

VADER-ENCHANTED VALLEY WATER SYSTEM NEWSLETTER



Lewis County Public Works, 2025 NE Kresky Ave, Chehalis, WA 98532

Lewis County Fiscal Billing Office, Lewis County Courthouse, 351 NW North St, Chehalis, WA 98532

Office Hours: 8:30 AM - 4 PM, Monday - Friday

Web address: www.lewiscountywa.gov/publicworks/utility-services or call 1-855-858-2843

Is That Normal?

We are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at 1-855-858-2843 to answer questions, resolve problems, receive comments (and kudos) and report leaks. After we understand your need, we can issue a work order to investigate or take measures to correct the situation. Our response time will depend upon the nature of the problem, but we will follow up with customers as needed. Comments and kudos are also welcome.

We are always looking for leaks and other unaccounted water usages. If you see a dip in the roadway, water flowing out of the ground, slumping ground, or isolated green patch of vegetation amidst dry vegetation, it may indicate a water main break. If you see something like this, please call and let us know.

FREE DRAWING

All customers who remit payment of the October 2015 invoice by November 5, 2015 are eligible for a drawing of an outdoor water saver kit.

Coming Soon to Your Neighborhood...a New Water Reservoir!

Good news everyone. We heard on August 27 that our grant application for a new water reservoir was approved! The funding is a \$717,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the State Department of Commerce.

The project is a new water reservoir at our water plant. Our existing 250,000-gallon water reservoir was built in 1979. Distribution system problems and deferred maintenance have made problems for our existing tank. A comprehensive inspection of the tank interior and exterior in 2013 showed a need for recoating. The main advantage of this project is that we will have a two-tank water system which gives us operational flexibility and additional capacity. Our existing tank will eventually have to be recoated but another tank will enable uninterrupted water service.

We will start as soon as the grant contract is approved. We hope to get started on the preliminary design this winter.

DROUGHT AND WINTER WISHES

With the shorter days and cooler weather of autumn, the summer drought and heat may recede in our memories of just another "hot summer". However, drought conditions can still linger especially in the Pacific Northwest where many public water systems rely on a heavy snowpack for their water supply. Our water supply is from the Cowlitz River which is fed from snowmelt from the east side of Mt Rainier and surrounding mountains.

Heavy winter rains are not enough to build up a heavy snowpack. We need snow in the mountains with cool temperatures in the spring. The cooler temperatures in the spring will control and regulate the release of meltwaters throughout the summer. A heavy snowpack is our reservoir and we need lots of it.

Although it is still water, the density of snow is different from precipitation. This is further complicated by the type of snow: wet or dry. Dry snow is very light, has very little liquid content and lots of air pockets in the snowflake. Dry snow is not "sticky" making it difficult to make snowballs and is easily blown about by the wind. The ideal snow is wet snow falling at freezing or below ground temperatures. The "average" snow to liquid ratio is 10:1. This is saying if 10 inches of wet snow was melted, it would make about 1 inch of rain.

It is still too early to tell if we should anticipate another drought, but we encourage you to practice water conservation. I know. A water utility telling their customers to practice water conservation seems counterproductive, because water sales pay for water utility operations. However, it is our goal to improve production and operational efficiencies to provide safe potable water. Although less water usage means decreased water sales, it also results in lower production costs.

It benefits us all to practice water conservation.

What do I want this year? Whirled peas. Oops make that world peace and a heavy snowpack!

by Lady Clearwater

WATER USE EFFICIENCY GOAL

The water system plan (WSP) has been prepared and will be submitted to Department of Health (DOH) for review this year. The WSP is a planning document that is required to be updated every six years or more frequently to reflect current conditions of the water system. The previous one was prepared for the City of Vader and dated May 2008.

Another reason besides regulatory compliance is because we have been managing your water system since October 30, 2010 and ownership was transferred to Lewis County as of April 30, 2014. We have operational goals and organizational structures that are different than the City. This information has to be outlined in the WSP. Our WSP will also outline our management, cross-connection control, water conservation, capital improvement and water use efficiency programs.

One requirement of our water use efficiency program is to establish a water use efficiency goal. The water system had a water loss exceeding 50% when we started management of the system in October 2010. The loss rate was reduced to 19% for 2014 with a three-year average (2012-2014) of 37%. We are asked to report annual and three-year average water loss values to DOH every year.

We would like to continue lowering our water losses and have set a water use efficiency goal to: ***“reduce distribution system leakage to less than 20% of total production by 2034 as calculated on a rolling three-year average”***. This also translates to an annual water loss rate of 10% or less.

We would like to hear from you, our customer, about what you think of the proposed water use efficiency goal. Please email or call us at our toll-free utility number.

We will be holding a public hearing about your WSP which is another opportunity to let us know about the proposed goal. The public hearing date is tentatively set for this year and details will be announced in the Lewis County WebSite.

New Look, Same Service

Starting this month, your water bill will have a new look. When we started managing the system in October 2010, we inherited the billing software system that was used by the City of Vader. Technical updates and support services by the vendor were discontinued in 2012 so we changed to a new billing system. It was our hope to have it in use last August, but the creation, transfer of data, training and testing took longer than expected.

The change to the new billing software will also simplify our billing process. We can use standard sized paper and envelopes thus forgoing the cost of special stationery. We also can run reports readily without using intermediate steps such as exporting data into a spreadsheet.

If you need help to understand your new utility bill, we are here at 1-855-858-2843.



Vader-Enchanted Valley Water System

Historic Courthouse, RM 030
351 NW North Street
Chehalis, WA 98532

VADER-ENCHANTED VALLEY WATER BILL