

THE PIPELINE

News From Your Ross Valley Sanitary District



INSIDE THE PIPELINE

50,157 Lft. ↑

That's the additional amount of pipe that RVSD maintenance crews cleaned last year thanks to new operational efficiencies. A total of 774,581 lineal feet were cleaned in FY 2009-10 compared to 824,738 feet in FY 2010-11.

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KENTFIELD PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

The replacement of the Kentfield Force Main, which serves 60% of District customers, is nearly complete. The new pipeline should be operational by mid-October.

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NEW ROBOTIC INSPECTION SYSTEM TO LOWER COSTS

A new state-of-the-art robotic closed circuit TV system will prove to be a valuable tool in lowering costs, increasing efficiency, and avoiding spills.

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CHIEF OF OPERATIONS TAKES ON CRITICAL SYSTEM CHALLENGES

While much of the public's attention is focused on new capital improvement projects, RVSD's Chief of Operations faces the daunting task of maintaining critical pipes as they wait for replacement.

Approved 2011-12 Budget Impacts Capital Improvements, Staff Hours and More

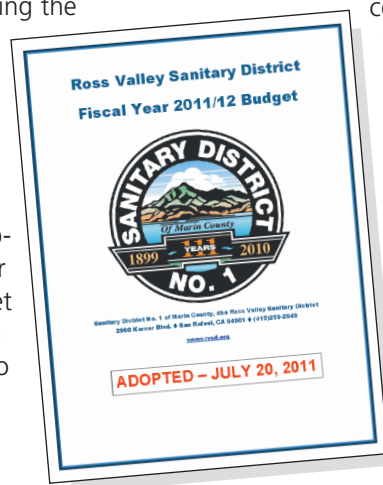
Caught between a desire to satisfy ratepayer demand for affordable and equitable sewer rates while addressing the State's strict requirements to avoid sewer spills, RVSD's Board of Directors approved its 2011-12 fiscal year budget along with the corresponding rates to be charged customers.

The Board responded to public concern by both cutting over \$7 million from an initial budget that would have doubled much needed capital improvements to the District's aging pipes and agreeing to study a flow-based rate system.

Additional cuts were achieved by furloughing non-field staff two days a

month, reducing money for emergency repairs, and slashing the District's very successful Lateral Replacement Grant Program.

"The rate compromise (\$638 for Ross Valley and \$864 for Larkspur), was a result of customer feedback," said Brett Richards, RVSD General Manager. "Unfortunately these lower rates do not address my long-held concern that we need significant funding to fix our aging sewer pipes before they fail."



For budget details visit rvsd.org, select "About Us," then "Financial Information."

Repairing Aging Sewers Not a Choice! Water Boards Enforce Mandate with Fines

State and Regional water boards are making it very clear to communities across California that putting off fixing aging sewer pipes will have serious financial consequences. While economic times are tough for everybody, the State does not appear to be cutting sewer agencies any slack when it comes to enforcing its very powerful Wastewater Discharge Requirements (WDRs).

Fines for sewer spills are now the norm and while these fines seem counterproductive (they take away money that could be used for repairing pipes), our community must recognize that they are a reality. It's in everyone's best interest to do the one thing that can help us avoid fines: fix our aging sewer pipes.

Perhaps a good way to understand our situation is to point out that if potholes in our roads don't get fixed, we are not going

to get fined by the State. On the other hand, if we have sewer spills, we can face thousands, if not millions, of dollars in fines that are ultimately paid by ratepayers.

The State is telling us that we cannot put off what is necessary to avoid spills.

The WDRs require every sewer agency to develop a Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP) and to report all sewer spills to an online database. In addition, they make it clear that sanitary districts must allocate adequate resources for operations, maintenance and repairs by establishing a proper rate structure, accounting mechanisms, and audited procedures to ensure an adequate

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Chief of Operations Brings Extensive Knowledge to Address District's Daunting Challenges

Given the critical condition of most of the community's aging sewer pipes, John Clark's responsibility to keep RVSD's collection system operating efficiently might be viewed as a Sisyphean endeavor!

Fortunately, Clark who signed on as the District's Chief of Operations some 16 months ago, doesn't view his job as an insurmountable task (or punishment by a Greek God). In fact, Clark has made significant headway thanks to his extensive industry knowledge.



Clark reviews detailed reporting on system performance at Pump Station 15.

Despite a perfect storm of unanticipated spill events and the juggling of his maintenance staff to run a successful Pipe Bursting pilot program, Clark and his team have managed to increase year-over-year productivity. In addition, Clark has raised the bar for his maintenance

and operations crews by improving training, data collection and reporting standards.

"I share the credit for these improvements with the employees who have joined me in stepping up their games to make some good things happen," says Clark. "These days it is not unusual to see our guys show up for work early and start talking shop before hitting the pipes. They're motivated."

Clark has set himself far apart from his fellow water professionals by earning the highest certifications in two different water industry specialties. He holds top certifications for wastewater treatment operations, collection systems operations, and professional level certifications for both water treatment and water distribution systems.

Clark's wastewater treatment expertise, which is as high or higher than anyone's in the county, was responsible for discovering that San Quentin was due a rate reduction.

"Shortly after I joined RVSD, I began reviewing everything I could find about our system and its customers," says Clark. "In looking over the data for San Quentin that was provided by our treatment plant, Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA), I noticed some troubling inconsistencies."

Clark decided to begin independent testing of the "strength factor" of the wastewater at San Quentin. This factor

impacts the amount paid for sewage treatment. The results showed that the prison's strength factor was less than indicated by CMSA's data and the state

Clark has the highest certifications in two water industry specialties!

deserved a reduction in sewer fees. "Every customer of the District

must be treated fairly," says Clark. "This discovery will save the prison a substantial amount of money."

While Clark is proud of his team and their accomplishments, he is very concerned about the future of the District's collection system.

"We are doing everything we can to buy time for our aging system, but each year more and more pipe will reach a catastrophic stage and be prone to failure," says Clark. "Big spills will be unavoidable unless the community provides the financial resources to get more pipe replaced, and do it sooner than later."



Contacts

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Pat Guasco

San Anselmo Resident

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Fairfax Resident

Website: www.rvsd.org

The Ross Valley Sanitary District Work Schedule		
Project	Completed Work Locations	Scheduled Work Locations
Pipe Bursting (pipe replacement)	San Francisco Blvd., San Anselmo	Los Angeles Blvd., San Anselmo
Line Maintenance - North of SFD Includes clearing pipes of roots and other debris by rodding and flushing mains, inspecting manholes, and making minor repairs.	January: Larkspur, Heather Gardens, Greenbrae February: Kentfield, Larkspur March: Kentfield, Fairfax April/May/June: Fairfax July: San Anselmo	August: San Anselmo September: San Anselmo October: San Anselmo-Downtown November: Ross December: Ross
Line Maintenance - South of SFD Includes clearing pipes of roots and other debris by rodding and flushing mains, inspecting manholes, and making minor repairs.	April: San Anselmo May: San Anselmo June: San Anselmo July: Sleepy Hollow	August: Sleepy Hollow, San Anselmo September: San Anselmo October/November/December: Fairfax

District to Continue Testing for Human Bacteria in Ross Valley Creeks

The RVSD Board of Directors has approved the continuation of its Healthy Waterways Study, which began in 2009 to monitor the presence of bacterial contamination in the Ross Valley watershed.

The latest tests, which were performed by West Yost Associates, concluded that the seasons play a role in the presence of harmful bacteria in our creeks.

The "dry season" testing indicated that the creeks in the watershed are not consistently contaminated with bacteria of human origin. The "wet season" report showed that a majority of samples tested positive for human Bacteroides.

"The testing is important to help establish long-term trends in the health of the watershed," says Sandy Guldman, President of Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed.

She believes seasonal differences are

likely related to two sources. First, the high water table during the winter provides a pathway for leaks from public and private sewer pipes to reach the creeks. Second, surface contamination is washed into the creeks through storm drains.

Guldman points out that while drawing conclusions about sources from water quality testing results is challenging, we can use the data to assess the impact of repairs to public and private sewer pipes.

"Tests for *E.coli* quantify the contamination in the creeks and Bacteroides testing helps us determine if bacteria are from humans, wildlife or pets," she says.

Protecting our watershed requires the participation of the entire community. Given our aging system, leaks in public and private sewer pipes are contributing to bacteria in the watershed. If we want clean water, both pipes must be fixed.

New Robotic Closed Circuit TV System Increases Efficiencies and Savings!

The District has just taken delivery of a state-of-the-art closed circuit television (CCTV) system that will dramatically increase the efficiency of our operations and save the District literally hundreds of thousands of dollars when compared to hiring an outside contractor to perform our CCTV work!

As you might imagine, one of the greatest challenges we face is to accurately assess the condition of miles of aging pipes, especially when there is a problem causing a backup or spill.

Our new cutting-edge technology uses a television camera mounted on a robotic device that is placed directly into the sewer through a manhole. The operator has full control of the device as it moves through the pipe recording video information and logging its exact position.

Data from ongoing surveys of our collection system plus images from capital

improvement projects will create valuable institutional memory that will be used to plan and prioritize our repairs and maintenance schedules.

The cost of using an outside contractor for our CCTV work has averaged \$12,000 a mile.



In our first year, if we include the purchase price of the equipment, start-up costs, and fully-weighted employee costs, our in-house program will cost \$8,600 per mile.

We plan to survey approximately 50 miles of pipe each year until our system is fully mapped, so for the next four years a minimum of \$430,000 per year will be saved.

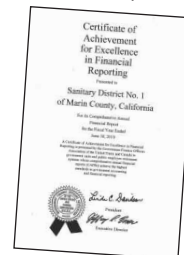
In an emergency, the system provides us with more safety and savings as it can

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MORE NEWS!

Award of Excellence for Financial Reporting

For the second year in a row, RVSD has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association.



The award recognizes organizations that produce and submit a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for review. The CAFR is considered to be the accounting standard for financial transparency and full disclosure. For more information, see our press release at rvsd.org.

Treatment Plant Rates

Your sewer fee that appears on property tax bills actually funds two separate organizations: RVSD, which provides sewer pipe maintenance and sewage collection, and Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA), which provides sewage treatment. The community's costs for treatment, which are not subject to public hearing when initiated, will be just over \$6.8 million for 2011-12, which translates to about \$249 for most District customers.

Customer Pipe Repair Grants Available, But Hurry!

If you suspect your private sewer pipe that runs from your property to the public sewer system is damaged, you should contact us soon.

The District's popular Lateral Replacement Grant Program, which pays for up to one half of your pipe replacement costs, has been cut in half in the District's fiscal year 2011-12 budget. (See Approved Budget article on page 1).

The program represents a very progressive method of dealing with the large number of private pipes that are leaking sewage into the environment and causing spills during storm events.

For information on qualifying for a grant, please visit rvsd.org or contact the District office.



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Repairing Pipes from page 1

nisms, and audited procedures to ensure an adequate measure of revenues and expenditures. In other words, the State is telling us that we cannot put off doing what is necessary to avoid spills.

It is important for our community to understand that behind the fines associated with the WDRs and spills is the State's commitment to enforce the Federal Clean Water Act, which protects human health and environment.

Repairing our aging sewer infrastructure is not going to be cheap, but it simply must be done. Your District is looking at all options to get the most from your existing sewer rates, but we need your understanding and help funding this vital service. Please visit rvsd.org to learn more about your district and/or attend a monthly Board of Directors' meeting.

(Provide link to RWQCB document - post on rvsd.org or direct to .gov site?)

Kentfield Project Nears Completion

One of the most important capital improvement projects in the District's history is projected to be operational by mid-October with only the site restoration needed before the area is re-opened to the public.

The 'once in a generation' project, which replaces a defective force main serving 60% of the District's customers, presented the District with some unusual challenges that included protecting an endangered species and

addressing the existing pipe that began catastrophically failing during its replacement.

The new pipeline will actually consist of two parallel pipes that will significantly increase capacity and safety should one pipe need repair in the future.

The popular bike and walking path will be resurfaced and upgraded, which

will add to the community benefits of the capital project. For project updates visit rvsd.org.



Contractor Maggiora & Ghilotti "turned the corner" on the project in mid-September.

CCTV from page 3

In an emergency, the system provides us with more safety and savings as it can be deployed to quickly identify the seriousness of a problem and its precise location. This enables us to avoid unneces-

sary, costly and time-consuming excavations and to strategically address problems.

The CCTV system will also be a great tool for quality controlling our in-house work and outside contractor projects. Feel free to watch a little TV with us when you see our new van in your neighborhood.