

The Pipeline

March/April 2009

8000 NE 52 Court
PO Box 8979
Vancouver, WA 98668

Phone: 360-750-5876
Fax: 360-750-7570

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Friday
8:00 am—5:00 pm
Closed Sat, Sun, &
Holidays

Emergency? Call us
@ 360-750-5876
24 hours per day/
7 days per week

Commissioners:
Neil Kimsey
Denny Kiggins
Norm Harker

General Manager:
John M. Peterson

CRWWD Stats... (Jan 2009)

- Processed 4,719 calls
- Connected approximately 1 home to sewer per day
- 459 injury-free days in the field (since 10/31/07)
- 0 new subdivisions
- 0 new commercial projects

REMEMBER...



Your Toilet is NOT a trash can!

Stimulus Funding Efforts

One of the points in the 2009 Economic Recovery Plan highlights the need to invest in "...environmental protection and other infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits..."

"There's been a great deal of discussion about the stimulus package," Shawn Moore, District Engineer, said. "It appears the state would direct funding to projects that are 'shovel ready' or that could gather bids within 180 days of funding."

According to Moore, the money will be distributed through the state and one of the hopes is that funding for short-term projects will stimulate the long-term economic benefits, including job growth.

Despite the highly competitive nature of the recovery funding, the District submitted a proposal that focuses on wastewater infrastructure projects serving the new urban growth area, which was added in 2007. The District coordinated with its partner agencies in Clark County in developing the list of projects, Moore said.

Although the list of projects is still being evaluated, most are previously "rural" areas with limited or no wastewater infrastructure that will require a significant investment for service, Moore said. If awarded, federal or state stimulus funding would be welcome and utilized to meet the needs of a growing service area.

The District included a unique project on the list, the Septic Elimination Program, because it offers a mixture of short-term construction jobs along with environmental benefits. If funding were available, it could also have the benefit of limiting the financial burden on the participating District customers.

How Do I Pay My Bill?

- ◆ **Online:** www.CRWWD.com
Debit/Credit Card Payments
- ◆ **By Phone:** Call (360) 750-5876 and press "1". Available 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday-Friday, except District holidays
Debit/Credit Card Payments
- ◆ **In Person:** 8000 NE 52 Court, Vancouver, WA. Available 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday-Friday, except District holidays
Cash/Check/Debit/Credit Card Payments
- ◆ **By Mail:** PO Box 8955, Vancouver, WA 98668
Check Payments
- ◆ Payments can be made at any **First Independent Bank** branch office
Cash/Check Payments
- ◆ **Payment Drop Box:** 8000 NE 52 Court, Vancouver, WA
Check Payments
- ◆ **Recurring Payments:** Authorization form found at www.CRWWD.com
Direct Debit from Bank Account

Note: The District accepts Visa or MasterCard credit/debit cards only

Recurring Credit Card Payments Coming Soon

"One of the top requests from our customer survey last year was for recurring credit and debit payments," said Ken Andrews, Finance Director.

Shortly the look and feel of our payment web page will be completely new. The first enhancement District customers will see is the ability to pay their one-time bill directly from their checking or savings account, in addition to their credit or debit card payment ability currently in place. Next, in the second quarter, customers will be able to set up recurring payments from their credit card (Visa or MasterCard), debit card (Visa or MasterCard logo) or from their checking or savings account.

The District is continuing to look for more customer-friendly and green ways to issue bills and receive payments. "We're investigating paperless bills, e-mail bill ready notification and interactive voice response bill pay as potential future enhancements," said Andrews.

Liens Protect Ratepayers

The District is strongly committed to controlling costs we charge to all of our customers. As such, we work hard to ensure past due accounts are handled timely. The District, like most sewer districts in Washington state, uses property liens to assure payment and manage accounts that are past due. Once a property is connected to sewer service, it's permanently connected and the District does not have the ability to turn off the sewer (like other metered utilities such as water or electrical service). By this method, we are attempting to simply limit our regular paying customers from potential rate increases, which can be necessitated if delinquent payments grow.

"Putting a lien on someone's property for not paying for their sewer service sounds harsh," said Ken Andrews, Finance Director. "However, the intent of the lien process is to protect the majority of rate payers who regularly pay for sewer service received."

According to Andrews, liens are simply the result of a multi-step process:

- ◆ When a ratepayer is past due two bill cycles for 120 days of service, the District sends out an "intent to lien" letter notifying the property owner payment is due within 15 days. "Seventy-five percent of those notified pay in time, and we don't ever start the lien filing process," he said.
- ◆ For the smaller percentage still delinquent, a lien is filed to secure the debt owing against the property.

"Bad debts are a potential cost of doing business borne by all ratepayers, and District staff work to minimize this additional operating expense," Andrews noted.

Meet Robin Krause, P.E.



Robin Krause is the District's Capital Program Engineer in charge of the replacement and restoration and capital improvement programs. His job includes planning and implementing the construction projects needed to maintain and expand the sewer system. With the District passing the 50-year mark, infrastructure is of growing importance. Part of what Krause

must do this year is to merge and analyze the engineering and maintenance data about the health of the District's infrastructure. This information is used to generate a prioritized list of projects to be completed over the next several years.

One of the first projects Krause worked on was to pull together a proposal requesting that the state consider the District for some of the stimulus package funding targeting short-term construction jobs for wastewater management infrastructure. "We wanted to get in line for funds by making our needs known," Krause said. "This is an extremely competitive process, and we don't know if we will get funding or, if we're so fortunate, how long it will take to trickle down to our level."

A graduate of Evergreen High School, Krause has spent most of his life in the Vancouver area. He graduated from the University of Portland with a degree in civil engineering in 1995 and worked in both the public and private sectors for 13 years. He worked as a design engineer for several years before joining Clark County Public Works, where he served as Project Manager for the County's 6-year road program. Krause later worked as a construction engineer and, before joining the District, he was a project manager for roads, signals and other projects at Clark County Public Works.

When not planning the capital needs of the District, Krause likes to go camping and motorcycle trail riding with his wife, Charell, and their son and daughter, 12-year old Ryan and 10-year old Jenna. Krause also coaches soccer and is a hobby woodworker.

