



THE ENDEAVOR

A PUBLICATION OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

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SERVING EL CERRITO, KENSINGTON, AND RICHMOND ANNEX

SPRING 2005

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MISSION STATEMENT OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT

It shall be the mission of the Stege Sanitary District to plan and operate a safe, efficient, and economical wastewater collection and transfer system for the present and future customers of the District.

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Stege Gets Its Own Closed Circuit TV

As every homeowner knows, the best way to avoid expensive emergency repairs is to fix something before it breaks and causes even more problems. A roof that is missing shingles needs to be replaced before a leak ruins the carpet. A cracked sidewalk needs to be repaired before someone trips and falls.

But what if your "house" were buried and there was no easy way for you to see the roof or walls or sidewalk?

That's the problem Stege faces in maintaining the 150 miles of sewer lines that run through the District. Knowing which pipes need to be repaired or replaced before they fail is essential in planning a maintenance and rehabilitation program that is both reliable and cost-effective.



The remote controlled camera is being readied for lowering into the sewer main.



The inside of the van provides a sophisticated computer console and software to capture and store digital images of the sewer pipes.

For several years, Stege has contracted with outside companies to provide video inspection of the District's sewer lines. The video images, which provide specific information on potential problems, were ranked and cataloged to determine which segment of the sewer collection system should be repaired or replaced first.

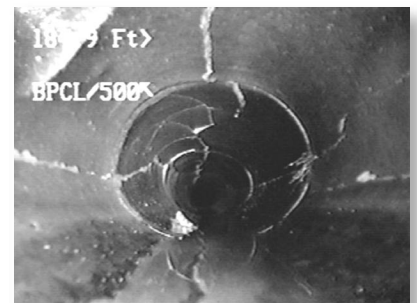
Relying on outside contractors, however, curtailed Stege's ability to inspect lines whenever and wherever the situation required. The District also wanted to maintain better control of the process and establish consistency in data collection and reporting.

Last November, Stege acquired its own CCTV (Closed Circuit TV) capability with the purchase of a remote

video inspection camera, computer equipment, software, and van. Camera propulsion, lighting, focus, and rotation of up to 360 degrees are all remotely controlled from the van as the remote camera moves through Stege sewers.

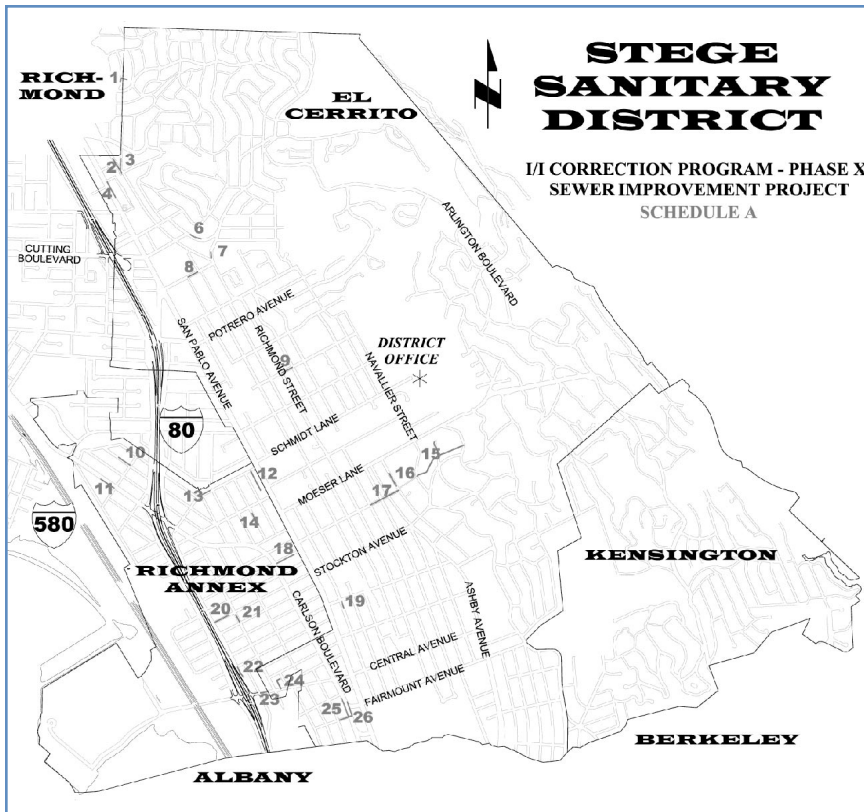
In addition to on-demand capability and consistency, the new system provides cost-savings and improved technology. Still digital images and video clips are now stored on DVDs that are easily stored and accessed.

All of the District's maintenance staff is being trained on the CCTV system so Stege will be able to digitally capture even the most buried and hidden pipe whenever necessary.



A digital inspection of the lines can show cracks and other defects that need to be repaired or replaced.

SYSTEM REHABILITATION



Believing it makes practical and economic sense to anticipate potential sewer failures before they occur, Stege continued its system rehabilitation program in 2003-2004, even when State funds became temporarily unavailable. The ongoing repair and upgrade program started in 1997. Lines targeted for immediate repair were those identified by remote camera (see page 1) as being cracked or broken, or in some way in danger of failure. Often, these were old clay pipes in established neighborhoods.

Recently, Stege was approved for funding through the California State Revolving Fund, which provides loans to jurisdictions at one half the interest rate of State general obligation bonds. Currently, that rate is about 2.6%. With this infusion of capital, the District will be able to continue its system rehabilitation program. The location of lines that will be replaced in 2005 are shown on the map on the left. If you have any questions, please feel free to call (510) 524-4668 and ask for Engineering.

Keep Rainwater Out of the Wastewater System

The areas served by the Stege Sanitary District—El Cerrito, Richmond Annex, and Kensington—all employ separate collection systems for wastewater and rainwater. Stege is responsible for wastewater collection and delivery to the East Bay Municipal Utility District wastewater treatment facility in Oakland. Rainwater is collected in another system of storm drains that eventually lead to San Francisco Bay. Most people, therefore, would be surprised to learn that during heavy rains, water in the District's system can swell to ten times its normal volume.

How can this be? Some of the increase is naturally occurring. Many of the older sewer lines are made of clay, which lets groundwater seep into the pipe. Cracked or broken laterals that lead from homes and businesses to the sewer mains also allow a significant amount of water to infiltrate the system. Another potentially greater increase in water volume, however, is due to water from rain downspouts and sump pumps that is fed into the wastewater collection system. To do so violates District, local, and federal standards. Penalties and fines may be imposed for these violations.

When the wastewater collection system is stressed beyond its capacity to carry water, overflows will occur. For your sake, for the sake of your neighbors, and for the local environment, be sure that none of your downspouts or sump pumps are connected to your sewer lateral or the District's sewer mains.



SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

Arvin Gonzales, Engineering Technician/Inspector

Walk into the Stege Sanitary District office in El Cerrito and you may find Arvin Gonzales at the front desk answering questions about a customer's sewer lateral. Or, he may be further back in the office going over plans, calculating fee estimates for commercial and new residential construction, getting ready to issue permits.



Then again, you might see Arvin out in the field inspecting all the new sewer construction in the District, both large and small jobs. Arvin is also responsible for overseeing all of the District's ongoing capital improvement and rehabilitation projects.

You might say Arvin wears many hats. The important thing is that he wears them all so well.

An Industrial Technology graduate from San Francisco State, Arvin has been with the District for nearly five years. What he likes best about working for Stege, he says, besides the freedom and independence of his job (or jobs), is the chance to help people with their sewer problems.

Arvin lives in Oakland with his wife and two little girls.



FREE BACKFLOW PREVENTION INSPECTION

Is your home adequately protected with a backflow prevention device? For a free backflow inspection, call the District office at (510) 524-4667, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Protecting Our Creeks

Birds chirping, leaves rustling, water splashing over rocks – these are the sights and sounds of a creek side.

Stege knows how important these oases of tranquility are, especially when set in the urban landscape of houses, roads, and diesel buses. To protect District creeks from failure of the sewer lines that run along their banks, Stege has developed a special preventative maintenance program.

Most of the sewer lines that run along the creek banks are made of clay which, over the years, is prone to cracking and breaking from earth movement and general deterioration. The old clay mains are being sliplined with durable, non-porous polyethylene. These new pipes are laid in one continuous length, so there is no need for joints that might leak. The upgrades are being made now, before there are problems or leaks in the old lines.

Two such recent projects were completed next to portions of Baxter Creek and Cerritos Creek, the creek that forms the boundary between Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.



Sewer lines along Baxter Creek were recently sliplined to protect the creek from possible sewer failure.



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Got a Plumbing Problem? Call Us First



The causes of most sewer clogs and backups can be found in the **home plumbing system** or in the **lateral** that connects the domestic sewer line to the District main. Years of grease or debris buildup may have clogged your line or roots might have infiltrated your system. Settling may have caused a clay pipe to crack.

On the other hand, the problem might lie with the District's main sewer line.

Property owners are responsible for maintenance and repair of the entire length of their lateral, up to and including the lateral's connection to the sewer main. The District is responsible for the condition of sewer mains.

If you are having problems with a sewer backup or a sluggish drain, call Stege first, any time, day or night, at (510) 524-4667. The service is free and could save you a lot of money. If the problem is with the main, the District will handle it. If the problem is with your system, we'll let you know that, too.

How to Contact Stege

By phone:

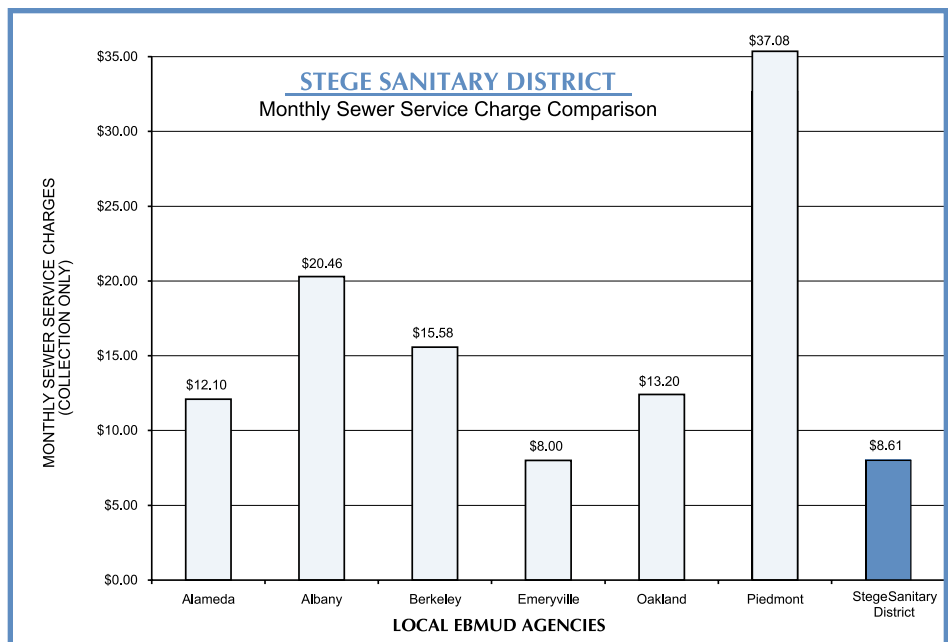
(510) 524-4667

By mail:

Stege Sanitary District
 7500 Schmidt Lane
 PO Box 537
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By email:

staff@stegesd.dst.ca.us



Stege Sanitary District rates remain among the lowest of local EBMUD agencies.

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