

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT PIPELINE



VITAL INFORMATION ON SANITARY SERVICE
FOR OUR RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT

SUMMER 2009
ISSUE NUMBER 19

LEAKY LATERALS



“A Potentially Serious Environmental Problem Arises When Laterals Become Leaky”

Unless you've suffered through the distress of seriously clogged drains or a sewage backup into your home, the last thing you probably ever think about is your lateral – the underground pipe in your yard that carries wastewater from your house to the Sanitary District sewer line under the street. Out of sight, out of mind. Please be aware that:

- You own the entire lateral from the house to the point of connection to the Sanitary District sewer, not just to the sidewalk or curb.
- You are responsible for your lateral's maintenance and good working order.

A potentially serious environmental problem arises when laterals become leaky from cracks due to age or encroaching tree roots. In heavy rainstorms, rainwater leaks into the lateral and a high volume of extra water flows into the Sanitary District sewer system.

Multiply one leaky lateral by perhaps thousands, and all that additional water can overwhelm the Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Plant cannot adequately process the dramatically increased wastewater flows. This in turn can lead to fouling of the environment.

If the Sanitary District gets fined for the

violation, who pays? Ultimately, every ratepayer in the District.

Water in the ground leaking into the pipe is defined as infiltration. Rainwater getting into the sewer system up on the surface is called inflow. The latter occurs for example when a resident illegally hooks his roof drain to the sewer or opens a lateral cleanout to re-

Continued on page 4

No Service Rate Increase!

Despite rising expenses, sewer service rates for Ojai Valley Sanitary District customers will remain unchanged for the 2009-2010 fiscal year, announced John K. Correa, P.E., OVSD General Manager.

“Our Board of Directors is a local board looking out for the best interests of our local residents,” said Correa. “In a time of extraordinary economic circumstances and uncertainty, this Board is sensitive to community needs and has done everything it could to keep rates from going up this year.”

To avoid a rate hike, the District is using reserves from its Contingency and Stabilization Fund to partially subsidize rates for the upcoming fiscal year.

Belt-tightening by the District also helped make it possible to avoid a sewer service rate hike. This year, employees are not receiving cost-of-living salary increases. The District is also reducing the costs of post-employment benefits for employees by starting a trust fund for those benefits.

“We’re doing everything we can to run this agency in a fiscally-responsible manner,” said Correa.

Out with the Old

Ventura Avenue Project to Begin Shortly



As part of its continuing commitment to protecting the environment, the Ojai Valley Sanitary District will soon begin work on the \$4.5 million Ventura Avenue Sewer Improvements Project. By replacing aging infrastructure built in the 1960s and realigning sewer pipelines, the project will:

- Prevent future sewage leaks
- Increase efficiency
- Cut operating costs
- Reduce the carbon footprint

The upgrade will include building two new sewer pipelines. One is a gravity line from the Valley Vista tract down to the pumping station on Orchard Drive near Ventura Avenue, south of the Pepsi plant. The other is a nearly two-mile force main through which sewage will be pumped from the pumping station to the OVSD Treatment Plant.

The new pipes will be of heavy duty plastic material, stronger, longer-lasting and much less prone to break and leak than the 1960s-era pipelines they are replacing.

In the process, one existing pumping station (located at the old Petrochem Refinery) will be eliminated, along with the need for the electricity to power it and the costs of maintaining it.

The project will completely rebuild the pumping station on Orchard Drive, installing more energy-efficient pumps and motors.

The construction project is expected to take at least one year, and will proceed in phases. Phase One of the pipeline proj-

ect, awarded to Lash Construction, Inc. of Santa Barbara, started in June. Work on Phase Two of the pipeline project will probably start in August. Construction at the pumping station is expected to begin in October or November.

Financing for the Ventura Avenue Sewer Improvements Project is already in place. The District sold bonds about two years ago to defray the costs.

During work on the project, there will be no interruption of sewer service. Because much of the project is being built in the lightly-traveled Crooked Palm Road, traffic impacts are expected to be relatively minor.

Bad Medicine

For Fish, Frogs & Humans

If you flush unused or expired medications down the toilet, you're in effect flushing them directly into the Ventura River.

That's because the Wastewater Treatment Plant's processes are unable to remove many chemicals present in prescription, over-the-counter, veterinary drugs or personal care products. This is due to the chemical structure and potency of even minuscule amounts of xenobiotic chemicals.

Flow of such chemicals into the river poses a threat to the aquatic environment in several ways, including interfering with growth and reproduction in aquatic organisms. Exposure to hormones such as those present in birth control pills or estrogen replacement products appear to cause sexual anomalies in fish and frogs.

Scientists are also concerned that the presence of medications in surface water bodies may in-

crease bacterial resistance to antibiotics.

To safely dispose of unused or outdated drugs, Ojai Valley Sanitary District officials offer these recommendations:

- Keep the medications in their original containers, scratching your name off to protect your privacy. Bag them, put the bag into a sturdy box and place it into the trash close to the time rubbish is picked up.

- Drop off your unused medications at Help of Ojai's Community Assistance Program (CAP)

office at 212 Fox St., Ojai; telephone (805) 640-3320.

The CAP office accepts medications and contributes them to Doctors Without Borders for use overseas.

• • • • •
For more information visit:
www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org



Illegal Sewer Connections are a Rip-Off!

pass appropriate ordinances and charge the violators.

Illegal sewer connections typically occur when structures on properties – such as garages or pool houses – are converted into separate residences, usually as rental units for additional income.

The property owner pays for only one sewer connection to the main house, when they should also be paying connection and service fees for the second residence.

As the Board moves forward on this issue, District officials are asking the public for their help in getting all properties to pay their fair share. If you are aware of any situations that should be checked, you may contact the Ojai Valley Sanitary District office anonymously at (805) 646-5548.

A number of illegal, bootlegged sewer connections in the Ojai Valley are increasing the sewer service rates paid by everyone served by the Ojai Valley Sanitary District. The many law-abiding ratepayers are unknowingly subsidizing those who are not paying their fair share.

Enough is enough. The OVSD Board of Directors has established a committee to develop policies and procedures to address the situation. The Board is legally empowered to



DID YOU KNOW...

that the Ojai Valley Sanitary District has approximately 120 miles of sewer pipeline between the east end of the Ojai Valley and Shell Road at Highway 33? OVSD crews regularly clean and inspect the pipeline, doing the preventive maintenance necessary to vastly reduce the risk of sewage spills into the environment.

Sheets, OVSD Operations Superintendent.

The stakes are high, because congealed grease can clog sewer pipes, causing sewage spills into the environment and increasing costs to the ratepayers.

Between last December and March, an inspector visited all 60 restaurants and food service companies — ranging from fast food outlets to gourmet eateries — that discharge wastewater into the OVSD sewer system.

“The restaurants are doing a better job of keeping their laterals clean, and we expect that will translate into improved conditions in our sewer system,” said Sheets.

The OVSD contracts with the Ventura Regional Sanitation District to provide inspections. On each visit to restaurants, the inspector checks hauling records of the establishments that use a



Improper disposal of commercial fats, oils, and grease can cause sewage spills into the environment, and increased costs to ratepayers.

commercial hauler to take away the grease. If the restaurant has a grease trap, the inspector checks to make sure it is being used within proper operating standards. The inspector also educates restaurant management and personnel in best management practices in grease removal and wiping down all pots and pans thoroughly with paper towels before washing them.

When warranted, the inspector will make follow-up visits to restaurants to ensure compliance.

With regular inspections continuing, Sheets expects that restaurants’ grease-handling practices will continue to improve. “We’re getting increased awareness and cooperation from the restaurants,” he said. “But prevention is an ongoing job.”

The Ojai Valley Sanitary District FOG program – aimed at stopping discharges of commercial fats, oils and grease (FOG) into the sewer system – is making progress, reports Ron

PIPELINE

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

1072 TICO ROAD, OJAI, CA 93023

WWW.OJAISAN.ORG

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GEORGE GALAGAS, DIVISION 1

RANDY BURG, DIVISION 2

PETE KAISER, DIVISION 3

JACK CURTIS, DIVISION 4

RUSS BAGGERLY, DIVISION 5

STAN GREENE, DIVISION 6

WILLIAM E. LOTTIS, DIVISION 7

GENERAL MANAGER

JOHN K. CORREA



Recycled Paper, Soy Based Inks

Stopping the Stop-Up...

Chances are you're unaware of it. But if your lateral clogs up, you'll be the first to know. Simple preventive maintenance can go a long way toward reducing the risk of clogs in your lateral, or worse, a backup of sewage into your home. As an example, grease congeals and hardens in the lateral and may cause blockages.

- Keep fats/oils/grease (FOG) out of your drains. Pour off grease from pans into a disposable container and deposit it into the trash.
- Wipe down all pans and utensils thoroughly with paper towels before washing them and place the towels into your garbage receptacle.

Also, be aware that the roots of trees and shrubs commonly grow into sewer laterals, particularly at the joints, and can cause major blockages. Avoid planting trees and shrubs directly above the lateral.

Leaky Laterals

Continued from page 1

duce standing water. (Remember: in California, unlike back east, sewer systems and storm drains are separate entities, and the sanitary sewer system is not designed to handle storm water.)

Regardless of the source, infiltration or inflow, the effect is the same: potential harm to the environment.

Over the last two decades, the Ojai Valley Sanitary District has aggressively

repaired and replaced sewer pipes in its system to reduce leaks and infiltration.

The District maintains a preventive maintenance schedule that routinely and consistently cleans the system. So now, in heavy rainstorms, it's becoming clear that the remaining primary source of excess wastewater flow is leaky residential laterals.

But which ones and where? The District has invested in new technology to monitor

wastewater flow in its system. Portable flow meters can be moved around the collection system to identify areas of excess flow. Narrowing down the problem area will eventually enable the District, using video inspection, to locate the laterals that are leaking and discuss the problem with the homeowners.

Leaky laterals are most likely in high groundwater areas and older residential areas.

EMERGENCY ALERTS

In case of fire, flood or other natural disasters or emergencies, tune your radio to 1610 AM.

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN!

Green up your lawn and shrubs and strengthen the plant growth in your garden this summer with nitrogen-rich compost from the Ojai Valley Sanitary District.

Composted biosolids are available to the public for unrestricted use as a soil amendment at no cost. The OVSD compost meets the Environmental Protection Agency's "Class A Exceptional Quality" standards for biosolids. Bring your own container or fill a truckload at the District's wastewater treatment plant located at 6363 North Ventura Avenue.

Supplies are limited. To ensure availability, which is highest in summer through late fall, call:

(805) 646-5548