tax”. The article indicates that the Auburn tax will have a lesser impact on water rates due to the payment by Auburn of the District’s hydrant charge.

After the Newsletter was prepared, Auburn informed the District that it would not be paying the hydrant charge. In response to this, the Board adopted amended rates for Auburn water customers that includes the full 11.5% tax. Accordingly, the water rates for Auburn customers include the full amount of the tax.



## 2023 Water and Sewer Rate Survey

Included with your bill is the “2023 Water and Sewer Rate Survey”. The survey compares the rates you pay for water and sewer service with the rates paid by the customers of neighboring utilities.

The rates we show in the survey are the rates charged to residential customers inside the City of Federal Way, the largest geographic portion of our service area. Federal Way charges the District an excise tax on water and sewer revenues within the City of 7.75%, which are passed on to customers (note the actual increase in water rates is small due to an offset to the tax provided by Federal Way paying the District’s hydrant charge). The City of Auburn charges an 11.5% tax on water and sewer revenues from customers within Auburn, which are also included in the rates. Water rates for customers outside of Federal Way and Auburn are lower and, except for a relatively small number of District customers within areas that flow to Tacoma and King County for wastewater treatment, sewer rates in other parts of the service area are lower as well.

Most cities impose utility taxes on the water and sewer rates they charge. For any given city in the survey, we are uncertain whether rates shown by the city include those taxes. Additionally, some agencies in the survey charge different summer and winter rates to residential customers. Where that is the case, we show a blended rate to provide the average cost of water over a year.

## Headquarters Project Update

Construction of the new Headquarters Building is finally complete! The Administration staff moved in during the latter part of February and first part of March. Engineering, Development Services and Field staff will be moving once the old Administration Building has been demolished and the parking areas are complete. That move is currently anticipated to occur in May or June. Once the transition is complete, the District will begin offering monthly public tours for those interested in seeing the building. Watch our website for more information.

