



LAKEHAVEN UTILITY DISTRICT

31627 1st Ave. S. | PO Box 4249 | Federal Way, WA 98063-4249
Federal Way: 253-941-1516, Tacoma: 253-927-2922 | www.lakehaven.org

January - February 2014



Washington State DOE Permit Manager, Kevin Leung, presented the 2012 WWTP Outstanding Performance Awards to the District for the Lakota and Redondo plants.

Commissioner's Corner

Don Miller



As we enter 2014, I am pleased to say that we see very positive things ahead of us here at Lakehaven. After a period of prolonged malaise, the economy seems to be growing again. This is best evidenced by the expansion in the housing and commercial sectors, including improvements to the

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Commons and new city center projects that are planned for the upcoming year. Nothing happens overnight, of course, but with good engineering and prudent financial and environmental planning, progress in and around our community is achievable.

We are updating and replacing equipment in the water and sewer utilities to make sure that we have infrastructure that can provide the most reliable service possible. As the nearly twenty five million dollars that we are putting into a water filtration plant for the Second Supply Pipeline reminds us, investment in new facilities can be an expensive proposition that places significant burdens on our financial resources.

Our investment in the Second Supply Pipeline project with Tacoma Water and several other local water agencies is now paying dividends by providing us a high-quality and sustainable long-term source of water. By current estimates, the Second Supply Pipeline, which brings water to us from the headwaters of the Green River, will be a source of clean water to last well beyond the growth in demand projected for the next fifty years. I am proud to say that very few water utilities are fortunate enough to have resource planning objectives met at this level. Having just completed my 30th year on the Board, I have had the pleasure of working on the Second Supply Pipeline project from its infancy in the 1980's to the point where it has been delivering water to a regional customer base for the past ten years. When the filtration plant comes on line, hopefully sometime next year, the water we receive from the Green River will be even cleaner and more reliable than ever.

We are also making sure that, as stewards of a regulated industry, we are keeping current with new rules and directives from the agencies of federal and state government that oversee the water and sewer services we deliver. We hire consultants with experience in the industry to advise us on the “best practices” for management of the utilities as well as on current trends for service, rates and regulatory compliance that help us “stay ahead of the curve”. Because of the attention to detail and the great work of a dedicated staff, the Washington State Department of Ecology just awarded our Redondo and Lakota Wastewater Treatment Plants with a golden and a platinum designation, respectively, for 2012.

Running a water and sewer utility of this size is not all about pipes, pumps and treatment plants. It takes a lot of human resources to make the utilities run smoothly. We employ nearly one hundred staff members who run the utility systems and manage the business operations necessary to keep services we provide to our customers efficient and affordable. With the increasing demand we see for qualified staff in this industry, we encourage anyone with an interest in a career in the water and/or sewer utilities to seek training opportunities, such as community college programs and internships, which are available in the area.

While we have some winter ahead of us, the hope that spring is just around the corner sustains us. For my wife and I, this includes thoughts of preparing our yard and gardens for the summer season. Eating your fresh tomatoes or watching a sunflower follow the sun is part of the fun!

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ONLINE BILL PAYMENTS & PITFALLS

Almost every business offers online bill payment options and this service is no longer for early-adopters, but is now a popular choice for most payments. Lakehaven Utility District has offered this option since 2008 and collects approximately 1/3rd of its payments online. In 2014, the District will be rolling out improvements to its payment site and including new functionality such as email notifications and paperless billing.

Many other online payment options exist, though there are risks for the unwary. As the online payment industry evolves, new companies have appeared that will allow customers to pay their bills online, for a fee. Any bills can be paid this way (i.e. Lakehaven water bill, charge cards, mortgages, or even student loan payments). These online services charge a fee (sometimes surprisingly large), are often unable to send the payment quickly, and have limited numbers of customer service staff (usually in another time zone) to correct any problems.

Our Board continues to regard online payment as a part of its goal to provide the best customer service possible, and provides online bill payment at no additional cost to our customers. Customers can reach the online payment portal through the District website www.lakehaven.org. Customers are advised to take additional caution when interacting with any web payment portal not reached from the original Lakehaven home page, and can call us at (253) 941-1516 with any questions.

MULTI-YEAR RATE PLAN ADOPTED

The Board adopted the recommended multi-year rate plan at the December 12, 2013 meeting. The 2014-2018 rate plan is intended to provide more year-round revenue stability by reducing the impact of the high consumption in the summer months. The plan includes an increasing share of capital asset reinvestment in order to provide for major plant and infrastructure replacement in the next decade. The Board chose to adopt a five year rate plan in order to spread the necessary rate increases out over a longer period and minimize the impact on customers.

Beginning in 2014, water rates will increase by an average of 1.75% per year through 2018. Some customers will experience slightly higher increases, some lower. Sewer rates will similarly increase by an average of 2.75% per year for the same period. In 2014, an average residential customer will see their monthly water charge increase by \$1.12 and their monthly sewer charge increase by \$0.79. The Board recognizes that the economic recovery is far from over and any rate increases will be felt by our customers.

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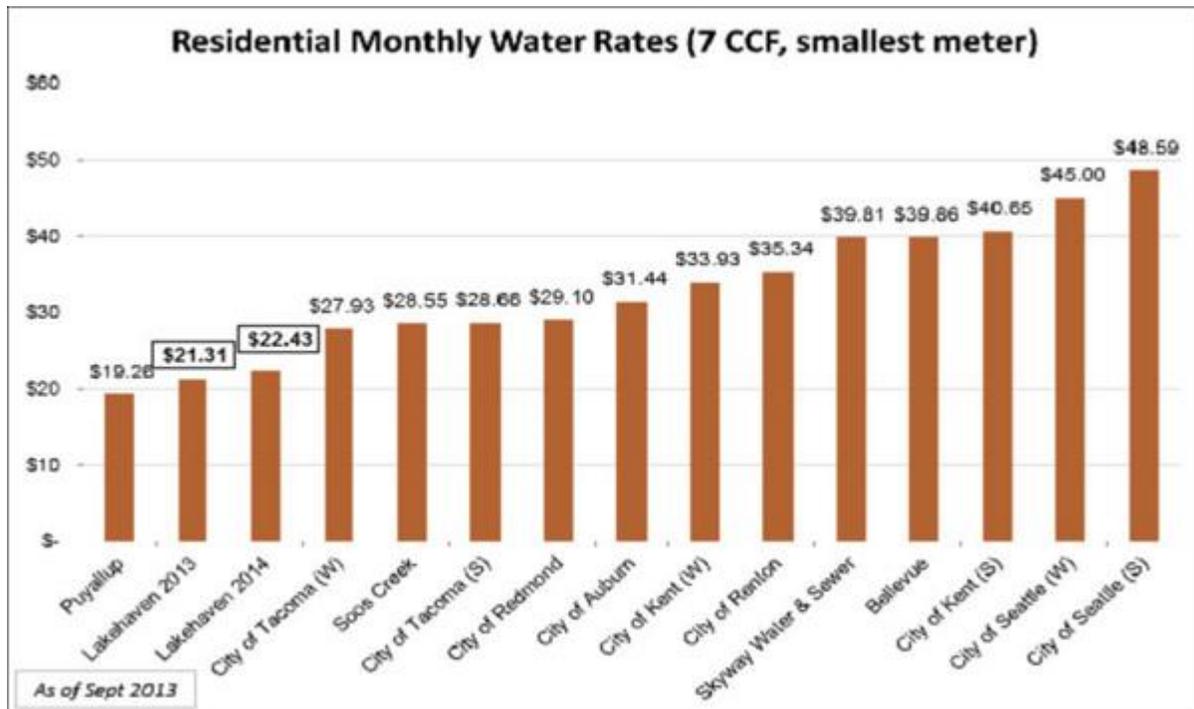
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The Board remains committed to providing the best quality service to District customers at an affordable rate while still planning for future needs. With these adjustments, the District rates continue to be among the lowest in the Puget Sound region.



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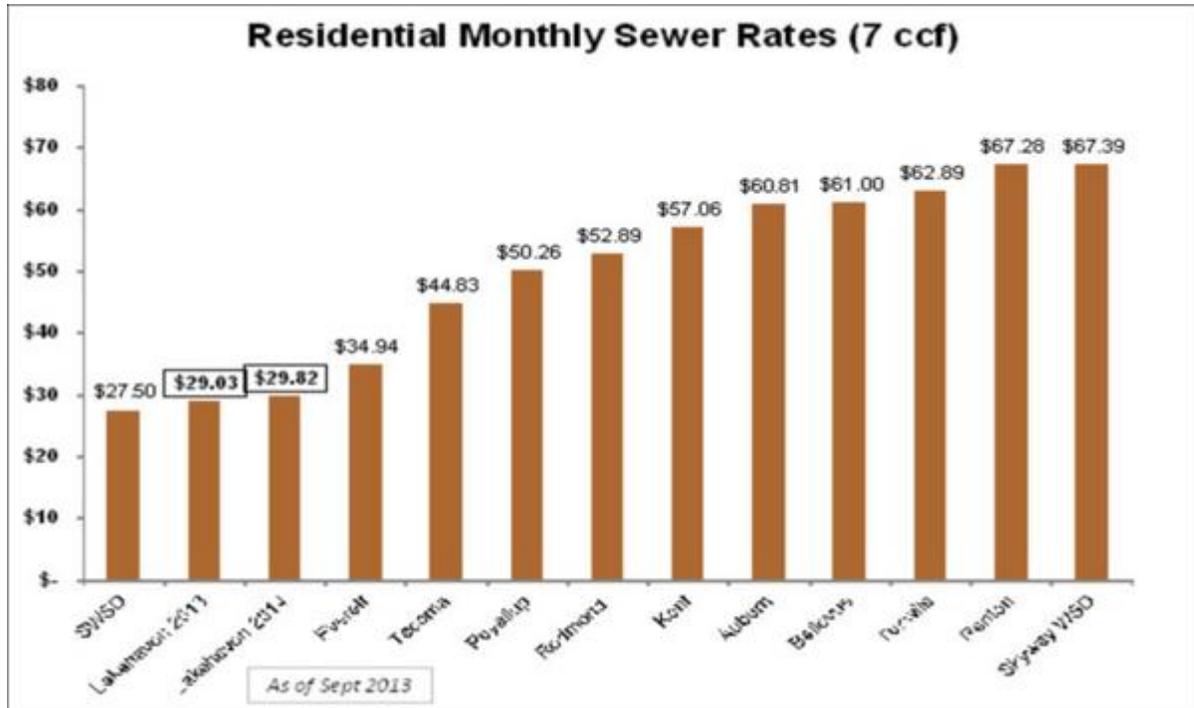
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CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The Customer Assistance Program gives special thanks to all the merchants and employees who donated to the District's annual gift basket auction and raffle for the Multi-Service Center. Donations from Salty's, Les Schwab Tire Co., Black Bear Diner, Chris Leavitt Photography, Marilyn Evans & family, Judy Brooks, LUD employees and Commissioners helped raise \$1,636.00 from this event alone. In addition, over \$4,889.00 was raised in 2013 via employee payroll deductions and \$2,129.00 via customer contributions. All monies raised were donated to the Multi-Service Center to help customers in need pay their water and sewer bills. This totals over \$8,654.00 to help those in need!

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Your Board of Commissioners

Chuck Gibson - President
Tim McClain - Vice President
Don Miller- Secretary
Len Englund - Commissioner
Ron Nowicki - Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.
These meetings are held at the Lakehaven Center at:

Lakehaven Center
31531 First Ave. S.
Federal Way at 6 p.m.

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