

The Pipeline



Issue 39

Keeping Lakewood Water District Customers Informed

WINTER, 2005

"SERVING THIS COMMUNITY SINCE 1943"

From Your Commissioners

Dear Lakewood Water District Customer,

Approximately two years ago, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department mandated the fluoridation of public water supplies throughout Pierce County. Your Water District, and specifically your Commissioners, have been working to resolve the issue ever since. Now that the voters have spoken favorably on the issue, we have reached final resolution on fluoridation. We want to review the issue in detail and lay out how we plan to implement the decision of our voters in this edition of "The Pipeline."

From the outset, your District has taken a neutral stance on the issue of fluoride itself while simultaneously opposing the mandate of the Health Department because it violated the legal rights of the District and its ratepayers. As stated in RCW 57.08.012, the Commissioners have the statutory right either to impose fluoridation without a vote or, as we chose, to put the issue to a vote of the District's customers. The mandate of the Health Department resulted in a denial of that right. We felt we would have been derelict in our duty as Commissioners if we had allowed any agency to erode the specific operating authority of the District. We also believed that any issue as controversial as fluoridation of the water supply should be determined by a public vote. Consequently, in order to preserve our customers' right to vote, we challenged the mandate. The Supreme Court of the State upheld our position and struck down the Health Department's mandate. We then followed through on our promise to put the issue to a vote of the District's customers. The voters approved fluoridation of our water, albeit by a very narrow margin. As promised, we will abide by that decision.

The Health Department initially sought to impose a \$250 per day penalty if the District did not obey the mandate and their timetable. One result of the ruling of the Supreme Court was to prevent imposition of that penalty. The Health Department initially also offered funds to partially cover the cost of fluoridation, but that offer came with a threat that we would be denied them if the District did not obey the mandate. For the reasons stated above, we refused to do so. The Court upheld the District's legal right to allow its customers to vote on fluoridation, and our customers have now voted to fluoridate. As of this writing, it is uncertain if partial funding will be offered by the Health Department.

The Commissioners of the District agree with the editorial position of The News Tribune that the Health Department should reward the citizens of the District for voting favorably to implement fluoridation. With their legal right to vote on the issue and the independence and integrity of the District preserved, our customers have chosen to move towards the same goal. Given the vote of our customers, if the Health Department chooses to deny partial funding as a result of our actions, it appears to us it is the Health Department which will be failing to fulfill its stated mission to promote fluoridation.

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Happy New Year

The Commissioners and staff of Lakewood Water District wish you a very joyous and prosperous New Year!

TOUCH READ METER UPGRADE UPDATE

The Lakewood Water District has completed a 3-year project of upgrading all meters to the Sensus Touch-Read Meter System. Presently, 16,000 meters have been changed.

The new touch-read system has proven to be beneficial to the District by providing greater accuracy and efficiency when reading our customers meters.

We would like to say, "Thank you!" to our customers for their patience during any inconveniences this project may have caused while working in your neighborhood.

The District plans to install approximately 400 remote radio readers. These remote radio readers will be installed primarily on busy streets where there is a safety concern for our meter readers.



SEASONAL FLUSHING TO BEGIN IN MARCH



It is the time of year for the Lakewood Water District flushing crew to be out flushing the District's water mains. Flushing is a maintenance task the District takes on every year, beginning the first week of March and continuing through the first week of July. This time of year is chosen because of the warmer temperatures which will prevent frozen roadways when we flush water out onto the streets. This allows for the flushing to be completed before our pumping season peak demands.

Natural mineral deposits of iron and manganese build up around the inside of the 4-inch and larger water mains. There are no health risks associated with these deposits. Annually we flush the system by pulling water from a storage tank or reservoir and proceed from hydrant to hydrant with high-velocity flows of water. This is called high-velocity

flushing. The hydrants are turned on full speed out of the front pumper port. This action causes a scouring of the inside of the water mains.

If you experience **DARK OR CLOUDY WATER**, we suggest that you do not drink the water until it is clear again. You may want to store extra drinking water before this time period, and we recommend you refrain from doing laundry during this time. You may want to use the water only for toilet flushing, lawn watering, etc. If the water remains dark and cloudy, **RUNNING YOUR OUTSIDE FAUCET** for five to ten minutes should clear up this problem.

Flushing occurs between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Be sure to watch for our blue-and-white street notification signs giving you a 48-hour advance notice of the Lakewood Water District's flushing crew coming to your neighborhood.

If you have any questions, please call 588-4423. If you need assistance after hours, please call 588-2296. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

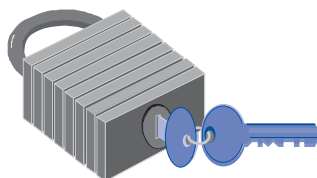
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The initial capital cost of fluoridation will be over \$820,000 and the annual ongoing costs will be in the range of \$140,000. These costs were determined by an independent engineering consultant retained by the District to provide accurate cost information. This information was provided to both proponents and opponents of fluoridation prior to the vote by way of the public disclosure process. Because the Court upheld our independent operating authority, we have been able to adopt a two-year schedule for implementation, rather than the one-year schedule originally mandated by the Board of Health. This will save our customers at least \$200,000 in additional costs to do the same work. As it stands now, we expect to be providing fluoride sometime in 2006.

Your Lakewood Water District is governed by three Commissioners who devote their time and talents as a contribution to the community they serve. Our professional management team and staff are outstanding, devoted to fulfilling the mission of the District, and are extremely sensitive to the needs and concerns of its neighbors. The result is a water district whose rates remain the lowest in the state among its peers and will remain so even after the increase necessary to fund the cost of fluoridation. We are proud of this record and intend to continue our efforts to maintain it.

*Sincerely,
Your Board of Commissioners*

SECURITY UPGRADES



Homeland security is no longer solely law enforcement's responsibility but necessitates a collaborative effort among citizens, corporations, public utilities, and the government. All agencies, from the Federal government on down, are putting extreme emphasis on protecting the public water supply. The District is doing its part in this effort by constantly looking for new effective means of upgrading its security measures at all the District's remote sites as well as the District Office.

A small part of the security upgrades will be the installation of a combination short duration blast horn with an amber strobe light at each facility. Installation should be complete by late February/early March 2005. The purpose of this horn/strobe light is twofold; first, it immediately informs the intruder their presence has been detected, and secondly, it informs the surrounding neighbors that an unauthorized entry has taken place. ***At these times, please call the Lakewood Police Department at (253)798-4721.***

The Federal Bioterrorism Act of 2002 states that tampering with a public water system can result in severe penalties. Upon notice of any tampering or unauthorized intrusion at our sites, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) immediately takes over jurisdiction of the situation. Penalties may be up to 20 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

We appreciate your involvement in keeping our water supply safe and secured.



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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

President: Lawrence Ghilarducci, Jr.
Vice President: William Philip
Secretary: Mark Hullinger
General Manager: Randy Black

The Board of Commissioners meets the 3rd Thurs. of each month at the District office - 3:30 pm.
Public Welcome

