



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

November - December 2014

Commissioner's Corner

Len Englund



Lakehaven is staffed by nearly 100 individuals dedicated to providing you the most efficient and reliable water and sewer service possible. Each employee brings unique talents, personalities and work and educational backgrounds to the job every day. You would probably be surprised to know of all the different types of jobs that it takes to run the water and sewer systems and manage the administrative functions necessary to develop and sustain the utility services you receive at your homes and business.

When one thinks of the work at Lakehaven, it is easy to identify the people driving around the area in District vehicles reading meters. You may also notice District crews working at our tank sites or in and around the various roadways to repair and replace underground water and sewer lines. These are examples of just a couple of the activities it takes to provide water and sewer services to nearly 120,000 customers that reside within our service area.

Although you don't typically see them, we also employ professional engineers, engineering technicians, and mapping professionals. They manage infrastructure development and the repair and replacement of components of the systems that require attention. Without them, the water and sewer service would not be nearly as reliable and efficient as it is.

In our main building, we have our purchasing, human resource, finance, legal, computer, customer service and billing professionals. They do the work to manage the business of the District and keep the utility enterprises functioning efficiently. It is a tribute to them that we continue to receive clean audits every year from the Washington State Auditor's Office.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention our water and wastewater field and plant personnel that keep the actual systems that provide the services to you running day and night, or, as some people like to say, "24/7"! They are in the field and at the treatment plants taking care to make sure that the pipes, pumps

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and mechanical processes are functioning as they were intended to. Because of their efforts, you can turn on your tap or flush your toilet with confidence that the water and sewer utility systems you pay for will do their job.

Many of the field and plant employees are certified under programs run by the Departments of Health and Ecology. These staff members attend continuing education classes in order to keep their certificates up to date. Lakehaven routinely provides other educational opportunities for its employees so that everyone is exposed to the latest in technology and remain current on industry best practices. This is not only required by the agencies that regulate our operations, but it also keeps us at the top of our game!

Board members regularly participate in activities of industry associations to further their knowledge of the water and sewer industry and the evolving regulatory landscape. In addition to technical and professional education, all staff and Board members attend diversity training every other year. The Board receives ongoing training on the Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act to help us manage our goal of full transparency in our utility operations and management. The bottom line is that we at Lakehaven are committed to providing you service in a sound and ethical manner and to treating our customers with respect and dignity.

CLEAN AUDITS

The District received a clean audit report from the Office of the State Auditor for the recently completed audit of year 2013. A "clean" audit is one in which no findings are issued and no material misstatements are noted in the District's financial statements. The audit, performed annually by the Auditor's Office, examines the District's financial statements and its compliance with legal regulations that govern the operation of the water and sewer utility. The District takes pride in meeting its financial reporting and legal compliance obligations and the current report continues the District's long record of having no audit findings.

The District was also audited recently by the Washington State Department of Revenue.

The last audit was in 2002. The Department audit focused on excise and B & O taxes paid by the District since 2010. Thanks to the careful work of our Finance Department, we were able to demonstrate that our tax payments complied with prevailing tax regulations during the audit period. The Revenue audit also reviewed the allocation of revenues between the portions of the wastewater system that perform collection and treatment functions. The distinction is critical because the associated revenues are taxed at different rates. With the cooperation of the auditors, we were able to agree on a reasonable allocation between the two wastewater components that ensures that our rates include no more than a fair share of taxes to the state.

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CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Lakehaven Utility District's Customer Assistance Program is helping those customers in our community who find themselves unable to pay their water/ sewer bills. Funding for this program comes from voluntary contributions from our employees, commissioners and from customers wishing to help their neighbors in need. The Multi- Service Center in Federal Way has been administering this program since it started and carefully screens fund recipients to determine eligibility and need. Since 1994 this fund has helped between 35 and 60 families per year.

In 2014, Employee and Commissioner fundraising brought in \$2,565.00! We'd like to thank the generous employees and commissioners who donated to our most recent raffles, as well as the St. Luke's Lutheran Church's Quilting Group, and Judy Brooks for the beautiful quilts and scarves they donated to the auction.

If you would like to make a donation, please contact Customer Services at 253-941-1516. If you are interested in donating to employee raffles, please contact Carrie Peters at 253-946-5423.

RATE UPDATE

As part of the rate program adopted by the Board at the end of 2013, water and sewer rates will be increasing slightly in 2015. The average single-family residential customer using 16 hundred cubic feet of water (approx 12,000 gallons) over a two month billing period will see their water bill go from \$47.80 to \$48.54 for the bi-monthly period. This is an increase of \$.74 cents for two months (or just over 1 ½ %). The same wastewater customer will see their sewer rates go from \$64.64 to \$66.42, an increase of \$1.78 (or slightly over 2 ½ %). Other water and sewer rate classifications will see similar small increases in 2015.

Staff completed its review of street lighting rates and presented its analysis to the Board in November. While it was reported in the last Newsletter that an increase in street light rates was anticipated, it appears that the current rates should be sufficient for the next couple of years. The Board will review these rates again later in 2015 or in 2016.

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KID'S CORNER

Spot The Differences

Look at the two pictures and circle as many differences as you can. There are a total of eight.

Your Board of Commissioners

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