

The Drain Report

Spring 06



An Ounce Of Prevention Is Worth A Pound Of Cure

By: Ken Kase, Manager

Did you ever consider that the Midway Sewer District may prevent more illness in this region than all the local hospitals combined are able to cure? Look at third world countries that don't have sewer collection and treatment systems. People who come into contact with polluted water may suffer and die from water-borne pathogens that cause diseases such as typhoid, cholera, and amoebic dysentery. Children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems run the greatest risk. Water-borne pathogens kill more children than any other cause, making unclean water the biggest threat to world health.

Historically sewage was washed away in the streets and it was not until Louis Pasteur linked bacteria to disease that people began to understand that poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water were vectors for disease. Allowing sewage to flow in the streets essentially recycled the bacteria into the water supply.

Public officials and engineers proposed a solution for this problem that was twofold: First collect the sewage by building sewers, then disinfect the water to make it safe for consumption.

The Midway Sewer District is aware of just how precious safe drinking water is to all of us. The earth is 76% covered with water but we need to remember only 2.5% of that is fresh water. Over 99% of that fresh water is inaccessible (glaciers, polar ice, etc.) which leaves only 1% of earth's entire fresh water supply available for all living creatures to share.

We all benefit from a greater quality of life because we have a great sanitary sewer system that protects us from coming into contact with sewage, preventing groundwater supplies from becoming contaminated, and disinfecting pathogen-filled water.

Excuse Our Mess...

In late 2005, we watched from our office as the Midway Drive-In screen was pulled down. We also watched as the sign was removed, the buildings on the site demolished, and the parking lot dug up.

We are now next to a construction site! A Lowe's is being built on the old site, and between them digging in the road and the dump trucks and street sweepers, it has become more difficult to get to our office.

By: Cordelia Ford, Office Manager

Adding to the problem is the improvement to Pacific Highway, which has now reached our section. Pacific Highway is being widened, and a HOV lane is being installed. Also raised medians are being installed, and I believe lights will also be installed in the medians. It will be a great improvement, once it is completed.

If you are planning on coming to the District office, you may experience delays due to road construction and the Lowe's project.



Commissioners:
Vincent Koester
Jack Hendrickson
George Landon

Manager:
Ken Kase

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Commissioner's Forum

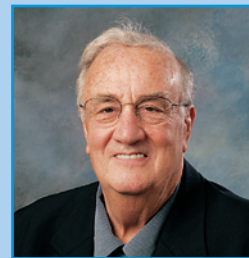
Almost 60 years ago, the Midway Sewer District (fka Des Moines Sewer District) was initiated by a petition prepared and signed by residents of an area of approximately 200 acres in downtown Des Moines, and heard before the Board of County Commissioners. On July 16, 1946, the sewer district was formed and the Commissioners elected. General obligation and revenue bond issues were presented to the voters in 1949 and defeated. The Board did not gain voter approval until a special election held on November 6, 1956.

By April 24, 1957, the first Utility Local Improvement District (ULID) was established. This ULID allowed the District to set about the process of constructing a collection system, submarine outfall, primary treatment plant, and two pump stations. By December, 1958, the District had an operating system of sewers.

By August, 1960, the District began the process to build a new treatment plant even though the existing plant was only 1½ years old. The location of today's present day Des Moines Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant was selected because it was better suited to serve the rapidly growing area. This treatment facility was completed in 1965, and was sized for an average dry weather flow of 1.91 million gallons per day (MGD). The original treatment plant was converted into what is now known as the 7th Avenue pump station.

In 1965, the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport abandoned their Bow Lake sewage treatment facility, which was inadequate for their future needs and began discharging sewage into the District's system. The Airport also constructed an industrial waste treatment plant which discharges into the District's outfall via an industrial trunk sewer that by-passes the Des Moines Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

There were numerous annexations into the District in the period from 1960 to 1980. The largest of these annexations was the merger of the Sylvania Pines Sewer District into the Midway Sewer District effective in June of 1968. The sanitary wastes from the Sylvania Pines Sewer District were treated at a small treatment plant located on the east side of Salt Water State Park. In 1969, this treatment plant was abandoned and converted into the present day 16th Avenue Pump Station. The flows from this abandoned plant were conveyed to the Des Moines Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.



George Landon
Commissioner

As the District continued to grow the treatment facility was expanded from 1.9 MGD to 6.0 MGD capacity in December, 1984.

Following the treatment capacity expansion the Des Moines Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant was upgraded to secondary treatment. Due to certain constraints at the plant site, the trickling filter / solids contact process was chosen. This construction was completed in July, 1989. Immediately following start-up of the secondary treatment process an extensive odor control system was constructed and completed in 1991.

Due to a continuing increase in demand, the treatment facility capacity was again increased. Construction was completed in June, 2000, and now has a design capacity of 9 MGD. We continue to work hard to meet the ever changing demands on the sewer system.

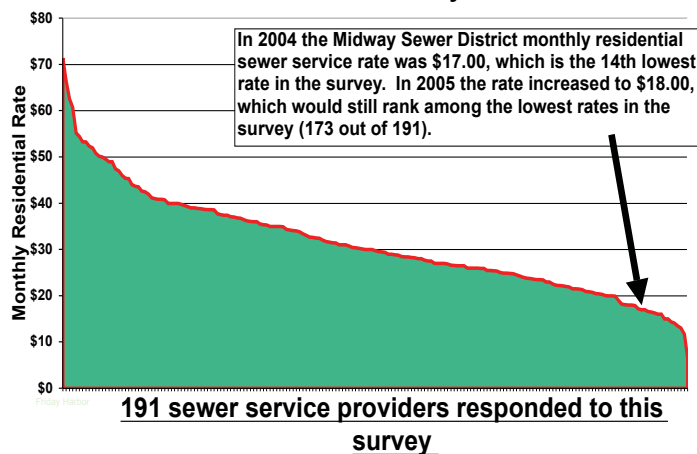
George Landon

Albino Alligators in Sewers?

By: Jeff Griffith,
Treatment Plant Supervisor

We've all heard the stories of alligators living in the sewer system. They were once cute little baby alligators that tourists returning from Florida brought home for their kids. As they outlived their cuteness, as an alligator generally will, they were flushed down the toilet. These discarded pets now living in the dark, dank sewers became sightless and lost the pigment in their skin as they thrived on food waste from restaurants and garbage disposals. It all sounds pretty good. Fortunately, this is an urban legend. The water temperature in sewers is typically not warm enough for an alligator to survive for long, to say nothing of the bacteria it would encounter. So you are as likely to see an alligator crawling out of a manhole in Midway Sewer District as seeing a Wildebeest grazing in your back yard.

AWC 2004 User Fee Survey Results for Sewer Service Monthly Rates



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