

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT PIPELINE



VITAL INFORMATION ON SANITARY SERVICE
FOR OUR RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT

SPRING 2007
ISSUE NUMBER 17

Focus on the Future



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that sewage spills are a serious problem nationwide. The untreated sewage from these overflows can contaminate our waters, cause property damage from backups into homes and businesses and threaten public health.

Communities across the nation are experiencing an increasing number of sinkholes caused by deteriorating underground sewer pipes.

Here in the Ojai Valley, the Sanitary District is planning ahead to reduce the risk of such catastrophes occurring locally. In collaboration with a consulting firm, Ojai Valley Sanitary District officials have developed a Capital Improvement



Plan for rehabilitation of the District's wastewater collection system. Some sewer pipes and pump stations are 50 years old or more and must be extensively repaired or replaced to ensure reliable operation in coming years.

GETTING OUR HOUSE IN ORDER

"We're getting our house in order for the future," said John Correa, P.E., OVSD General Manager. "We operate proactively because we don't want to wait for something to go wrong. We don't have some regulatory agency forcing us to be proactive. We're taking responsibility and doing

what should be done now in order to protect our environment, which is our most important job."

The Sanitary District hired a consulting firm to help develop the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The goal of the recently completed CIP is to provide reasonable estimates and predictions of the timing and cost of capital investments over the next 25 years based on the best information currently available. Using this information, the District can

Continued on page 3



TARGETING ILLEGAL SEWER CONNECTIONS



Confidential phone calls from Ojai Valley Sanitary District customers have helped the District identify several illegal sewer connections throughout the Ojai Valley. The calls came in to the District office from people who had read about illegal connections – and their District-wide negative impact – in the last issue of *Pipeline*.

Those property owners throughout the Ojai Valley who have “bootlegged” illegal sewer connections are not paying their fair share. Because owners of these properties are not paying for the connections, the rest of the Ojai Valley Sanitary District ratepayers are unknowingly subsidizing them. Illegal connections contribute to increasing everyone’s rates.

The problem typically arises when structures at the rear of properties, such as garages or pool houses, are converted into separate residences, usually as rental units for added income. In these cases, property owners pay for only one sewer connection to their main house.

District officials remain concerned about this issue and ask for the public’s continuing help. **If you are aware of any situations that should be checked, please contact us anonymously at (805) 646-5548.**

Safety Superstars

For the last two years, Ojai Valley Sanitary District employees recorded zero lost-time accidents at work. The California Sanitation Risk Management Authority (CSRMA) recognized the achievement by awarding OVSD staff members the Safety Superstars Award.



Way to go OVSD employees!



See You Later, Alligator

You don’t have to be concerned that an alligator will crawl out of your toilet any time soon. Ever since a full-grown gator was dragged out of a New York sewer in 1935, the rumor mill has been in overdrive. Supposedly, alligators get flushed down toilets as babies, then they grow into the rapacious reptiles that many of us fear and loathe, lurking in the nation’s underground sewer lines. This is one of the most familiar urban legends on record, according to Jan Harold Brunvand, who specializes in debunking such fables.

Focus on the Future

Continued from page 1

can ensure that financial and funding plans are in place to meet future collection system capital needs. The CIP is designed as a "living document" that can be updated on a regular basis as technology, financial considerations and regulatory requirements change.

The CIP calls for spending approximately \$10 million over the next ten years. Part of the funds will come from reserves saved up over the years by the District and designated for rehabilitation of the collection system. The remainder must be borrowed.

District officials expect to begin the highest priority collection system rehabilitation measures soon, and complete them in about three years, because costs are going up. Industry-wide, sewer line construction costs are rising 4 to 5 percent a year.

To help build up reserve funds for collection system rehabilitation and repair in the more distant future, District officials project rate increases in coming years. The increase for 2008 is expected to be between 13 and 14 percent.

WHAT THE DISTRICT IS DOING TO KEEP RATES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE

The Capital Improvement Plan for the collection system - and a similar CIP for the Wastewater Treatment Plant completed last year - are examples of how the District is working to assure its continuing capability to protect the environment, while maintaining its own financial stability.

Proactive financial management also seeks to keep rates as low as possible, consistent with the District's mission. Specific measures include:

• Year-to-Year Fiscal Management

The District prepares and follows an annual budget based on all relevant data, including the Capital Improvement Plans.

• Improving Investment Strategies

Last year, the District removed its reserve funds from county and state treasuries and hired a private investment brokerage to manage the funds, with an eye to improving OVSD's return on its investments. "We're following all the laws and rules and we're doing everything possible to get the best yield we can for the benefit of our District and its financial health today and in the future," said General Manager Correa.

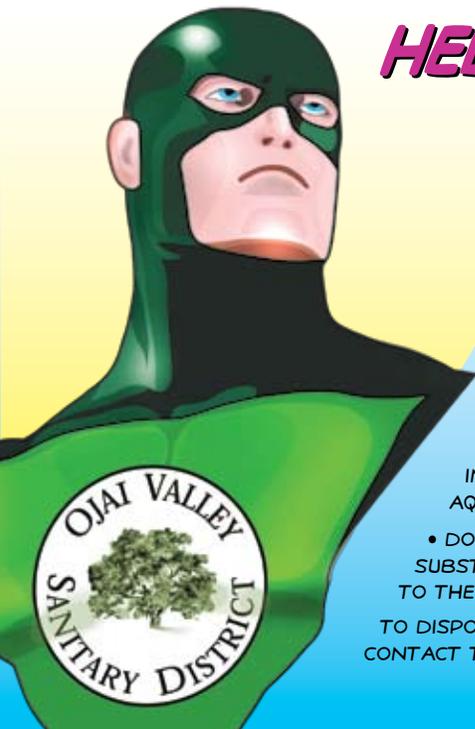


• Soliciting State and Federal Grants

Last year, the District received emergency grants in the amount of \$4.7 million to fund cleanup and replacement of a storm-damaged sewer line. FEMA covered approximately three-quarters of the cost, with the state picking up most of the other quarter. The District also routinely applies for state and federal grants on a preventive basis, to repair and upgrade elements of the system before crises occur, reducing the risk of environmental damage. Every grant dollar is one less dollar the District has to spend of its own funds for such improvements.

"The rates are where they are because of necessary improvements completed in the past," said Correa. "We are an environmentally sensitive community. We discharge into an environmentally sensitive waterway, the Ventura River, which has a number of endangered species. We also function in an increasingly stringent regulatory climate."

Correa also pointed out that unlike many sanitary sewer districts where large-scale residential development occurs regularly and more customers are coming on line all the time to spread out the costs, the Ojai Valley is relatively static. There is little population growth locally, so current ratepayers share the increased expenses of operating the Sanitary District.



HELP PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

• KEEP GREASE OUT OF YOUR DRAINS. GREASE THREATENS THE SYSTEM WE ALL DEPEND ON. IT CAN CLOG THE SEWER LINE ON YOUR PROPERTY. THIS RESULTS IN SEWAGE BACKUPS AND COSTLY PLUMBING BILLS. POUR COOKING GREASE AND OIL INTO A CAN AND DISPOSE OF IT IN THE TRASH. WIPE DOWN POTS AND PANS THOROUGHLY BEFORE WASHING THEM.

• PREVENT RAINWATER FROM ENTERING THE SEWER LINE. RAINWATER BELONGS IN THE STORM DRAIN. SOMETIMES RESIDENTS ARE UNAWARE THAT ROOF DRAINS HAVE BEEN PIPED ILLEGALLY INTO THE SEWER LINE BY PREVIOUS OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY. DO NOT OPEN CLEAN-OUT CAPS TO DRAIN OFF RAINWATER. RAINWATER CAN OVERWHELM THE SYSTEM AND RESULT IN SEWAGE SPILLS.

• DO NOT PUT PHARMACEUTICALS OR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS INTO THE SEWER SYSTEM. THE SEWAGE TREATMENT PROCESS DOES NOT REMOVE MANY OF THE CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS FROM THESE PRODUCTS. FLUSHING THEM DOWN THE TOILET IS EQUIVALENT TO FLUSHING THEM INTO THE VENTURA RIVER. THESE CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON THE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT.

• DO NOT POUR UNUSED CLEANING PRODUCTS, SOLVENTS, INSECTICIDES, FERTILIZERS OR OTHER SUCH SUBSTANCES INTO THE DRAIN OR FLUSH THEM. THE CHEMICALS IN THESE PRODUCTS ARE HAZARDOUS TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

TO DISPOSE OF UNUSED CLEANING PRODUCTS, PHARMACEUTICALS OR OTHER HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES, CONTACT THE COUNTY OF VENTURA POLLUTION PREVENTION CENTER AT (805) 658-4323.

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Make it Flourish with Free Nitrogen-Rich Compost!

Composted biosolids are available to the public for unrestricted use as a soil amendment at no cost.



Apply the nitrogen-rich compost available free from the Ojai Valley Sanitary District; then stand back and watch your plants grow.

A number of experienced local gardeners who use the compost as a mulch and soil amendment report strong new plant growth and a profusion of blooms, fruits and vegetables.

The compost material is 50% biosolids from the wastewater treatment process and 50% horse bedding from local stables. The materials are combined and composted at the OVSD Wastewater Treatment Plant. Regular testing assures that 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



PIPELINE

OJAI VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT
1072 TICO ROAD, OJAI, CA 93023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WILLIAM M. STONE, DIVISION 1
RANDY BURG, DIVISION 2
PETE KAISER, DIVISION 3
JACK CURTIS, DIVISION 4, CHAIRMAN
RUSS BAGGERLY, DIVISION 5
STAN GREENE, DIVISION 6
WILLIAM E. LOTTS, DIVISION 7

GENERAL MANAGER

JOHN K. CORREA

 Recycled Paper, Organic Inks