

NEWSLETTER

September 2007

Sewer Rate Study- The recently completed sewer rate study recommended an increase from a monthly fee of \$23 to \$26 and a raise in the dedicated capacity fee from \$15 to \$19. The rate change is a result of increased costs of maintenance and operation of the upgraded wastewater treatment plant. The rate increase as approved by the Board of Commissioners takes effect September 1, 2007.

Treatment Plant Award- The Washington State Department of Ecology has awarded its outstanding wastewater treatment plant performance award for 2006 to the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District. The Regional Director, Grant Pfeiffer, at the regular Commissioner meeting in July, presented the award. The District also received a second award for its innovative solutions in significantly reducing phosphorus discharge to the river. Chief Operator Dan Grogg, Operators Mike West and Darrell Gamble were present to accept the awards.

Spokane River Issues- The District has joined with the City of Spokane, Spokane County, Inland Empire Paper, and Kaiser Aluminum in a joint Management Implementation Plan (MIP) to reduce phosphorus discharges to the Spokane River over a 20-year period. The goal is to meet a phosphorus standard that will be one of the most stringent in the United States at 10 micograms per liter. The plan includes additional treatment plant upgrades using the state-of-the-art technology and reducing phosphorus discharges from non-point sources such as agricultural runoff, erosion control, and public education regarding reducing phosphorus. The Spokane River does not have enough dissolved oxygen (DO) during the months April through October to meet current Water Quality Standards. The best available science shows that the excess phosphorus is the main cause of this problem. Currently there is not well-established technology that can reliably treat a variety of wastewater discharges and achieve river phosphorus levels required to improve DO to meet Water Quality Standards. During the term of this MIP, each discharger to the river will have a permit with prescribed interim limits of phosphorus and other substances. For additional information contact Lee Mellish at 922-9016.

Reclaimed Water Planning- Cleaning up the Spokane River will require making changes in the way we dispose of wastewater. Reusing the water for other uses is being planned. Reclaimed water must meet certain state standards before it can be used in areas open to the public. Future upgrades to the District's wastewater treatment plant will permit reuse in areas such as golf courses, parks, wetlands, freeways, commercial and industrial uses. The term "purple pipe" is used to refer to the transmission of reclaimed water to disposal areas. There are many areas in the United States using reclaimed water for these uses without creating risks to the public. The District has already begun installing future purple pipe conveyances under new roads. Plans are underway to install purple pipe in some new developments. The challenge is to find the locations to use the reclaimed water. The most likely sites are south of the freeway, which means boring under the freeway.

Use Water Wisely- Conserve Water- A United States Geological Survey report in 2004 stated the average daily water consumption in Washington is 114 gallons per person compared to King County at 87 gallons and Spokane County average at 217 gallons. Liberty Lake daily average last year was approximately 235 gallons per person per day. For 2006, the District sold 458,852,140 gallons for residential use; 243,331,538 gallons for commercial use and 256,051,538 for commercial irrigation and multifamily use. Recent results of the Spokane Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer study estimated that the annual consumption per person using water from the aquifer is 89,000 gallons. In comparison, one half the world's population uses less than 25 gallons per person per day or 9125 gallons per year. Why conserve water when we have so much? The aquifer is a finite source. Studies show that we may not be mining the aquifer because it is recharged every year by winter rain/snow and spring runoffs. The problem is that the aquifer provides water to the river, and during late summer, this recharge of the river is becoming less and less. The aquifer drawdown from summer use is over 12 feet annually but will recover to full pool levels by the next spring. What can we do to use less water? Irrigation of lawns is the single largest use of water. Fine tuning the irrigation controls or using moisture sensors can reduce excessive watering. Reducing lawn and replacing with low water consumption plants and landscaping can also have benefits. Lawn watering uses 5 to 10 gallons per minute. Leaky toilets and sinks can also result in significant water loss. A dripping faucet that fills a cup in 10 minutes wastes 3,280 gallons per year. A 1/16" leak the size of a straight pin will waste 35 gallons per hour. The District provides free of charge low flow showerheads, toilet dams and water restrictors. Contact John Yake at 922-5443 ext 27.

Watershed Pledge- For the past year, the District has teamed up with the Washington State Department of Ecology to perform an educational pilot project at Liberty Lake, called "Watershed Pledge". The project is designed to engage residents in changing their behaviors to reflect good water stewardship. Participants are provided information about how they can protect and improve

rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater. The pledge takes residents through a checklist of practices that can be adopted in the home to prevent pollution and allow them to take pride that they are doing their part to protect local rivers and lakes. TAKE THE PLEDGE TODAY! For more information contact Bijay Adams at 922-5443 ext. 30.

Lake Water Quality Monitoring- The District in conjunction with Washington State University conducts ongoing testing and sampling of the lake and its tributaries for nutrients and water quality. This year water quality has been exceptional where clarity reached 7 meters. (Average annual clarity is 3.5 meters) For the past few weeks as the lake elevation has dropped with little or no precipitation, some areas have experienced algae blooms. The algae most seen has been Spirogyra, a green algae.

Eurasian Water milfoil- The District conducts numerous boat and SCUBA dive surveys of the milfoil infestation and maps the locations with a GPS. Surveys this year revealed that the infestation is sparsely scattered about large sections of the shoreline. Herbicide treatment was performed on 13.5 acres of the lake and shoreline. Hand harvesting also occurred in the smaller less dense areas. The herbicide treatment is conducted by a state licensed aquatic weed applicator. The herbicide used is approved by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Prevent the spread of milfoil by checking your boat and trailer for aquatic weeds prior to launching. For additional information contact Bijay Adams at 922-5443 ext. 30.

Fertilizer Give-away Program- Again this year the District teamed up with Greenstone Corporation and the Lands Council to offer free 50 lb bags of phosphorus free fertilizer to residents in the watershed. This is the third year of the program and this year it allowed people signing up for the Watershed Pledge to take advantage of the offer. In total, 168 bags of fertilizer were given away through the two programs. The program is over for this year, but will start up again in the spring of 2008.

Stormwater Treatment-Stormwater treatment has been recognized nationally as a method to protect lakes, surface and groundwater, public and private property from contamination and damage. Cities, towns, Counties and various special purpose districts have adopted rules and regulation controlling stormwater. The District's stormwater resolution requires stormwater protection or treatment for any ground disturbance or new construction. For new construction, an engineered stormwater plan is required before building permits are issued. The District Board of Commissioners is now reviewing a revision to the stormwater policy to consider new technology that may be available to treat stormwater. For additional information contact Lee Mellish at 922-9016.

Attitude and Perceptions Study- The results of the recent community survey conducted by Robinson Research was that the District was perceived overwhelmingly as doing a good to great job. A 400-sample telephone survey was conducted of residents in the District, with 232 living in the City of Liberty Lake. The purpose of the study was to determine how the community perceived the work of the District and determine areas for improvement. Overall satisfaction with the performance of the District was high, with half indicating complete satisfaction and one-third (34%) indicating satisfaction. Only eight customers surveyed indicated dissatisfaction. Nearly all surveyed understood the need to conserve water. Fifty-four percent would be willing to alter their landscape to conserve water with no incentive. Comparatively, sixty-seven percent would alter landscape if offered design and/or financial assistance. Eight-in-ten believed that the quality of the lake affected their property values. Regarding major issues currently facing the community of Liberty Lake, two-thirds mentioned area growth / overpopulation as the key issue. The District's annual beach and leaf cleanup was very popular. Watershed protection was perceived as very important. Two-thirds interviewed believed their water/sewer bills were "about right". Nine in ten supported the idea of irrigating with treated wastewater. Three-in-four reported using phosphorus-free dishwashing detergent. Areas mentioned for improvement were: Keeping the public informed, Better/more communication, Lake and water quality, Improve relationship with city, lower costs to households and billing accuracy. Thanks to all that participated in the survey. The District continues to pride itself in customer service. For additional information contact Tom Agnew, President, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District Board.

Bottled Water vs. Liberty Lake Water- Is there a difference between commercially produced bottled water and water from the tap at Liberty Lake? Yes! Liberty Lake (aquifer) water costs about .14 cents per gallon (1 cent per cubic ft) compared to up to \$10 a gallon for bottled water. Bottled water can cost more than gasoline. We think our water quality is at least equal if not better than most bottled waters. The District is required to sample for bacteria at least 7 times per month. Testing for other elements including radionuclides, volatile organics, synthetic organics and inorganic chemicals are also conducted on established schedules. Bottled water is required to meet federal drinking water standards, but sampling requirements are somewhat different. Public water in Washington is regulated by the State Department of Health. The Federal Drug Administration regulates bottled

water. Liberty Lake is not required to chlorinate its water supply because of the good quality of the water. The only source of water at Liberty Lake is from wells in the aquifer. Depending on the brand of bottled water, the source can vary from springs, wells, or treated surface water. In some cases the source of bottled water is tap water from a public water purveyor. The bottle itself is produced from a petroleum product and eventually becomes garbage. Drink lots of water and if you must use bottled water, try refilling with Liberty Lake water.

Before you blow out your sprinkler system this fall- Once water enters your irrigation system it can become contaminated with lawn chemicals and bacteria. If your irrigation system doesn't have adequate backflow protection, blowing out the system can push this contaminated water back into your home's water supply. All systems that contain pumps or injectors for lawn chemicals are considered a high risk and should be equipped with a Reduced Pressure Backflow Assembly (RPBA). If the system does not have pumps or injectors it is considered a moderate risk and requires a Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA) or a Pressure Breaker Vacuum Assembly (PBVA). However if you plan to use an air compressor on your irrigation system, a PBVA will **not** provide adequate protection. For more information, a list of certified backflow assembly testers, or to learn if your system has backflow protection contact John Yake at 922-5443 ext. 27 or visit these websites: Spokane Regional Cross Connection Control Chapter www.src4.org; Washington State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw>; or Spokane Aquifer Joint Board www.spokaneaquifer.org.

How to Read Your Bill- The District bills in 4 quarterly cycles per year. Each cycle is billed in advance for current charges plus past due balances. Past due bills are charged 10% late charge on previous balance. Monthly sewer rate is \$26 plus tax. Water is \$10.08 plus tax for 240 gallons per day. Water usage in excess of 240 gallons per day is charged at a higher rate. Most residential homes exceed the 240 gallons per day during the summer irrigation season. Some customers have a \$3.15 monthly Water Replacement fee for repayment of the water system purchased in their neighborhood. For more detailed explanation of the bill, go to the District's web site at www.libertylake.org and click on billing and finances.

Water and Sewer Billing Questions? The District is happy to answer questions regarding your water and sewer bill. If you think there is a problem with the billing, please let us know. Don't call the City of Liberty Lake, as they are not in the water or sewer business. Water customers on the Eastside Liberty Lake Improvement Club or Greenridge Water Association should call their respective representatives. For additional information contact the District Accountant Kathy at 922-5443 ext. 25.

Direct Debit Payment Option- A direct debit payment option is available to pay water and sewer bills. After we receive an authorization form and a copy of a canceled check, the amount of the bill will be removed from your account automatically on the date specified. If interested in signing up for direct debit payment contact Kathy at 922-5443 ext 25 or obtain the form on the District web site at www.libertylake.org

Watershed Advisory Committee- The Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District Watershed Advisory Committee meets monthly at the District offices. The watershed committee has been very active in promoting lake, river and aquifer protection. Look for the "Watershed Watch" column twice a month in the *Liberty Lake Splash*. All Liberty Lake residents are welcome to attend. Call Bijay Adams for the next meeting date at 922-5443 ext 30.

Water Meter Care- Winter is just around the corner and protecting the meter from freezing is the customer responsibility. The District has meter blankets available at no cost. Waterproof insulating materials can be used to insulate the meter from freezing. Don't fill meter box with material that will absorb water and freeze. For additional information contact John Yake at 922-5443 ext. 27

Water Meter Access-Meters are read for residential customers only 4 times per year. Customers are required to keep the meter vault clear of obstructions such as shrubbery, debris, machinery, vehicles, etc. Customers with meters in back yards must provide access for meter reading. The District on occasion will trim shrubs to access meters. If the meter reader experiences a problem, a door hanger will be left describing the problem. Your prompt attention is appreciated.

Board of Commissioners- The Board of Commissioners for the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District is comprised of three elected officials. Your three Commissioners are: Tom Agnew, Frank L. Boyle and Steve Skipworth. The Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month at the District Administration offices located at 22510 E. Mission Ave. Liberty Lake, WA 99019.

Fall Reservoir Maintenance- Every fall the District lightly chlorinates the reservoirs to disinfect the system as a preventive measure. In addition, lines are flushed to eliminate stagnant water in dead-end lines.

Phosphorus Free Dishwasher Detergent- Phosphorus is one of the nutrients that cause excessive aquatic growth in lakes and rivers. Dishwasher detergent containing phosphorus contributes 5% to 30% of the phosphorus to treatment plants according to various studies across the country. The reduction of phosphorus to the treatment plant will significantly reduce the amount of phosphorus discharged to the river. Phosphorus free dishwasher detergent can be found at several area grocery stores.

Demonstration Garden- To see examples of low water consuming plants, check out the District demonstration garden at the Administration offices, 22510 E. Mission Ave., Liberty Lake. Also on the web site at www.libertylake.org.

Recycle Hazardous Wastes-Automotive wastes such as used oil and antifreeze must be recycled, not disposed into the sewer, drywells, storm drains, the lake or onto the ground. Disposal of any hazardous waste into the sewer or drywells is illegal and could cause contamination of the lake or aquifer. Please report unauthorized dumping of hazardous materials to the District at 922-5443. The Spokane County Transfer Station at N 3941 Sullivan Rd will accept and recycle these products.

Water Conservation Tips- Washington State University Spokane County Extension Agent provides classes and information on water conservation. For more information call 477-2048. The Washington State Department of Ecology web site has information on water conservation at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/ws/wtrcnsv.html>.

District Web Site- The District's web site (<http://www.libertylake.org>) is a great resource. Currently there are topics with information related to history, district contact information, news and events, conference room scheduling, newsletters, billing and finances, water conservation, treatment plant, customer service, lake protection and reference links. For more information e-mail us at info@libertylake.org.