

# 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

## Completed Construction

Construction of the long awaited water system improvements began last July and was completed in January 2013. You may have noticed a lot of safety-orange clad folks from I&E Construction, Inc. and their subcontractors around town at that time. As soon as the new improvements passed testing, it was immediately put into service.

The new mains replaced known segments of old brittle lines prone to line breaks, connected mains to avoid "dead end" lines; and installed blowoff assemblies and hydrants for ease in maintenance. The new improvements consisted of: 6,710 lf of 8" main; 76 new service connections complete with meter box, meter and shutoff valves; one commercial service connection to the existing fire station building; 6 new hydrants; 4 sampling stations; 5 air release/vacuum assemblies; 4 blowoff assemblies; 60 valves; and 1,940 lf of 4" main.

One important feature of the improvements is the customer shutoff valve and box placed after the new meter box and toward the house. This customer valve will allow homeowners to temporarily turn water off to fix a leak or do home repairs on their premises without contacting the Utility to shut water off at our meter box. At this time, only customers served off of the new mains will see this feature.

The Utility is constructing this shutoff valve feature for subsequent repairs. If you need instructional help, please contact us at 1-855-858-2843.

By the way, our contractor said they will miss the good eats at the Little Crane!



*Preparation by the Contractor to bore under 7<sup>th</sup> St. at B Alley.*

The Cost of a thing is the amount of life which must be exchanged for it,  
immediately or in the long run. Thoreau

## KEEP COSTS DOWN

Potable water is nice...if you live in a third world country. It is pretty essential in this neck of the woods, and we would hate to shut customers off for delinquency. It is also not very cost effective as late customers can incur additional fees. Pay by one of the following methods to avoid a water shutoff:

- Remit payment by personal or cashier's check.
- Pay your bill in cash at the Fiscal Office window located in the basement of the Lewis County Courthouse.
- Use Point & Pay for electronic payment.
- Bill pay through your bank.

## IN THE GREEN

Since August 2011, the water system has been in the "green" permit category. Green is the highest permit category and it means our system is substantially in compliance with applicable drinking water requirements. The system is adequate for growth up to approved number and existing uses. Our current operating permit is valid through August 2014.

## WATER LOSS

By Who's Counting?

Our goal for 2014 to 2015 is to reduce unaccounted water loss to 20% or less. The water system has a historical water loss rate exceeding 40%.

Since 2011 we have reduced production by 10 million gallons which is about 25%. Much of this reduction is due to repairing multiple leaky mains and hydrants, replacing broken customer lines and old meters, and removing inactive services. Approximately 21% of service meters have been replaced. Lewis County has started a meter replacement program to replace all meters within the next three years. We are also contacting customers and locating services that were identified as inactive accounts in the Vader database. The old database had two types of accounts: active and inactive. Since implementation of our base-and-usage fee structure in March 2011, we only have active accounts. All accounts are billed.

All accounts are billed a base rate and a rate for usage. The base rate covers the incurred costs to produce and convey finished water to each customer regardless of the amount of usage. These costs also include maintenance and operation of the system, and replacement costs.

Another benefit of cleaning up the inactive accounts in the database is to ensure that adequate connections are available to new customers. Our system is approved for 369 water connections by the State Department of Health. By having only active accounts, we readily know the number of available connections to be in compliance.

## EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

The best source of drinking water during an emergency is water you have stored with your emergency supplies.

1. Store one gallon of water per person per day. Store enough for three days.
2. Store-bought, factory-sealed bottled water is best. Check the expiration date and replace as needed.
3. If you choose to fill your own water containers:
  - Collect the water from a safe supply.
  - Store water in thoroughly washed containers such as soda bottles, or food-grade plastic containers.
  - Seal containers tightly, label with date, and store in a cool, dark place.
  - Replace water every six months.

NEVER use a container that held toxic substances such as pesticides, chemicals or oil.



## ASK TIM

By Boss Tim

### ***What's all the fuss about reducing water loss?***

It's about keeping costs down for our customers. The water utility must pay for itself: there are no county funds earmarked for the Vader-Enchanted Valley water utility. The revenue from the water utility goes back into the costs of running the water utility for producing and delivering the finished water to each customer. Because our customer base is so small our customers pay for it. When we lose water and can't account for it by either billing a customer or realizing that it was used for regular operations, we cannot recover the costs to produce that water.

### ***Found any good discoveries when cleaning up the inactive accounts?***

No gold mines, but we did find several meters noted as inactive and locked several years ago, yet it showed recent water usage. One showed over 4 million gallons of water since 2007! We have removed these meters with the owners' approval.

### ***I see county trucks and contractors drawing water from a hydrant. Are these authorized usages?***

Lewis County Public Works is an authorized customer and all usages are noted and billed. Authorized contractors will normally be accompanied by county personnel. If you do see something out of the ordinary, please contact us at 1-855-858-2843.

### ***How did the Utility find leaks?***

Most of our leaks have been reported to us by the customers. We found some when we did a leak detection study. Our budget and workday doesn't allow for our operator to "walk the beat" so please contact us if you see water coming out of the ground, unusually wet or green spots, or anything pertaining to our water system that we should know about.

### ***What are some upcoming projects and issues?***

Our attorney is still working with the City of Vader to negotiate terms of the transfer of water system assets to Lewis County, coordinating land development approvals with water availability in city limits, and procedures for potential return of the water system to the City of Vader. Our initial goal was for completion in 2012, but it likely will be in 2014.

Another upcoming project is the development of the Water System Plan. The current plan is dated May 2008 and water system plans must be updated every six years.

### CODE RED

Register your telephone number and email at <http://lewiscountywa.gov/911-code-red>. If you do not have Internet access, then call 360-740-3394 to register.