

The Pipeline



Issue 37

Keeping Lakewood Water District Customers Informed

SUMMER, 2004

"SERVING THIS COMMUNITY SINCE 1943"

From Your Commissioners

Dear Lakewood Water District Customer,

As you know, our Lakewood Water District is a "Special Purpose District." We thought you might enjoy knowing—or being reminded of—what makes your District "special."

Water districts are just one of a number of special purpose districts formed under specific statutory authority. Others include ports, public utility (PUDs), school, library, fire, irrigation, lake management, and public facilities districts, to name a few. Among these, water districts are even more "special." Why?

As a special purpose water district, we do not levy taxes on our constituents. Most other special districts rely on property taxes to fund their activities. Water districts must live solely on revenue realized from the sale of water at rates established by them, and they are the only government entities in Washington that do just that. We are able to deliver high-quality, reasonably-priced water services to our owner/customers while maintaining a well-trained staff and efficient facilities...*all on our rates alone.*

Special purpose water districts do have the authority to collect on Utility Local Improvement Districts (ULIDs), and a new district may charge a fee for the building of its initial infrastructure, but assessments for ULIDs and infrastructure are different from taxes. These are lev-

ied for a specific purpose and for a limited time. Once the project has been completed, the assessments stop. Our Lakewood Water District, however, does not collect on ULIDs because it has no need to do so; and, we are not a new district, so there are no initial infrastructure costs to be considered.

Another tax advantage to our customers is that we are not authorized to levy a utility tax as cities are allowed to do. Water district customers do not have to pay taxes on their water just as they do not have to pay taxes on their food. "Local Government that Works—Without Taxes" has become a slogan of special purpose districts.

Our Lakewood Water District, like all special purpose districts, is governed by an elected board of commissioners. Each commissioner must be a resident and registered voter within the district boundaries. We say "our Lakewood Water District" here, because we three Commissioners are residents, registered voters, and rate-payers of the District along with you. We are proud to support the District and serve you, and we look forward to sharing more with you in the days ahead regarding our *special* purpose district.

Sincerely,
Your Board of Commissioners

WATER USAGE CHART ADDED TO BILLINGS

The District has installed and implemented new Utility Billing software. As of May 2004, you will notice a Water Consumptive History chart has been added to your statement. This will enable each customer to compare his/her current water consumption with the previous year's usage. Due to our exceptionally warm spring, water consumption has been higher this year than in previous years. If you have any questions regarding your water usage, please feel free to contact the District Office at 588-4423, and our Customer Service Department will be glad to assist you.



TOUCH-READ METER UPDATE:

Lakewood Water District is continuing to upgrade all water meters in the District to a touch-read meter system. Over 12,000 meter upgrades have been completed thus far. The District plans to complete this project by year-end 2004.

The touch-read crew is currently working in the Interlaaken area and will be moving into the Steilacoom Boulevard area. It may be necessary to shut off your meter for approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the upgrade. Upon arrival at your residence, one of the crew will come to your door to notify you of the upgrade and inform you of any needed meter shut-off. The new touch-read system continues to provide greater meter-reading accuracy and efficiency. We thank you for your cooperation.

LWD EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN:

Lakewood Water District is in the final stages of updating its Emergency Response Plan. Since the horrendous events of September 11, 2001, security and preparedness have become two of the District's highest priorities. In the case of a major occurrence, the District will coordinate its efforts with the Lakewood Fire District, City of Lakewood and all appropriate law enforcement agencies, and Pierce County Emergency Management to ensure the best possible response for the citizens of the District.

Obviously, earthquakes represent the greatest potential for natural disasters in this region. In the case of a major earthquake, the District's first and foremost priority will be its storage facilities and infrastructure. This will necessitate responding to the needs of its individual customers to be a lower priority. Your personal preparation can be very helpful. It is important to know where your water and gas shut-off valves are located and how to turn them on and off. You may want to install a water shut-off valve near your house so you know exactly where it is. If you would like to have more information regarding personal preparation for such an occasion, feel free to call our Emergency Response Plan Coordinator, Dave Hall, at 588-4423.

SEE FLUORIDE REPORT ON WEBSITE

Visit the District's website at www.lakewood-water-dist.org for the latest update on the fluoride issue as well as other District matters and events.

AUTOMATIC BILL PAYMENT:



If you are looking for a convenient way to pay your water bill, the Lakewood Water District is accepting applications for our Automatic Bill Payment Service. If you would like to sign up for the Automatic Bill Payment Service, either contact the District Office at 588-4423 or you can obtain an application form at the Lakewood Water District website, www.lakewood-water-dist.org.

ARE YOU MOVING?

If you are moving and need to close your account or transfer the responsibility for paying the water bill, please contact our Customer Service Department one day prior to your move-out date. This allows the District staff adequate time to schedule the service order, read your meter, and close your account. Your closing bill will be calculated,

applying any applicable water deposit credit, and mailed to your forwarding address within two weeks. *PLEASE NOTE: A new owner or tenant is responsible for contacting our office to set up service and pay a deposit.* Where applicable and possible, this should be done within seven days of closing the old account.

BACKFLOW Q & A

We have received many questions about backflow protection. Here are some of the most commonly asked questions and their answers.

Question: *What is potentially dangerous about an unprotected hose bibb (outside faucet)?*

Answer: Drinking from an unprotected outside faucet is potentially dangerous because hoses are often attached to them, and drinking from a garden hose can be extremely hazardous. Hoses are often left submerged in swimming pools and hot tubs, and chemical sprayers are attached to hoses for weed killing, etc. Also, hoses are often left lying on the ground that may be contaminated by fertilizers, cesspools, and garden chemicals. The purpose of a garden hose and hose bibb is to provide a means for easy outside watering, not drinking.

Question: *What protection is required for a hose bibb?*

Answer: A hose bibb vacuum



breaker should be installed on every hose bibb to isolate garden hose applications, thus protecting the potable water supply from contamination. The exception to this is newer houses that have hose bibbs with built-in protection. These hose bibbs have a small cap on top of them.

Question: *Can a hose bibb vacuum breaker be installed on a frost-free type of hose bibb?*

Answer: Yes, providing the device is equipped with means to permit the line to drain after the hose bibb is turned off. There are two ways to accomplish this: (1) remove the hose bibb vacuum breaker in the colder months or, (2) buy a hose bibb vacuum breaker that can be drained.

Questions or comments can be directed to our Backflow Department at 588-4423 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.



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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 Tues. of each month at the District office - 3:30 pm.
Public Welcome

