

# The Lens

Issue Number 11 Fall 2004

## Montara Water and Sanitary District

### AIRPORT WELLS

The District operates three wells located at the Half Moon Bay Airport. These wells produce about 60% of the water used annually by the system. These wells are capable of producing more water, but one of the wells has levels of nitrates which exceed the State's Maximum Contaminate Level (MCL), and another has nitrates over 50% of the MCL. To bring the levels down, California American, the previous owners, blended in low-nitrate water from the third well to get the average nitrate level to comply with state water quality requirements.

Rather than blend, the District is installing a treatment system on the two high-nitrate wells to remove nitrates to a non-detectable level. We'll have better water and more water during the times where production would normally be limited by the blending.

The treatment plant is manufactured by US Filter, and will cost about \$100,000/year to operate.

### DISTRICT SERVICE BOUNDARIES

The service boundaries of the California American Water Company, former owner of the water system acquired by the District in August of 2003, include some land just south of the Half Moon Bay Airport. Those lands are outside of the current boundaries of the District, which were established before the District became a combined Water and Sanitary District. To harmonize the water and sanitary boundaries, the District will be submitting an application to the County's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to include the southern portion of the water service area. We anticipate that an application will be submitted to LAFCO in November.

### ADDITIONAL WATER SOURCES

Two years ago, well before the water acquisition, the District submitted applications to the County of San Mateo to drill up to eleven test wells, mostly in areas without existing wells. After a lengthy permitting process, and with the help of a \$170,000 grant from the State, the District started drilling test wells. The grant money goes to offset the cost of drilling and to install stream monitoring gauges and other devices to monitor the impact of drilling on the aquifers.

We have completed drilling most of the most promising wells. We are wrapping up pump testing on five wells. We tested during the dry months to see just how reliably they produce when pumped at constant high rates at the end of the annual rainfall/dry season cycle.

At this point, the most promising well is located near the District's Alta Vista Storage Tank. We'll bring you more information as our testing program progresses.

### PLANNING WELL AHEAD

Well owners should know that, because of the long-standing moratorium on water system connections, there is no available public source of replacement for loss of water from a dry well. This obviously could create a public safety and health hazard situation. The District is advocating specific revisions to the County's Local Coastal Program to provide a reserve for priority connections based upon failed wells so that, once additional water supplies become available, well owners whose wells fail might have an opportunity to connect to the District's system on a priority basis.

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### FORMER OWNER REQUESTS 36% RATE INCREASE

California American Water Company has submitted a request to the California Public Utilities Commission for a rate increase for its Larkfield system in 2005 of 26.1%, a 7.63% increase in 2006 and a 2.36% increase in 2007. Larkfield was formerly part of the same CalAm territory that included our District, but CPUC rate increases no longer affect our rates.

### ALTA VISTA WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The plant that treats the water coming from the Alta Vista Raw Water line had not been repaired in decades, and was subject to failure. The District advertised for bids to bring the plant up to modern standards and to reduce its potential for failure. This work was completed in June 2004 at a cost of approximately \$33,000.

# WATER AND SEWER PIPELINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Now that the District handles both sewer and water, we have the opportunity to combine efforts to get better deals on such things as pipeline replacement projects. The District has been aggressively pursuing ways to initiate a pipeline replacement project which is both flexible and capitalizes on the increased market size that the District now has. The work primarily involves contractors who specialize in underground pipeline work, and have experience in both water and sewer pipeline replacements. If the District can use a single contract with one contractor to do both sewer and water pipeline replacements, it leverages the increased dollar amount of improvements to achieve a lower unit cost. This approach also enables us to spread the work over a two to three year period as projects become ready for construction. Overall, the process minimizes disruption to the community and reduces administrative costs.

Most of the water line projects were originally identified by Citizens Utilities Company in 1991 (then the private owner) as needing replacement because of leaking, substandard size and/or high maintenance problems, but the work was never initiated. The projects currently scheduled to begin construction in October 2004 are:

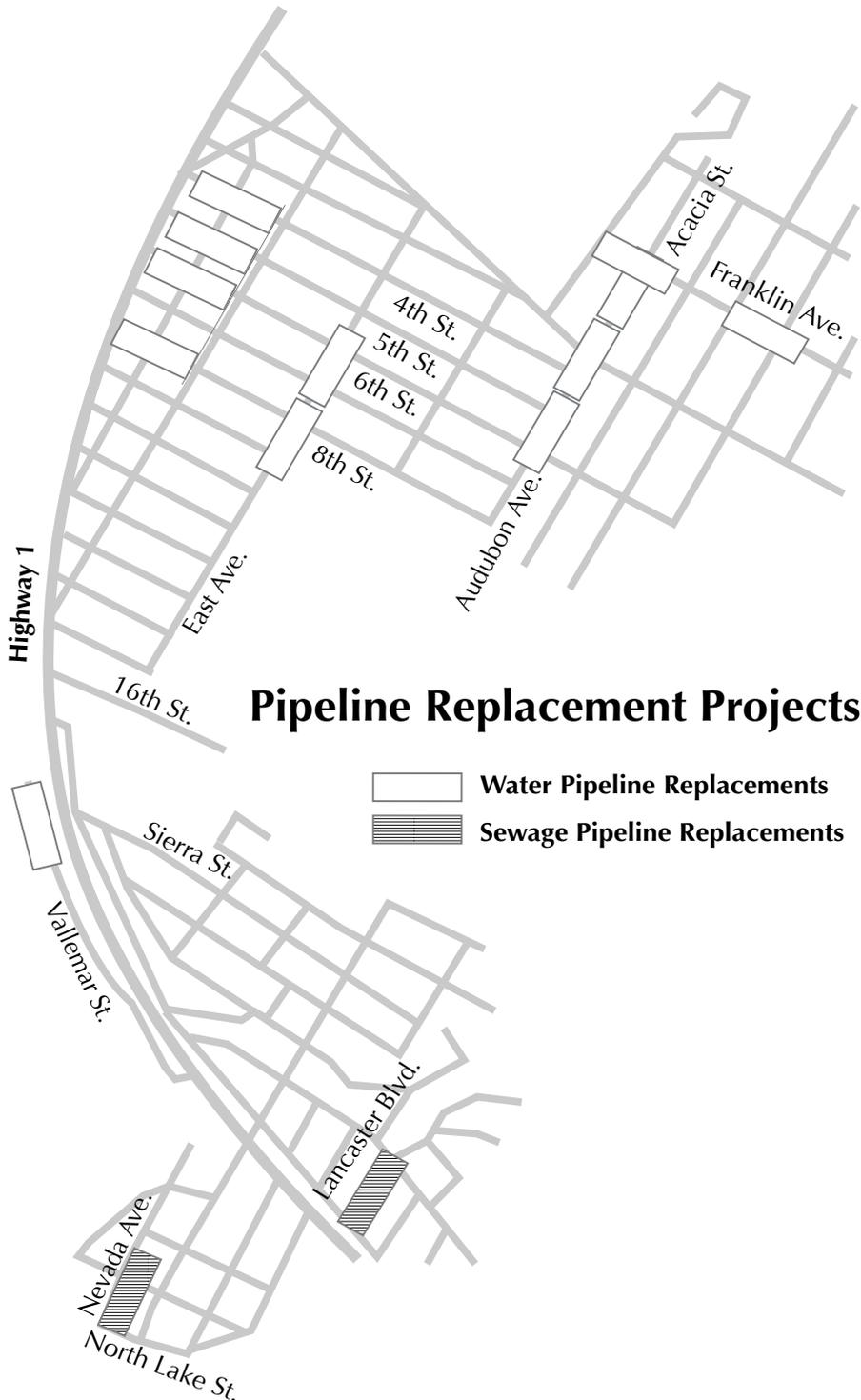
WATER LINE REPLACEMENTS:

- 1st St. /Highway 1 to Kanoff Ave.
- Franklin Ave./Tamarind St. to Date Street.
- Acacia Street/George Street to Franklin Ave.
- 4th Street/Highway 1 to Main St.
- 5th Street/Highway 1 to Main St.
- 6th Street/Highway 1 to Main St.
- 8th Street/Highway 1 to Main St.
- Audubon Avenue/Harte St. to George St.
- East Ave./9th Street to 6th St.
- Vallemar St./Niagara Ave. to the end.

SEWER LINE REPLACEMENTS:

- North Lake St. /California Pump Station to Nevada Ave.
- Nevada Ave./230 Nevada to North Lake St.
- Lancaster Blvd./521 Nevada to Etheldore St.

The contract for this work was recently awarded to Andreini Brothers of Half Moon Bay for \$412,355.



## Pipeline Replacement Projects

-  Water Pipeline Replacements
-  Sewer Pipeline Replacements

## WATER SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

The Board adopted a master plan for the water system. The master plan covers the condition of the system, and lays out which capital projects are recommended to fix or upgrade the system over the next five to ten years. Copies are available on our web site ([mwsd.montara.org](http://mwsd.montara.org)) and may also be picked up from the District office at 8888 Cabrillo Highway, right next to the Pt. Montara Lighthouse and Hostel.

## WATER RATES

The District adopted the same rates and rate structure (minus a Public Utilities Commission fee) in effect under the private corporate owners, California American Water Company. The District is reviewing the rates and rate structure and will consider changes, such as a tiered rate with a higher rate for those using more than the average amount of water.

No public hearing has yet been set for this matter, but it will probably be during the first quarter of 2005. We hope to provide updated information on our web site.

## ALTA VISTA RAW WATER LINE

While it varies throughout the year, the District receives about 20% of its annual water supply from Montara Creek. A pipe about a half mile long delivers that water through hilly, steep terrain to the Alta Vista Water Treatment Plant. That pipe had not been repaired in a very long time, and was in serious disrepair, showing signs of bad corrosion and leaks.

The District, after an extensive environmental review process, completed replacement of the pipe in July at a cost of about \$150,000. The work included re-anchoring it to better withstand the elements. All work had to be done by hand because of the sensitive habitat area in which it is located, and that work included improvements to control erosion.



### *Pump Testing at Alta Vista*

*Pump testing involves pumping a considerable quantity of water over a sustained period. After working with regulatory agencies to find the best way to discharge the water, we arranged to spray it over a large area, thus avoiding erosion and giving the water a chance to go back into the ground.*

## DRAKE AND WAGNER WELLS ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS

The District is in the process of completing electrical and control system improvements at the Drake and Wagner Wells. Work includes the construction of a reinforced concrete foundation, walk-in enclosure, electrical and system controls, intrusion alarm, and site lighting installation.

These improvements should improve reliability and security for our water operation, as well as improve safety for our crew.

## CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

The County has an excellent brochure on how to recycle construction and demolition material. For details visit: [www.RecycleWorks.org](http://www.RecycleWorks.org)

## APPLIANCE REBATE PROGRAM

The District received a State grant to pay \$150 rebates when you purchase a high-efficiency washing machine, and \$50 rebates when you buy low-flow toilets.

The Federal government estimates that by changing a regular toilet to a low-flow toilet (1.6 gallons per flush, down from 3.5 gallons per flush), the typical homeowner will save 12,500 gallons of water a year and over \$125 per year in water costs! For further information go to: [mwsd.montara.org](http://mwsd.montara.org)

## THE PROBLEM WITH GREASE

Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage home interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from household drains as well as from poorly maintained grease traps in restaurants and other businesses.

Where does the grease come from? Most of us know grease as the by-product of cooking. Grease is found in such things as meat fats, lard, cooking oil, shortening, butter and margarine, food scraps, baking goods, sauces, and dairy products.

Too often, grease is washed into the plumbing system, usually through the kitchen sink. Grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes (both on your property and in the streets). Over time, the grease can build up and block the entire pipe.

Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. These units only shred solid material into smaller pieces and do not prevent grease from going down the drain. Commercial additives, including detergents, that claim to dissolve grease may pass grease down the line and cause problems in other areas.

### **The results can be:**

- Raw sewage overflowing in your home or your neighbor's home, an expensive and unpleasant cleanup that often must be paid for by you, the homeowner;
- Raw sewage overflowing into parks, yards,

and streets;

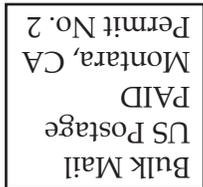
- Potential contact with disease-causing organisms; and
- An increase in operation and maintenance costs for local sewer departments, which causes higher sewer bills for everyone.

### **What we can do to help?**

The easiest way to solve the grease problem and help prevent overflows of raw sewage is to keep grease out of the sewer system in the first place.

### **There are several ways to do this:**

- Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
- Scrape grease and food scraps from trays, plates, pots, pans, utensils, and grills and cooking surfaces into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
- Do not put grease down garbage disposals. Put baskets/strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the drain baskets/strainers into the trash for disposal. Treating food scraps at the Wastewater Treatment Facility is very costly, especially when compared with disposal at the landfill.
- Speak with your friends and neighbors about the problem of grease in the sewer system and how to keep it out. Call Sewer Authority Mid-Coastside at (650) 726-0124 if you have any questions.



## MWSD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Term: 2003 - 2007

**Bob Ptacek, President Pro Tem**  
Term: 2001-2005

**Jim Harvey, Secretary**  
Term: 2003 - 2005

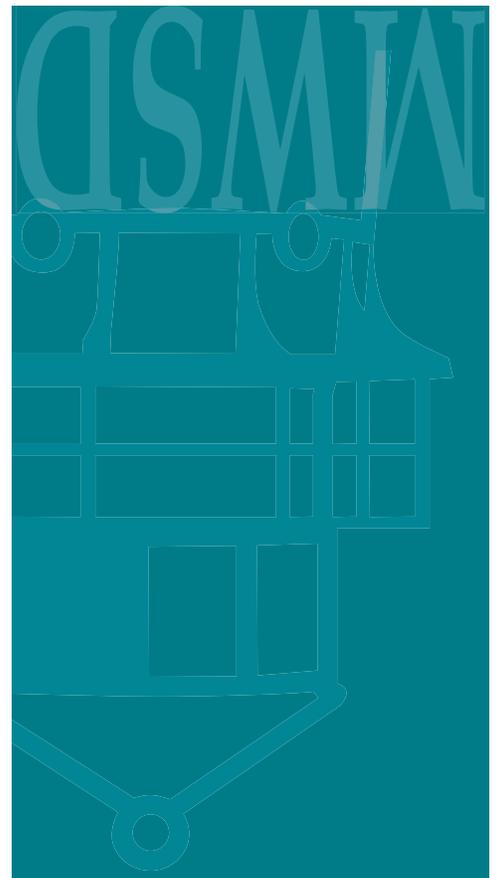
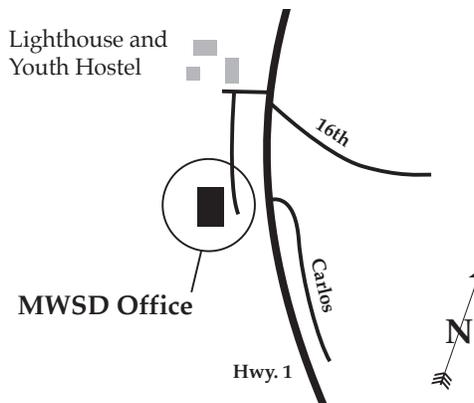
**Paul Perkovic, Treasurer**  
Term: 2001 - 2005

**Kathryn Slater-Carter, Director**  
Term: 2004 - 2007

## MONTARA WATER AND SANITARY DISTRICT

voice : 650-728-3545  
fax : 650-728-8556  
P.O. Box 370131  
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

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**Farallone View school garage sales:**

Saturday January 8th 9 am to 2 pm  
Saturday April 16th, 9 am to 2 pm

## TRASH DATES TO REMEMBER

**November 9: Greenwaste**  
**December 14: Greenwaste**  
**January 11: Greenwaste**

Christmas tree and live wreath pickup will be free in Montara and Moss Beach through January 11, 2005 and on any greenwaste day. Please buy non-flocked trees and wreaths, and leave them out on any greenwaste day for recycling.

## PORTOLA TANK ACCESS ROAD

The road leading to the Portola Water Tank washed out a couple of years ago. The erosion has worsened, and the road is almost impassible, making maintenance difficult. The District hopes to complete the erosion remediation before the winter rains. The District went out to bid in early September 2004 and estimates the cost of repair to be about \$300,000.