

# The Pipeline

May/June 2007

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:

Norm Harker  
Neil Kimsey  
Denny Kiggins

#### Manager:

Bob Bandarra

#### CRWWD Stats... (Jan.- March '07)

- Processed 15,245 calls
- Connected approximately 2 homes to sewer per day
- 90 injury-free days in the field
- 4 new subdivisions
- 4 new commercial projects

#### REMEMBER...



Your toilet is NOT a trash can!

## Medications Contaminating Groundwater

Flushed medications don't just disappear down the drain. They find their way into lakes, streams and rivers. This creates a problem similar to the one hospitals face—microorganisms becoming more resistant to medication and antibiotics.

They can also have a disastrous affect on fish and wildlife. Pills with high amounts of estrogen can cause male fish to start showing female sexual characteristics.

Disposing of outdated medication is a growing environmental and wastewater treatment problem. Increasingly scientists worry about the possible public health implications of pharmaceuticals, including painkillers, tranquilizers, antidepressants, antibiotics, birth control pills, chemotherapy and anti-seizure medications, contaminating our water supply. These drugs find their way into the environment through human and animal waste, and whenever someone flushes medications down the toilet, or tosses them into the garbage.

Flushed medications melt in water, and wastewater treatment plants cannot remove them. In landfills, they dissolve and pass directly into the groundwater. Currently, the long-term human risk of consuming small amounts of pharmaceutically contaminated drinking water is not clear.

However, an article published in the December 2002 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* stated the volume of pharmaceuticals and personal care products released into the environment each year equals the volume of pesticides used.

There are many reasons someone might toss out medications. When relatives or friends die, people don't know what to do with their prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs. Sometimes, they have prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs that are outdated, unwanted or unneeded.

In these cases, help reduce the flow of pharmaceuticals into the environment by using one of the following ways to dispose properly of unwanted drugs:

- ⇒ Carry them to pharmacies that collect unwanted medications
- ⇒ Return them to your doctor and ask that he/she dispose of them
- ⇒ Take them to a sheriff or police department
- ⇒ Drop them off at a named household hazardous waste collection facility

But be aware, not all pharmacies, police and sheriff departments and hazardous waste collectors accept the drugs. For details about disposing of drugs and where to take them in Clark County, go to the County Website (<http://www.co.clark.wa.us/recycle/A-Z/Materials/Pharma.html>).

## Snowbirds Spread Their Tiny Wings...

So goes Anne Murray's song, but the snowbirds that fly away from their winter nests and back to Clark County need to remember to contact the District office to change back to their Vancouver spring/summer home addresses.

Call the Clark Regional Wastewater District office at 750-5876 to make your semi-annual change.

## County Road Projects Impact Budgeting

Four potential Clark County road building projects have Clark Regional Wastewater District juggling funding this summer. The projects are located at NE 88th Street, NE 72nd Ave., St. Johns Road and NE 63rd Street.

Whenever the County builds or restores roads, the District must consider whether it's better to spend money now on sewer collection lines or delay service to the area. While the District pays for trunklines and pump stations, the cost to construct service lines is the responsibility of adjacent parcels.

However, delaying sewer installation pushes sewer availability out for five years, because of the "no cut" policy for 5 years on new County road construction. District Engineer Chuck McDonald said, "this is always a tough decision, and the funding for these projects usually comes out of the repair and restoration budget."

Avoid driving delays at these locations by checking the Clark County Website (<http://www.co.clark.wa.us/public-works/operations/roadoperations.html>).

## Klineline Bridge Restoration

Clark County plans to repair and rebuild Klineline Bridge.

Because it's more efficient and less disruptive to the community to also repair or install sewer lines at the same time, the District has already designed a plan to repair the sewer lines and extend them to support future growth in the area.

The District is finishing the design of its new improvements, so the County can include this work in their road construction project. Construction on the project is scheduled to start in the spring of 2008.

Although this effort is not part of the planned expense for 2007, it will not impact sewer rates. According to Chuck McDonald, District Engineer, the funding will come either out of the capital account or the repair and restoration account.

## Emergency Practice Pays Off With FEMA Windfall

Last May, the Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency (CRESA) staged an emergency readiness exercise around the county. The exercise simulated ash falling from a Mt. St. Helens eruption on the county and involved local law enforcement, the Red Cross, the Clark Regional Wastewater District, as well as other organizations.

But high wind gusts and power outages, not a volcanic eruption, flung the District team into emergency action on December 14 and 15 last year.

"During the power outage, 25 of our pump stations went down," said Hugh Findlay, District Risk Management Administrator. "So we were able to use what we learned during last spring's emergency simulation."

Although there are 55 pumping stations in the District, only about one-third are critical. The District emergency team worked to prevent any spillages that could have been caused by the power outages.

The payoff in working together on a real event was that each group qualified for FEMA funds that covered up to 75 percent of the noninsured losses. For the District that was mostly overtime pay for District Maintenance staff, who kept the pump stations pumping.

According to Findlay, December's windstorm cost the District about \$3,300 mostly in overtime labor, and much of that will be covered by the FEMA reimbursement.

## APWA Accreditation Update

In August 2005, the American Public Works Association (APWA) sent four volunteers to evaluate Clark Regional Wastewater District on District processes from strategic planning to human resource management to fleet management.

The group reviewed all the District's practices and found the District fully compliant with 270 out of 274 practices and substantially compliant with the balance. So the American Public Works Association awarded the District full accreditation.

Now its time to review the District's progress of bringing the substantially compliant practices to fully compliant. These fall in fleet maintenance and involve the District creating policies for maintenance, measuring the effectiveness of maintenance policies and formal evaluation of the agreement between Clark County and the District regarding servicing the District's trucks, vans and dump trucks.