



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 2005

Commissioner's Corner

Tom Jovanovich



With all the news of rising prices grabbing the headlines in the recent past, we hope word has reached you that the Board of Commissioners voted in November to hold 2005 water and sewer rates at 2004 levels (See the article below for more information). This marks the fifth year in a row that the District has been able to avoid a water or sewer rate increase. Even with increases in large expense items over this period, including labor and electricity costs, factors such as a healthy level of reserve funds and another long, dry summer, which increases water usage and, thereby, water revenues, contributed to allow us to hold the line on rates. Eventually, of course, rates will have to increase to keep up with the rising costs of providing these services. However inevitable, we will do our utmost to keep any future increases to an absolute minimum.

There are a number of things you can do at home to take even greater advantage of these low rates. Practicing water conservation all year will help you save on your water bill. This is particularly true in the summer months, when increased irrigation of lawns and planting areas can move water consumption into higher rate categories.

Saving water can also help your sewer bill. As many of you know, the wet weather months of November, December, January and February are used by the District to determine the "wet month average" for water consumption by residential customers. This average is then applied to determine your sewer bill for the entire year. The reason these months are used to measure your sewer bills is that they occur when water usage most closely reflects sewer system use. During these months we are not typically watering lawns and plants, washing our cars as often, or making other uses of water at our homes that drain outside of the sewer system. Uses of water that predominate in the wet months, such as bathing and the washing of clothes and dishes, drain to the sewer. Given this relationship, and lacking an ability to measure sewer flows from individual customers, we believe the wet month average to be the fairest way to measure the demand a residential customer places on the sewer system.

The Board also passed a resolution updating the District's fees and charges in November. These are fees the District collects for water and sewer system infrastructure costs to new customers and for non-recurring services provided beyond the basic service covered by the rates. The increases this year were fairly minimal and largely reflect increases in costs charged to the District by other agencies.

We recently voted to proceed with the purchase and installation of a sludge drying unit at the Lakota Treatment Plant. This unit will utilize unused methane waste gas from the plant digesters to heat and dry sewer sludge recovered from the wastewater treatment process. The heating will eliminate odor and kill any bacteria that may have been present in the raw product. With this process making the sludge safe for garden use, the District plans to join other local wastewater agencies that sell this product as a fertilizer or soil amendment. This alternative method of sludge disposal will also greatly reduce trucking charges and tipping fees we now pay to dispose of the sludge. Even without any money from the sale of the compost, we expect that the project will pay for itself in less than twenty years.

Thanks for your interest and best wishes for 2005!

Leonard D. Englund
Commissioner

Charles I. Gibson
Commissioner

Timothy A. McClain
Commissioner

Donald L.P. Miller
Commissioner

Ronald E. Nowicki
Commissioner



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NO RATE INCREASE FOR 2005

After deliberating for several meetings over the financial condition of the water and sewer utilities, the Board of Commissioners adopted a rate resolution at the November 23rd meeting which will continue 2004 rates in 2005. This continues a trend of holding monthly rates charged to customers for water and sewer service stable during the recent past (the last rate increase was adopted in 1999 for year 2000).

The District water rates are already among the lowest in the state according to surveys published annually by the Association of Washington Cities. Sewer rates are also below the average reported rates, making the combined rates for water and sewer service among the lowest in the region.

The decision not to increase rates was made after presentations from staff showing that the District's financial condition would continue to remain solid without an increase in rates for 2005. Dry weather over the past two summers has caused water usage and corresponding revenues from the sale of water, to remain at high levels. The Board will review rates for 2006 during the fall.

SECOND SUPPLY PROJECT WATER

Construction is nearing completion on the Second Supply Project (SSP) which will bring surface water from the Green River to our service area. Water from the Green River has been used to serve the City of Tacoma since 1913, and now a second pipeline from Tacoma's Green River diversion dam and treatment facility located at the foothills of the Cascade Mountains will divert water through Federal Way and serve our area. Lakehaven, the City of Kent, and Covington District have partnered with the City of Tacoma to finance and use this additional surface water supply source. In the spring of 2005, water from the Green River watershed is expected to be coming in this new pipeline and Lakehaven will begin utilizing this water to relieve demands on local groundwater sources.

Lakehaven Utility District will sample and monitor the water quality on a daily basis from the SSP to ensure that our customers continue to receive the highest quality water from this new source. While the water from the protected Green River watershed meets all state federal water quality standards, there are physical and chemical differences between this surface water and our current groundwater that are likely to be noticeable to customers. These differences include chlorine concentrations, fluoride, taste, odor, color, and temperature.

Due to these variations in surface water supply sources, higher levels of chlorine are needed to maintain water quality standards compared to groundwater. Variations in suspended or dissolved natural organic and inorganic material in the surface water can lead to noticeable changes in taste, odor, and color of the water. Due to these variations, higher levels of chlorine are used to ensure the water is properly disinfected and safe.



Green River Headworks Diversion Dam and Ladder

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Second Supply Project Control Facility.

Turbidity, which can reduce the clarity of the water, is continually monitored at the Green River intake facility for compliance with state drinking water standards. Withdrawals from the river will be discontinued and replaced with groundwater supplies during events that may cause turbidity standards to be exceeded. Withdrawals are also limited to the availability of water from the river. During low river flow conditions, withdrawals from the Green River will also be discontinued. This mixing or changing from surface water to groundwater supplies may be noticeable to customers, but will be done to ensure the safety and continual delivery of water.

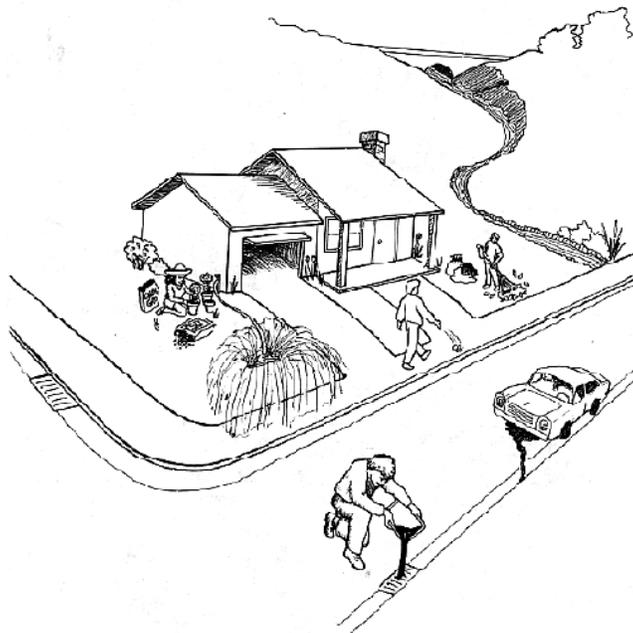
Water from the Second Supply Project will also contain a fluoride additive to meet Tacoma's standard for water delivery. Fluoride added to drinking water is a safe, practical method to reduce dental decay (cavities) and strengthen teeth in young children. You can contact Stan French at the District's office, telephone number 253-946-5410, for more information regarding fluoride or other water quality concerns.

PAYMENT METHODS

Please be aware that water and/or sewer payments made using your bank's online bill paying service take 7–10 days to be received in our office. Payments may also be made by cash, check, Visa, Master Card, or automatic deduction from your checking account. Please call 253-941-1516 or 253-927-2922 for further information.

KIDS CORNER – Water Pollution

The people below are taking care of their home and car, but they are doing many things that can damage the environment, especially our water. Where do you think someone is doing something wrong?



Leonard D. Englund
Commissioner

Charles I. Gibson
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Answers:

- A woman is using a large amount of fertilizer.
- A man is pouring oil into the storm drain.
- A car is leaking oil onto the street.
- A sprinkler is watering the sidewalk.
- Litter can wash into storm drains.
- Compost leaves, don't bag them.
- Eroding stream banks need stabilization.

Your Board of Commissioners

Ed Stewart - President

Beverly J. Tweddle - Vice President

Don Miller - Secretary

Tom Jovanovich - Commissioner

Dick Mayer - Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at:
Lakehaven Center
31531 First Ave. S.
Federal Way at 6 p.m.

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