

# 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](http://www.lewiscountywa.gov) or call 1-855-858-2843

## Point & Pay

By Pay It Again Sam

In response to many customer requests, we are offering an electronic payment method for your convenience. You can pay your water bill by logging onto the Lewis County Website, calling 1-855-858-2843, or stopping at the payment window in the Lewis County Courthouse.

Point & Pay is a secure electronic payment option approved by our Treasurer's Office and used for county tax payments, registration fees, and solid waste fees.

Point & Pay is a private company and applies a convenience fee to all electronic payment transactions. The Utility does not receive any money from these transactions.

To pay on the County Website, go to Public Works Department and click on [Pay Vader Water Bill](#). To pay online you must use a credit or debit card (Visa, Mastercard, Discover or American Express), or if by electronic check, your bank routing number.

## CodeRED System

By Wing Ding

In our last newsletter, we mentioned the use of the Lewis County Code RED system to contact customers about the waterline break. The County uses this system to send critical information about disasters, evacuation, missing child alerts and other emergencies. Here in Vader, we used the CodeRED system to notify customers about our work schedule to flush hydrants and exercise valves, and for meetings. We want to use the CodeRED system to notify customers of meetings, construction work areas, and other information for the water system improvement project.

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## It's Not Easy Being Green!

By Kermit T. Frog

As of August 10, 2011, the Vader Water System is in compliance with the operating permit. The System was given a "green" permit category. Green means the system is substantially in compliance with applicable drinking water requirements. The system is adequate for growth up to approved number and existing uses.

Prior to this issuance, the system operating permit was given a "blue" permit category because the system exceeded the number of approved connections.

You have to register your telephone number to get notified by CodeRED. If you haven't done so, we encourage you to get registered.

Register your telephone number and email at <http://lewiscountywa.gov/code-red>. If you do not have Internet access, then call 360-740-1152 to register.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We made several leak repairs during the last 6 months along with ongoing maintenance and operation activities. As we near the end of the first year of full operation by the County, we're hoping for a slower pace of activities next year. We'll be done with most of the major deferred maintenance and have settled into the operational side of running a utility. We want to share some of the major accomplishments from the time of the last newsletter in June 2011.

- ☑ Leak repair in C Alley south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
- ☑ Leak repair in D Street near 5<sup>th</sup> Street.
- ☑ Removed the leaking hydrant at SR 506 and A Street.
- ☑ Replaced 3 defective meters as identified in the leak detection study.
- ☑ Leak repair at 1124 F Street.
- ☑ Replaced existing cracked valve on Horseshoe Bend, installed thrust block and re-positioned riser of blowoff.
- ☑ Painted the WTP building using free paint from Lewis County Solid Waste Swap Shack.
- ☑ Painted hydrants red for improved visibility.
- ☑ Removed moss from roofs of WTP and storage shed buildings.
- ☑ Located, cleared brush, installed markers and painted valves to show type of valve key, service of AC or non-AC lines, and directional alignment of line—ongoing.
- ☑ Inspected and made improvements to the electrical system at the WTP building and storage shed to comply with building codes.
- ☑ Repackaged utility services and made changes to lower operating costs.
- ☑ Contracted electrician to review alarm program and control at the WTP for speedier notification and to avoid drawdown of the tank.
- ☑ Replaced meter and box damaged by customer on Olequa Drive.
- ☑ Repaired broken valves in service lines in 10<sup>th</sup> Street and in Little Pinto Court.
- ☑ Built up inventory of tools and supplies to respond and make repairs more quickly.



*Leaking hydrant at 7<sup>th</sup> & A St.*



### Congratulations...it's an operator!

Congratulations to our certified operator, John Strom! You may have seen John around town when he was working for the City of Vader. John started with Lewis County in March 2011 as a Level 1 operator. In addition to his daily work, he studied and passed his Level 2 exams in June.

*"...If you find yourself in a hole,  
the first thing to do is stop  
digging..."*

*An old farmer's advice on life.*



*Removal of leaking hydrant.*

## Don't Touch That Valve!

By China Bull

So you're working on a "honey-do" or a home improvement project and you need to turn the water off. Do you know what to do?

We had to replace a few broken valves recently. These were broken when the homeowners wanted to turn water off to fix a leak or do home repairs, or to turn water off when they left town.

### **DO NOT TURN VALVES OR TAMPER WITH THE SERVICE CONNECTION IN THE METER BOX.**

These actions are a violation of both County and City regulations. The service connection is the line from the water main to the meter box and that is the Utility's responsibility. Like the proverbial bull in the china shop: if you break it, you pay for it.

There were some incidents where tampering of the service connection broke a valve and allowed metered flow to the premise. The breaks were discovered when unusually high water usage showed up on the water bill. It was a hard decision for us to make, but we could not waive or adjust the bill for the high water usage because it would place the burden on the other ratepayers. We also had to bill the customers for the cost of the County repair.

It was unfortunate, and because we don't want to spend our time fixing and billing customers for something that can be easily avoided, we want to share some options with you.

## Distribution System Improvement Project

A lot of work has started on the Vader distribution system improvement project since our last newsletter in June 2011.

- We retained the design engineering services of Murray Smith Associates, Inc. (MSA).
- We held a project kick off meeting on August 31 at the Lions Club building to introduce the project team.
- A leak detection study of the system was completed in August 2011.
- Lewis County surveyors reviewed right of ways, established control points, and collected topographical and elevation data.



*The Utility maintains the service lines up to the meter box. Line connections from the meter box to the house are the homeowners' responsibility.*

Normally, there is a shutoff valve near your house on the line connection. The line connection is the water line from the meter box to your house. We recommend you locate and identify the shutoff valve for future use. Some resources to help you are building plans, plumber or someone knowledgeable in home repair/construction, and pipe locating services.

If you don't have a shutoff valve on your line connection, you may want to hire a licensed plumber to install a check valve and shutoff valve. The check valve will protect you from any system cross contamination, and the shutoff valve will enable you to shut water off to your house.

Lastly, if you need the water to be turned off at the meter box, call the Utility at 1-855-858-2843 at least 48 hours in advance. There will be a \$25 charge to turn the water back on.

- MSA analyzed the system with the proposed improvements from the 2010 Water System Plan, and started preliminary engineering for design plans.

Lewis County continues to manage the project and grant administration. We are aiming for construction to begin next summer if permitting and bidding tasks go well.

It is our intention to keep you informed. We plan to have another informational meeting about the improvements later this year, and another one with the contractor next year before actual construction.

Notification of these meetings will be by mailings and CodeRED.



## ASK TIM

By Boss Tim

***If I'm working on a home project or I'm going away, can I turn off the water at the meter box?***

Some of you savvy customers actually pop open the water meter box for a look. That's great, but please don't tamper with the meter or the service connection! The service connection is the line from the water main to the meter box and that is the Utility's responsibility. Like the proverbial bull in the china shop, if you break it, you pay for it. (See the "Don't Touch That Valve" story.)

***I don't think you read my meter because the inside of the meter box is all dirty, damp and filled with bugs.***

Rest assured. If we know about your meter we are reading it. Water meters sweat, and the moisture attracts earthworms and small bugs. The earthworms and bugs in turn attract moles which churn up the dirt in the meter box, making it look like a dirt bomb went off.

***Wow! I don't use that much water! The water meter must be defective.***

Generally, old water meters tend to run slower so it is to the customers' advantage. We will be replacing meters next year where we replace the distribution system. We are also starting a maintenance program to replace meters every year.

***How do I check for leaks?***

We have a brochure that shows you how to conduct a simple leak test. Call us at 1-855-858-2843 for a copy or go to the Public Works/Utility Division WEBpage at [www.lewiscountywa.gov](http://www.lewiscountywa.gov).

## Who Owns the System?

At the time of our last newsletter in June 2011, the Superior Court hearing on a proposed plan of disposition of the Vader Water System was tentatively scheduled for June 2011. Pursuant to a condition of the Court Order entered last year when Lewis County was appointed receiver of the Water System, a Disposition Plan had to be presented to and approved by the Court by October 29, 2011. The hearing to consider the Disposition Plan was held on September 23, 2011.

The Court approved the City's and County's proposal to transfer the assets of the Water System to the County at the end of the receivership. To successfully operate and ensure a viable water supply for the Vader Water System, the water right would remain appurtenant to the Water System.

The City has expressed concern about potential use of the water right to support development growth outside of Vader. However, water rights are tied to a point of withdrawal of the water and to the approved use or application. The System's withdrawal point is at our Intake Station and its use is for municipal water use. Any changes to this place of withdrawal or this use would require an application, a review and approval by the State Department of Ecology, and notice of and a public hearing.

Moreover, the Water System cannot construct pipes to transmit water outside of the System's approved service area. Any expansion of the service area requires a showing that it will not cause the System to exceed the water right volume, will not adversely affect service to existing customers, will not financially burden existing ratepayers, and that the System can manage operations and maintenance. These responsibilities must be addressed in an approved Water Service Plan. The Plan also involves a public hearing process, and review and approval by the State Department of Ecology and Department of Health.

Finally, the City, County, and Department of Health are engaged in discussions to develop a final Disposition Plan that takes these matters into account and that also sets forth the criteria that the City must meet if, in the future, it desires to re-acquire, operate and maintain the System. The final hearing on the Disposition Plan is expected at the end of 2012 or in early 2013.