



Summer 2013

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*Regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners are held the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 7:00 p.m.*

*Public comment is always welcome.*

Commissioners:  
Joan Caine Thomas McGrath  
Mike Johnson Thomas Rainville

General Manager:  
Jim Voetberg

Editor/Designer:  
Lisa Wolfson

## District Welcomes New General Manager

Jim Voetberg started with the District on June 5. He brought with him 25 years of management experience. He most recently held the position of City Manager of Newport, Oregon. In addition to other typical city functions, he operated a water and wastewater system similar in size to MWWD. He saw the District's General Manager position advertised on the League of Oregon Cities website and thought it would be a good fit for his management experience, professional engineer training, and municipal/local government background. The MWWD Board of Commissioners thought so too – and they passed a motion to extend an employment offer to Jim at their April 30 special meeting. More than 20 individuals applied for the position.

Jim knows he has some pretty big shoes to fill. Dan Hammer had been with the District for 43 years, 39 of those years as General Manager. Jim says Dan had set high standards for the condition of the District's systems and being mindful of how to serve the District's customers. Jim hopes to continue those high standards, and continue building on the District's successes. One way he plans to do this is with the use of updated

technology. He is excited about the recent upgrades to the District's SCADA system that will provide more information to the operators and help make the system more efficient.



Jim Voetberg came on board on June 5, 2013.

He is open to questioning how things work and he welcomes ideas that may improve existing systems. "There's always a way to do things better," says Jim.

Jim has spent his first couple weeks meeting staff, consultants, and local officials, and touring the District's facilities, reservoirs, lift and pump stations, and the Big Gulch Wastewater Treatment Facility. He met some customers at a recent Mukilteo City Council meeting and he is looking forward to meeting more as he makes Snohomish County his new home.

## Employee Spotlight: Al Bahl

In June, the Northwest and Puget Sound Sections of the Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association (PNCWA) held a quarterly meeting at the Brightwater Treatment Facility in Woodinville, WA. One of the topics presented focused on the microbiology of wastewater treatment. Al Bahl, MWWD's very own Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, led the class and analyzed the different plant conditions (via microscopic evaluation) on a large screen.

Gil Bridges, Big Gulch Wastewater Treatment Facility Manager, says Al is very knowledgeable about microbiology. "He has a true interest and love for it ... and he loves to teach." Every year engineering students from Seattle University come to our treatment plant for a tour and a brief microbiology class from Al. His knowledge and passion really come through in the Microbiology of Wastewater Treatment article on Page 2.



## The Microbiology of Wastewater Treatment

*Author: Al Bahl, Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator*

Wastewater is reduced to a clean product for discharge to the environment by a biological process using the microorganisms already found in natural systems (streams and lakes, etc.). When operating properly, a treatment plant can accept, adapt and absorb an astonishing amount of influent (sewage). However, it is not just water in and water out. Adjustments must be made periodically to keep the efficiency of treatment at a high level. One method of determining how well a process is running is through the use of a microscope to directly observe the type of bacteria that are growing in the system. Certain bacteria and protozoans (single celled animals) grow in different conditions.

At the Brightwater meeting, several treatment plants from the Puget Sound area brought in samples of their activated sludge (microorganisms) to be examined with a microscope in a classroom setting.

Treatment plants typically have different operating conditions during the year and it is good to look at and see what the conditions are using the microscope.



This method helped to show the audience how they can adjust their process control (growing the right organisms) to effectively discharge higher quality water (effluent) to the environment.

## Much Requested Online and Telephone Bill Payment Options Now Available

*Author: Liz Greene, Receptionist*

After many months of planning and working out a few bugs, MWWD is proud to announce the recent addition of both online and telephonic payment acceptance. Visa, MasterCard, Discover credit cards, and electronic checks (e-checks) are accepted forms of payment. A distinct advantage to this system is that it's accessible 24/7, wherever you can access a phone or the internet. You need only to know your Customer Number and have your payment information at hand. The system will confirm the amount you wish to pay as well as the service address.

Online payments are made through the portal on our website. Simply click on the link under the "Helpful Links" column on the right-hand side and follow the prompts.

Telephone payments are made by either calling (425) 493-4329 or toll free at (866) 552-0043. You will be asked for your Customer Number, and to confirm the service address and amount that you are paying.

The fee for either method of payment is a \$1 processing fee; credit cards are also charged 3% of the payment amount.

Other forms of payment, such as our drop-off box, in-person payments at our office, and the paperless doxo system, are still accepted. Please note that we cannot, however, accept credit or debit cards over the counter.

If you have any questions about these new forms of payment, call us Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and we'll be happy to assist you.

## Education Corner



Wastewater treatment? What's that? Kids ages 9-12 can learn about wastewater treatment. Feel free to pick up a free Information & Activities Book from our office.

What is the largest water user inside your home?

- A. Old toilet
- B. Leaky faucet
- C. Old clothes washer



(Answer at bottom of page)

A. Toilets are by far the main source of water use in the home, accounting for nearly 30 percent of an average home's indoor water consumption. Older, inefficient toilets that use as much as 6 gallons per flush also happen to be a major source of wasted water in many homes. (Information from www.epa.gov)