

The Lens

Issue Number 13 Fall 2005

Montara Water and Sanitary District

PUBLIC WORKS PLAN PHASE 1 SUBMITTED TO COASTAL COMMISSION

In the two years the District has been operating the system, we have made a number of improvements, and several of the bigger items are now ready for permitting. Several of these require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as a necessary step in obtaining approvals, and the District has prepared an EIR which includes the following improvements:

- New well at the 11-acre parcel owned by the District at the end of Alta Vista Road
- A 1 million gallon water storage tank on the Alta Vista site
- Replacement of the School House Water Tank (100,000 gallons) with a 200,000 gallon tank
- A centralized water treatment system at the Half Moon Bay Airport for all three wells

These are major, and we estimate it may take the California Coastal Commission up to a year to review the project and issue a Coastal Development Permit (CDP). Copies of the EIR will be available at the District office.

We are hoping to begin construction of the new well next summer. If this well performs as we hope, it will make up much of the deficit of water supply for existing customers, but will not be sufficient to remove the moratorium.

The District is drilling some additional test wells on District property in hopes of identifying additional water sources that will allow us to eventually remove the moratorium. However, this will require a separate project and a separate EIR and may take several years to complete the review

WATER RATES

Two years ago the District started looking carefully at how best to structure water rates to encourage conservation and better represent the cost of production and water supply. We worked closely with our economist, and presented and discussed his findings at our spring water workshop and several subsequent public meetings.

In July, the District enacted a two-tier rate structure for water, with approximately 75% of our customers in the first tier, and 25% in the second tier.

The first tier applies to consumption through 19 HCF (hundred cubic feet) of metered water used. The new quantity rate for the first tier increased 5% over the old quantity rate.

The second tier, for those who use more than 19 HCF of metered water in a two-month billing period, is set at a higher rate.

The District has not had a general rate increase since at least 1997, thanks in large part to the work of the District at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to address concerns of the people of this district every time the water company asked for an increase. This year's increase will allow us to cover operational costs plus set up a modest reserve for much needed capital improvements of about \$200,000 per year

FIRE INSURANCE RATINGS

Every ten years or so, the insurance industry, through a organization known as the Insurance Service Office (ISO), rates all fire departments and water systems and assigns an overall rating upon which fire insurance rates are based. In 1996 this area

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received a Class 5 rating.

The District has been reviewing this evaluation to determine what might be done to the water system in advance of the inspection in December 2005 to improve the rating.

To help improve the rating, the Board recently approved the accelerated replacement of older fire hydrants that the fire department considers obsolete. There are eleven such hydrants that will be replaced at an estimated cost of \$37,000.

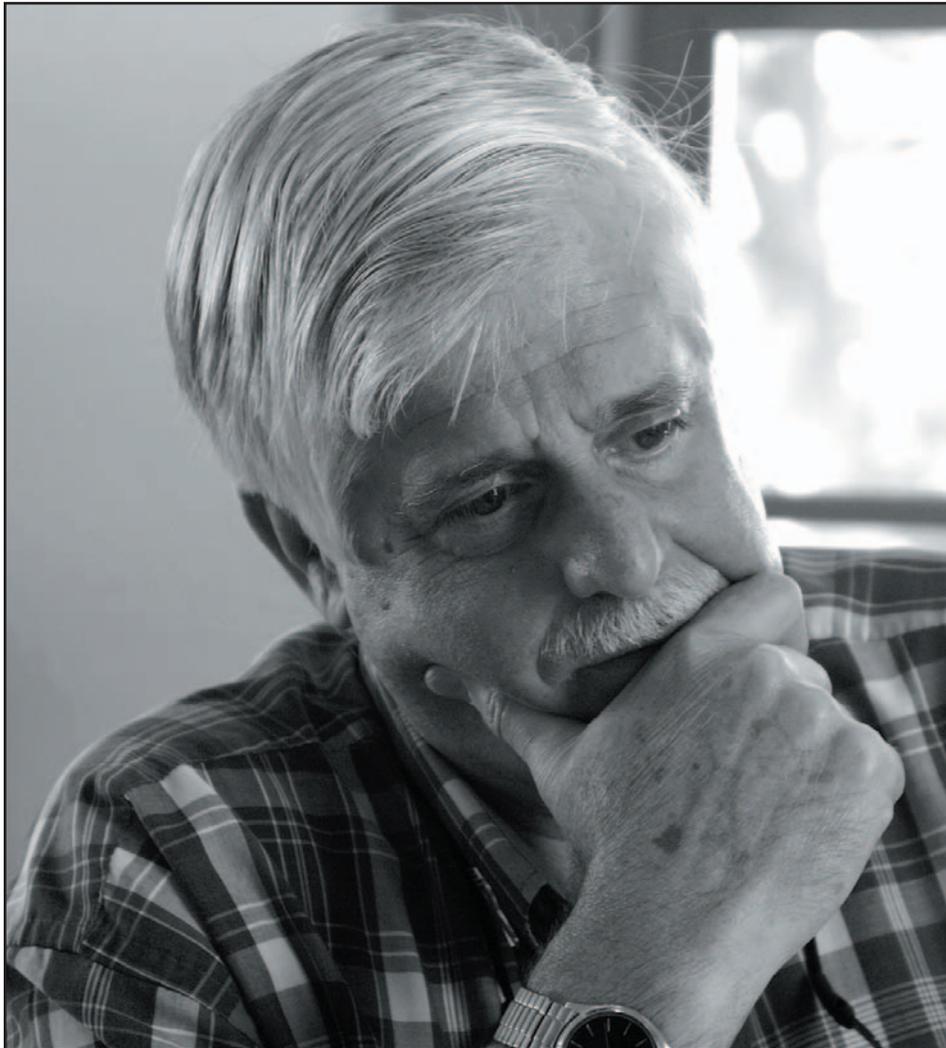
In addition, the recently completed water pipeline project replaced the majority of the substandard water pipe (4 inches or less in diameter). In 2004 the last nine of the very old "Greenberg" hydrants were replaced. These water system improvements will contribute to improving our overall rating to a Class 4 assuming the fire department's rating is the same or better than last time.

AT THE DISTRICT'S HELM

Montara and Moss Beach have been fortunate over the years in our efforts to fix our water system problems. Often the person who could do just what was needed stepped up to the plate at just the right time.

George Irving is one such person. George manages all aspects of the district, including sewer, water, trash, employees, projects, and works closely with the board. We could not have made the transition from MSD to MWSD without his tremendous efforts. His important work continues with his relentless search for grants and loans to pay for much-needed projects.

He, like the board and the community, knew we could succeed if we worked as a team. As soon as the board decided that we could find the resources to follow the community mandate to fix the water district, George added "communications central" to his role.



He began coordinating all who were involved in the complex task of finding a long term remedies for the water district. At the same time, he kept the sewer district running smoothly. George kept the information flowing so that all members of our team would know what the others were doing. From the start he sent everyone relevant news reports; found successful consultants to choose from: and provided sound analysis of the options.

When the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) held two local hearings about significant rate increases for the Montara District, all but 2 speakers asked the CPUC to make it possible for the community to own the water system.

The CPUC's first response, as a result of the significant public participation, was to tell Citizens Utilities (CU) that it needed to work with Montara Sanitary District to reduce capital costs. George found money, through low cost loans, and approached Citizens with several options to improve the system with the District's help.

In typical corporate fashion, with profits at risk, Citizens Utilities paid lip service to the requirement knowing the CPUC had no power to force their cooperation. Our efforts to find cheaper financing were ignored - although CU used the 1999 water study the District had paid for in CU's master plan to try to justify future rate increases to the CPUC!

George testified at the CPUC when the District protested the acquisition of CalAm by RWE

because it would have led to even-larger rate increases for our community. George was unflappable. His testimony was critical in convincing the CPUC to order the sale of the Montara District to a willing public agency - Montara Sanitary District.

George coordinated a three-pronged effort to acquiring the water system. As we were working before the CPUC, and attempting to work with CU, we also were in court. MSD filed to take the system by eminent domain. George led the effort to locate experts and build an acquisition team. Under pressure from the judge's order to mediate, and from the CPUC to divest, RWE (who had purchased the system by then), finally agreed to negotiate a sale (and save all of us court costs).

George's previous experience in water system management became even more valuable as he established the business methods and met the staffing needs of our new water department. Under George's management and guidance, and the Board's leadership, we have a friendly and efficient office staff who know our community, and an energetic, committed, and talented crew in the field.

With all of these fine accomplishments, George has never sought the spotlight, but our community deserves to know of his fine efforts. When you see the variety of projects underway that he's managing, the kind of people he has assembled to work for the District, and the range of forward-looking initiatives he's shepherding, know that George is working hard for us.

SOUTH AIRPORT WELL REHAB

The District has three production wells at the Half Moon Bay airport. The South Airport well is one of our best producing wells there, but production had steadily declined to about 45 gallons per minute (gpm). We reconditioned the well in the spring of 2005. That process removed particles from the well screens and rock surrounding the well hole. We also replaced the pump and motor because they were showing signs of failure. This rehabilitation increased the well production from about 45 gpm to up to 90 gpm.

Sand had been getting into the bottom of the well and into the pump. That shortened the life of the previous pump. The well driller, Maggiora Brothers of Watsonville, reduced the incidence of sand getting in, and we anticipate longer pump life and lower operating costs as a result of their good work.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR WATER SYSTEM

As we work to improve the water system, we're improving water quality, replacing worn out parts, and looking for ways to reduce the time and money we spend on emergency repairs. We're also aiming to help improve the ISO fire rating. The Board adopted the following capital improvement program for the water system as part of the Five Year Plan:

PROJECT	FY 05/06
Mechanical System Repairs & Replacements	\$10,000
Water Meter Replacements	\$10,000
Emergency / Contingency / Spot Repairs	\$25,000
Water Treatment System at Airport	\$100,000
Replace Fire Hydrants	\$20,000
Vehicle Replacement Fund	\$25,000
Water Main Replacements	\$10,000

This is in addition to the projects that are being funded by the General Obligation Bonds. These are funded by the water service charges as part of the on-going operations of the water system. This level of funding for capital improvements is less than the amount used to fund sewer capital improvements and represents a "barebones" level of funding for the water

Want to Save Some Money? Take Advantage of Appliance Rebates

New toilets and washing machines use less water, and save money. A new low-flow toilet replacing a leaky old toilet will save a lot of water and money. The District applied for and was awarded a State grant that allows us to offer rebates for the following water saving appliances:

- \$150 for high-efficiency washing machines
- \$50 for low-flow toilets.

There is very little paperwork and no hassle to this program. Just submit a one-page application with your receipts and we will send a rebate check to you within a couple of weeks. Go to MWSD.montara.org for details.

HOW MUCH WATER DOES IT TAKE TO...

- Brush your teeth? - 2 to 5 gallons
- Wash the car? - 50 gallons
- Use the dishwasher? - 8 to 15 gallons
- Flush the toilet? - 1.5 to 4 gallons (each flush)
- Take a shower or bath? - 17 to 24 gallons
- Run the washing machine? - 35 to 50 gallons (each load)

LEAD AND COPPER RULE

The State of California now requires that water districts test a representative sample of homes for lead and copper in the water. We sent letters to a variety of homeowners requesting that they fill a water bottle from their tap and return to the District for testing. We've collected those samples and sent them to a well-regarded lab for analysis.

If we find lead or copper in these sample, it's not from the water system itself. What can happen, however, is that some water characteristics may result in leaching of lead and copper from the water pipes in the home. If the tests show that this is a problem, we will attempt to adjust water chemistry. This may be an expensive but necessary process.

WAGNER WELL REHAB

The Wagner well is another well that has been showing declining production. We will be replacing the pump and motor and re-drilling the well's hole. This should restore its productivity from its current 40 gpm to about 80 gpm or more.

SEWER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Each year the District's staff works closely with our sewer engineer to update our five-year plan for our sewer system. These projects will replace items that have worn out, and will help us tighten up the system to avoid stormwater getting into the system. The Board of Directors, as part of the yearly budget process, approved the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program, which includes these projects:

PROJECT	FY 05/06
Mechanical System Repairs & Replacements	\$10,000
Inflow & Infiltration Testing	\$10,000
Emergency/Contingency/Spot Repairs	\$25,000
Replace Seal Cove Pump Controls and Cabinets	\$10,000
Vallemar Pump Station Generator	\$75,000
7th Street Pump Station Receptacle	\$25,000
California Pump Station Wet Well	\$30,000
Replace Check Values for 5th Street Pump Station	\$5,000
Update Date Harte Pump Station	\$10,000
Replace Date Harte Generator	\$10,000
Airport Pump Station Permanent Generator	\$10,000
Replace Cedar Street Line (8-117A to 8-117)	\$32,500
Replace Howells Street (8-96 to 8-91)	\$27,300
Replace Highway 1 (near Vallemar Pump Station)	\$36,400
Replace Airport Force Main Section	\$65,000
Replace 7th Street Line (2-73 to 7-72)	\$76,440

PLEASE DON'T HIDE THE BOLLARDS OR HYDRANTS

It might sound like it, but a bollard isn't a kind of a duck. These vertical pipes protect our community's fire hydrants. While many may look like they are in private yards, they are all located in the public right-of-way, and they are there to safeguard the fire protection system we all rely on. They should not be painted or altered by anyone other than the District. District standards require painting the bollards white and the hydrants yellow so that the fire department can quickly find them in an emergency.

If anyone changes the appearance of a hydrant or bollard, they must restore them to District specifications (which require specific surface preparation and specific paint).

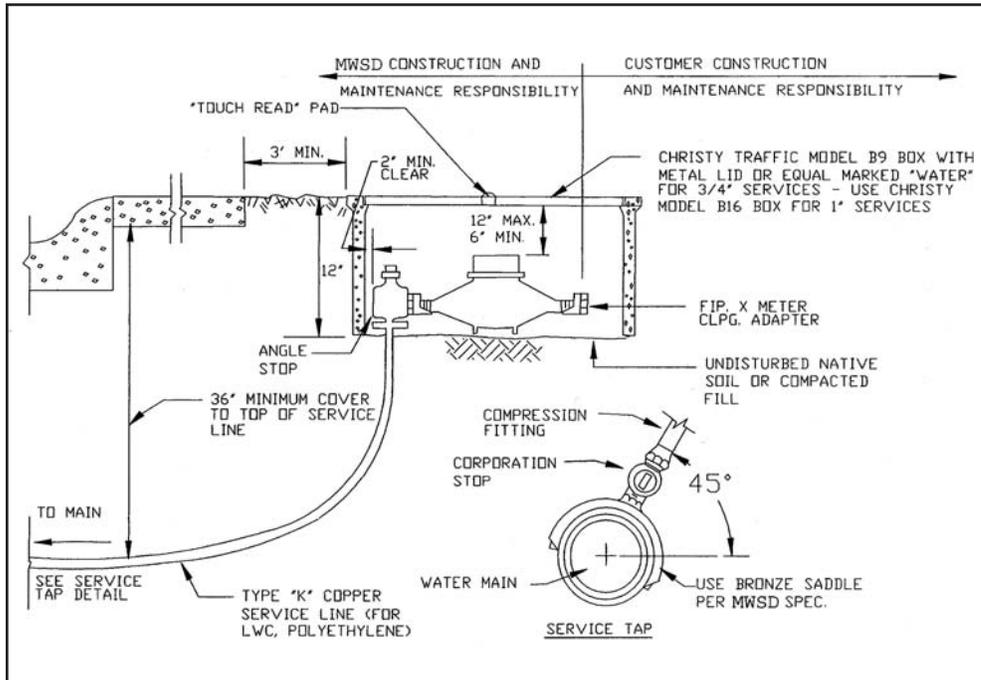
It's just as important that they not be obscured. Please do not plant shrubs, flowers or other items that will obscure the hydrant or bollards.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the District office at 728-3545 or send an email to msd@coastside.net.

WATER METERS

Please keep your water meter, which is normally located within the public right-of-way, free from obstructions so our crew can quickly read your meter.

Anytime you landscape or make other changes that may change the location or elevation of your utility box, please contact the District office first at 728-3545. We will provide you with our specifications to ensure the utility box is at the proper elevation and will not have to be moved.



Sewer line Replacement Project

The District replaced the following sections of sewer line:

- Nevada and North Lake section to the California Street Pump Station
- Lancaster Blvd. section to Etheldore Blvd.



SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

If you own a septic system, it is important that it be properly maintained. How often you need to pump the solids out of your septic tank depends on three major factors:

- the number of people in your household;
- the amount of wastewater generated (based on the number of people in the household and the amount of water used); and
- the volume of solids in the wastewater (e.g., using a garbage disposal will increase the amount of solids).

Although your septic tank absorption field generally does not require maintenance, you should adhere to the following rules to protect and prolong its functional life:

- Do not drive over the absorption field with cars, trucks, or heavy equipment.
- Do not plant trees or shrubbery in the absorption field area, because the roots can get into the lines and plug them.
- Do not cover the absorption field with hard surfaces, such as concrete or asphalt. Grass is the best cover, because it will help prevent erosion and help remove excess water.
- Do divert surface runoff water from roofs, patios, driveways, and other areas away from the absorption field.

Homeowners wanting to take good care of their septic systems should make note of the following items that should never be flushed down the drain or toilet. These items can overtax or destroy the biological digestion taking place within the system or clog pumps and pipes. Most of these apply to the public sewer system, as well. Take care not to flush the following:

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|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| • hair combings | • disposable diapers | • tampons |
| • coffee grounds | • kitty litter | • cigarette butts |
| • dental floss | • sanitary napkins | • condoms |

And NEVER flush chemicals that could contaminate surface and groundwater, such as:

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| • paints | • thinners | • photographic solutions |
| • varnishes | • waste oils | • pesticides |

(National Environmental Service Center)

GRANTS AND LOANS

The District continues to apply for a number of grants and low-interest State loans to fund for water and sewer projects. The District recently applied for an integrated regional grant to the Department of Water Resources and is currently applying for State loans for the water tank projects — the Alta Vista tank and School House tank. The District applied for but did not receive a grant and loan for the centralized water treatment system at the Half Moon Bay Airport because we do not own the land. We have only a license agreement with the County (which can be terminated at anytime).

TCP REMOVAL

The District has instituted a pilot project to reduce the TCP (1,2,3-Trichloropropane) found in the airport wells to a non-detectable level.

The District is using a granulated activated carbon (GAC) filter and initial tests indicate it is working to reduce the TCP to a non-detectable level. However, the State Department of Health Services must still review the pilot test before it can go into full operation. Details of all water quality items are available in the District's latest Consumer Confidence Report mailed to all homes in June 2005.

PIPELINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

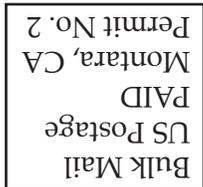
This year we tackled many of the substandard, leaky water lines in our neighborhoods. Replacing these lines will save water as well as eliminating problems in the future. Many of these lines had reached the end of their useful life, and had required a number of expensive, time-consuming, and inconvenient emergency repairs, and were clearly ready for replacement.

This was a major project for us, one necessitated by years of prior neglect by the former owners. District staff identified key sections, and staff and two board members sat down in consultation with Coastal Commission staff to move expeditiously through the permitting process. As a result, these sections were completed this summer:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • 4 th Street—Highway 1 to Farallone. | • East Street—5 th Street to 10 th Street. |
| • 5 th Street—Highway 1 to Farallone. | • Audubon Avenue—Harte to George. |
| • 6 th Street—Highway 1 to Farallone. | • Franklin Avenue—Tamarind to Date. |
| • 8 th Street—Highway 1 to Farallone. | • Acacia Street—George to Franklin. |

In addition, we identified several lines needing replacement in streets located on the west side of Highway 1 as well as Vallemar Street. Consultation with Commission staff was helpful in making sure that we move appropriately through the more extensive coastal development permit process required since they are within 300 feet of the ocean. Once San Mateo County completes that process, these pipelines will also be replaced.





MWSD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Boyd, President
Term: 2003 - 2007

Bob Ptacek, President Pro Tem
Term: 2001-2005

Jim Harvey, Secretary
Term: 2003 - 2005

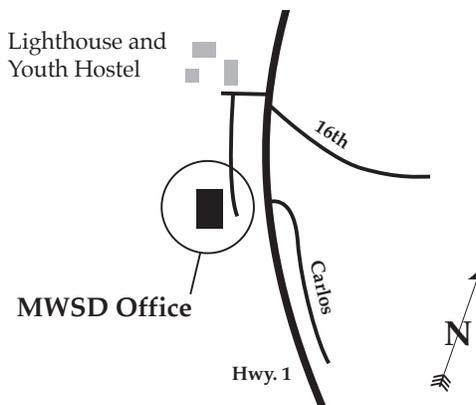
Paul Perkovic, Treasurer
Term: 2001 - 2005

Kathryn Slater-Carter, Director
Term: 2004 - 2007

MONTARA WATER AND SANITARY DISTRICT

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Montara, CA 94037

Board meetings are held the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the District Office at 8888 Cabrillo Highway, Montara, CA



Montara Water & Sanitary District
P.O. Box 370131, Montara, CA 94037

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CLEMENS HELDMAIER

A key member of the highly skilled team that operates and maintains our water system, Clemens is a native of Marburg, Germany, where he received a master's degree in geology. His early work there was involved with environmental remediation, such as directing the clean-up of leaking gas tanks.



Clemens and his wife moved to the coast three years ago, and it was then that he joined the MWSD team.

He is currently part of the 3 person crew that runs the water system. Their work encompasses the entirety of the system's operation: reading meters, maintaining the treatment plants, monitoring the distribution system, and being on call to handle the malfunctions that sometimes happen.

Thank you Clemens, for helping to keep our water flowing!