



OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

PIPELINE

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Kids & Adults Agree *Treatment Plant Tours* are a Big Hit

"Wow... I never thought I would actually like this place!"

"It was cool!"

"I'm going to tell my parents how awesome it was!"

Those are typical reactions from kids who take guided tours of the Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant. The tours are also a hit with adults, who find them interesting and informative.

The hour-and-a-half educational experience offers an inside look at the roles the Treatment Plant plays in protecting human health and the environment.

"I enjoy seeing the excitement and genuine interest the kids and adults have in learning how wastewater is treated," says Bradshaw Pruitt, Treatment Plant Supervisor, who frequently conducts tours. "I also enjoy the opportunity to explain the many things we do to ensure good water quality prior to putting the water back into the environment."

Pruitt says he has received positive feedback from teachers who bring their students for tours.

One such educator is Ryan Lang, the sixth grade earth science and math teacher at Ojai Valley School, who is currently in his fourth year of accompanying his students on field trips to the Plant.

"The Plant tour is a 10 out of 10 as an educational experience," says Lang. "Bradshaw



is great with the students and really thorough. One of the greatest discovery moments for the kids is learning that all our wastewater heads to the Plant, that it's such a very clean and well-run machine. The fact that micro-organisms are responsible for transforming wastewater back into a reusable resource is by far the most amazing thing for these kids to see."

Tours are offered throughout the year for various adult groups and for students from third grade on up to Ventura Community College environmental studies classes. Guides adapt the way they explain the treatment process to the age level of the group. The maximum number per tour group is 25 persons, but more than one group can be accommodated at the same time.

To arrange a tour, please call the Ojai Valley Sanitary District main number, 646-5548, and ask for Bradshaw Pruitt. 🌱

NEXT YEAR:
No Rate Hike!

Despite inflation, the Ojai Valley Sanitary District will not be increasing the sewer service rates for the fourth year in a row.

The Ojai Valley Sanitary District has taken cost saving steps to ensure that the rates can be held at the current level. Rates have remained unchanged since the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

OVSD's ability to hold rates down is attributable to a combination of factors, said General Manager Jeff Palmer. "We're always looking for ways to make the most efficient use of our resources," he said. "Over the past few years, we've reduced our use of electricity at the Treatment Plant by 20 percent. We recently approved the purchase of an upgraded, more efficient UV (ultraviolet) system and air compressor. We're in the process of refurbishing all our site lighting for additional energy savings." Palmer also credits the District Board of Directors for finding ways to keep rates down and making it as easy as possible for ratepayers in tough economic times. The Board also carefully monitors a structured investment policy, as they plan for the future needs of the District.

What's good for ratepayers is also good for the environment, District officials point out. Examples: The reduction in energy use that helps keep rates down is also reducing the Treatment Plant's carbon footprint. The use of UV (especially the Plant's upgraded ultraviolet) for disinfection is more environmentally friendly than using chlorine, avoiding the risks of discharging that chemical into the Ventura River. 🌱

Working Together

To Protect Our Environment

Ojai Valley Sanitary District officials and employees consider the ratepaying users of the system to be their partners in protecting the local environment.

The District's responsibilities include keeping the collection system's 120 miles of trunk and main sewer pipelines in good repair, operating the Wastewater Treatment Plant efficiently, staying on top of environmental regulations and scientific innovations, and working proactively to prevent mishaps.

OVSD officials and staff can't do all this alone. They need the help of their partners—the public—you. There is nothing difficult or complicated or time-consuming, just develop the habit of using the system in an environmentally responsible way.

That's in everybody's best interest. It not only protects the environment, it helps keep sewer service rates as low as possible. Here are three simple ways you can help.



Dispose of Unused Medications Safely

Locally, 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 OVSD Wastewater Treatment Plant has no magic filter. The Plant's processes are unable to remove many chemicals present in prescription, over-the-counter, veterinary drugs or personal care products.

These chemicals pose a threat to the aquatic environment in several ways—to fish, frogs, birds and other organisms—and ultimately to our drinking water.

To safely dispose of unused drugs, OVSD officials recommend availing yourself of the community drug take-back program. Deliver the medications to the pharmaceutical disposal box in the lobby of the Ojai Police Department (402 S. Ventura St., near City Hall), Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Before placing them in the disposal box, please remove the medications from their original containers and put them into zip plastic bags. Or, keep the medications in their original containers, scratching your name off to protect your privacy. Bag them, put the bag into a box and place into the trash close to the time the rubbish is picked up. For more information on medication disposal call the County of Ventura Pollution Prevention Center at (805) 658-4323.



Keep Fats, Oils and Grease Out of Your Drains

Grease congeals and hardens in your lateral

(the underground pipe in your yard that carries wastewater from your house to the Sanitary District sewer line under the street). The congealing grease can cause blockages in your lateral and sometimes, sewage backups into your home. Accumulated grease can also result in blockages and possible sewage spills along main sewer pipelines.

To avoid a major mess, pour off grease from pans into a disposable container and deposit it into the trash.

Wipe down all greasy pots, pans and utensils thoroughly with paper towels before washing them and place the towels into your garbage receptacle.

Also, avoid planting trees and shrubs directly above the lateral. Roots commonly grow into sewer laterals, particularly at the joints, and can cause major blockages.



Place All Used Wipes Into the Trash

Contrary to manufacturer's labeling of "Flushable," flushing these wipes down the toilet can clog up your lateral or our sanitary sewer system pumps, causing costly breakdowns or even possible sewage spills into the environment. The problem with some, if not all, "flushable" wipes is they do not break down and disintegrate in water as claimed. In other words, they are not biodegradable and they are not "flushable."

Know What a Triple-Whammy is?

That's when grease in the lateral balls up with a "flushable" wipe and hooks up to roots in the line. That's like putting a giant cork into the pipe. It's a sewage backup just waiting to happen. 🦋

UNPERMITTED CONNECTION ORDINANCE

Restoring Fairness

The ongoing implementation of the OVSD ordinance targeting unpermitted (bootlegged and illegal) sewer connections is proving highly successful, report District officials.

"This is a fairness issue," said OVSD General Manager Jeff Palmer. "When an illegal connection exists, that property owner is not paying for the service, and is being subsidized by all the other ratepayers in the

District. Our purpose with this ordinance and its enforcement is to make sure that everyone is treated the same and that everyone pays their fair share."

The District has already chalked up significant progress toward that goal. Through April of 2012, OVSD has identified 191 parcels as having possible unpermitted connections. Of these, 174 have been resolved. Seventeen are still in process. As a solution, several units removed food preparation areas and several paid their outstanding sewer connection fees.

"The others were determined to be in compliance at the time of a site visit or there had been an error based on the information transferred at the time of the merger of the Ventura, Ojai, Oak View and Meiners

Welcome Jeff Palmer

New OVSD General Manager



When Jeff Palmer was applying for the General Manager position at the Ojai Valley Sanitary District, he saw the job as a perfect fit for him professionally, and as an opportunity to serve his community. He was also mightily impressed by OVSD personnel.

Now after eight months on the job, he says his initial impressions have been confirmed.

"It has been extremely rewarding to work and interact with such a great staff and

Bringing that community sensibility to his job, he sees the relationship between the Sanitary District and the people it serves as a partnership.

Board," he says. "They are truly committed and proud of the work they all do. The Collection System and Treatment Plant staff all work hard to maintain a clean and professional Plant and operations area. The teamwork I see here is gratifying. The 'Small Plant of the Year Award' we received recently reflects that teamwork."

Jeff and his wife, Lindy, and their five children put down roots in the Ojai Valley five years ago. The whole family loves the area and participates in much of what the Valley has to offer, including sports, outdoor recreation and community events. An active member of the Ojai Valley Lions Club, Jeff frequently volunteers his time and skills for numerous local causes.

Bringing that community sensibility to his job, he sees the relationship between the Sanitary District and the people it serves as a partnership.

"Providing sanitary sewer service requires that we meet and work together with a wide range of people in the community," he says. "We have ongoing relationships with homeowners, businesses, contractors, local community groups, schools and the city and county. We pride ourselves on being good listeners, and we work to keep in touch

with them."

The mission of the OVSD, described as "stewards of the environment," is very much in synch with the environmental consciousness of most Valley residents, Jeff believes.

Jeff says his main challenges as General Manager—and those of the entire OVSD team—are to continue providing high quality service as economically as possible while meeting increasing environmental regulations. "These are challenges that we are going to tackle, and we're proud of our achieve-

ments so far."

Jeff Palmer earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, and is a Registered Professional Engineer. He has lived in Ventura County for more than 20 years, beginning his engineering career at the City of Santa Paula in the late 1980s. His experience includes design, development and implementation of capital improvement programs; as well as public agency and private projects in the areas of water, wastewater, transportation and development.

We're Here to Help

Do you have questions or concerns about your sanitary sewer service?

Please speak to our Ojai Valley Sanitary District Customer Service Representative, Laurie Johnson, or email her at laurie.johnson@ojaisan.org.

OVSD provides speakers for community organizations. Learn more about how your Sanitary District protects the local environment and public health.

Just call: (805) 646-5548

Oaks Sanitary Districts into the Ojai Valley Sanitary District," said OVSD Customer Service Representative Laurie Johnson. "So we were able to update our records."

Enforcement Period is Ongoing

The ordinance allowed for a year-long amnesty beginning on July 1, 2010. During that period, property owners with an unpermitted connection could avoid paying past sewer service fees and penalties if they came forward to correct the situation.

As of July 1, 2011, the program's enforcement period began. It is ongoing.

Last year, compliance with the ordinance got easier for property owners with unpermitted sewer connections. The OVSD

Board of Directors approved deferred payment plans for the connection fee (capacity-related charges), usually amounting to about \$16,000. (Essentially all District ratepayers are now eligible for financing of the connection fee when hooking up to the Ojai Valley sewer system.)

Customers may finance the connection fee for a period of five years at zero percent interest; for ten years at 5 percent interest; or for 15 years at 7 percent interest. Payments are made annually on the property tax bill.

The deferred payment option is available to finance the connection fees only. Penalties and past sewer service fees owed by property owners who did not take advantage of the amnesty cannot be financed on the deferred payment program. To read

the complete ordinance, go to the District's website at www.ojaisan.org.

If you're interested in determining if you have an unpermitted connection, legalizing a unpermitted sewer connection or need additional information about disconnecting an unpermitted sewer connection, please call Laurie Johnson at the District office, (805)646-5548.

PIPELINE

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

1072 TICO ROAD, OJAI, CA 93023

WWW.OJAISAN.ORG

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FEMA-Funded Pipeline Project Will Help Protect the Local Environment

A new project demonstrating Ojai Valley Sanitary District's proactive approach to protecting the local environment will get under way soon.

With majority funding from a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant, the Ojai TrunkSewer Relocation Mitigation Project will replace and relocate a section of vulnerable underground sewer pipeline along San Antonio Creek near Creek Road and Encino Drive. The underground sewer line will be realigned away from San Antonio Creek, using horizontal directional drilling.

The project is a form of environmental insurance policy, said Jeff Palmer, OVSD General Manager. "Right now, our sewer line goes along the edge of the creek," he observed. "We'll be relocating an 800-foot section of the line away from the creek, so if there's a future flood along Creek Road, our sewer line at this location won't be at risk. This significantly reduces the chance of a sewage spill in the area."

Engineering design has been completed by Phoenix Engineering, and the project is now out to bid to contractors, with a construction start date set for late August. The FEMA grant will finance more than \$900,000 of the estimated \$1.2 million total cost of the project, which equates to a big cost savings to the District. The FEMA grant requires that this project be completed by 2014.

During construction of the new sewer line segments, the current pipelines will remain in use, allowing for uninterrupted wastewater treatment. ♻️



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Keep up to date with what's happening in the District.



Get the latest information on your sanitary service.



Nutrient-rich, Class A composted biosolids are available at NO COST from the Ojai Valley Sanitary District.

Pick up a bag, or a truckload, of this highly beneficial soil amendment at the District's wastewater treatment plant located at 6363 North Ventura Avenue.

Call (805) 646-5548 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to ensure availability.