

Connections

January/February 2017



A Look into the District's Annual Budget

The District puts a great deal of effort into financial planning. Planning is important in helping the District manage the annual budget and customer rates. It ensures the District has the resources necessary to provide high service levels while offering some of the lowest rates in Western Washington and Clark County. Careful thought goes into balancing the two major parts of our service – wastewater collection and treatment. For each of these service areas, we must ensure reliable, safe operations, as well as plan for repair and expansion.

Collection System

The collection system connects homes and businesses to the local sewer network and safely conveys wastewater for treatment. Our system includes more than 600 miles of sewer pipes, 60 pump stations and 750 STEP systems. The scale of the system provides efficiencies and helps **maintain low rates for our customers**, but also means something always needs to be done!

At home, **you can help keep the collection system flowing** by not putting food material down the kitchen drain and flushing only tissue and human waste.

Wastewater Treatment

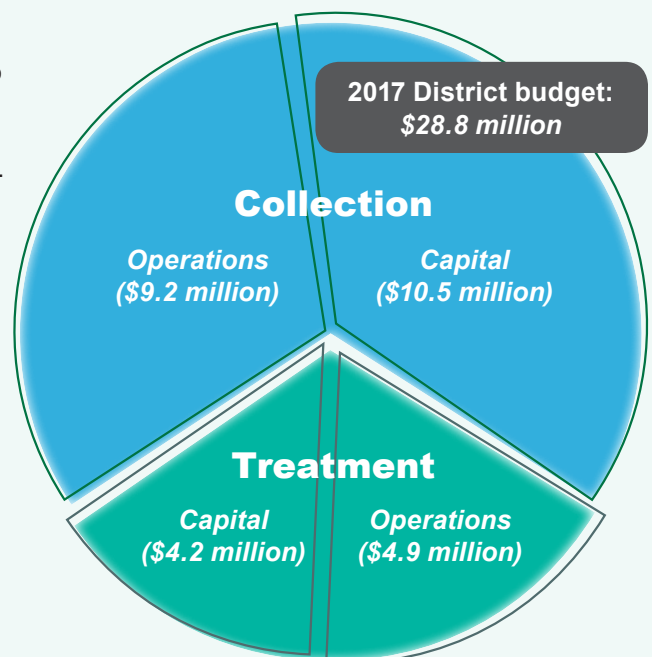
Safely treating wastewater is essential to **protecting public and environmental health**. Each person contributes about 100 gallons to the wastewater system daily, meaning the treatment facility receives and treats about 8 million gallons of wastewater every day! Clean water is safely released into the environment and useful biosolids go to local farms.

The **District works to keep treatment expenses as low as possible** through long-term, cost-sharing partnerships.



Capital Improvements

The District reinvests in the system by restoring and replacing existing infrastructure as needed, as well as **expanding or increasing capacity of the system to support economic development** and population growth.



Operations

Running a successful utility takes a lot of expertise, from customer service to business management to system maintenance. Regular inspections and tracking of system needs help **ensure reliable service** and maximize the life of sewer infrastructure.



Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Closed Weekends
& Holidays

Emergency?

Call 24/7:
360-750-5876

Commissioners

Norm Harker
Neil Kimsey
Denny Kiggins

General Manager

John M. Peterson

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2017 Budget Overview

The District recently adopted a balanced budget totaling \$28.8 million for 2017. Some of the major items included in the 2017 budget are:

- **No rate increase**; base rates will remain the same as 2016.
- System Integration Charge on Ridgefield bills lowers as new homes are built, resulting in slightly **lower rates for Ridgefield customers**.
- **Forecasting increased growth**. The District forecasts similar growth as 2016, which is higher than historic averages.
- \$1.8 million for **reinvestment in the existing system** under the Restoration & Replacement program.
- \$6.8 million for **system expansion** (funded by System Development Charges).

The full budget is posted on the District's website, www.crrwd.com/about/financials.html.

Make a Resolution to Go Paperless!

The District offers many ways to pay your bill, including options for e-bills and electronic payments.

On our website, you can:

- Make a one-time payment online using your credit card.
- Sign up to receive paperless e-bills.
- Set up automatic monthly payments from your checking or savings account.

Links to all of these options are on our home page, www.crrwd.com.

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly: Drain Clog Products

Verdict: Do Not Use Chemical De-Cloggers!

The active ingredient in many commercial drain cleaners is sodium hydroxide, also known as caustic soda or lye, which can burn skin and aggravate breathing passages. These products are made to coat pipes, which means residue stays in pipes (in your house and the larger sewer system) for a long time. Chemicals can react with other substances in the pipes (such as cleaning products) in unexpected and unwanted ways.

What to Do Instead

Maintain your drain – Inexpensive, barbed drain openers quickly and easily pull out hair and other clogging material that gets caught in the p-trap just under the sink. These devices are available at most hardware stores and can be used regularly to keep drains flowing.

Try a homemade natural solution – This recipe will free minor clogs and helps to prevent future clogs. Pour 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain first, then 1/2 cup vinegar. Let it fizz for a few minutes. Then pour down a kettle full of boiling water. Repeat if needed.

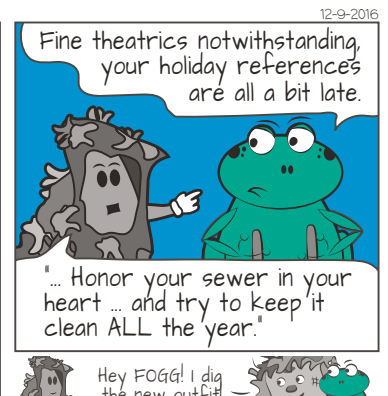
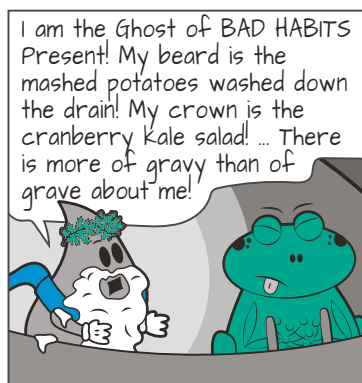
Prevent the clog – Use good disposal practices, such as installing small screens atop drains to keep hair, lint and other clogging elements out of the pipe. Also, keep fats, oils, grease and grit out of the kitchen sink.

Think of the Whole System

Remember, slow drains or clogs could be caused by bigger problems, such as tree roots or a pipe blocked by grease and grit. In these cases, chemical de-cloggers are even more harmful because they get stuck in a concentrated area. If you can't find the problem, call the District to inspect the sewer lateral outside your home. Go online or call (360) 750-5876.



Frog and the F.O.G.G.



12-9-2016