



THE ENDEAVOR

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SERVING EL CERRITO, KENSINGTON, AND RICHMOND ANNEX

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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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New Environmental Regulations to Close Point Isabel Plant

During heavy rainstorms, water in the District's sewer system can swell to ten times the average flow. While some of this water comes from homeowners illegally connecting rain downspouts and sump pumps to the sewer lines, much of this water comes into the system through cracks in old clay pipes, both main sewer lines and home laterals. Sewer overflows can occur when rainwater overwhelms the wastewater collection system.

The Point Isabel wet weather treatment plant was established to act as a wastewater transfer facility during dry weather and as an advanced primary sewage treatment facility during heavy rains. The wet weather plant is called on to settle, disinfect, dechlorinate, and then discharge wastewater into the Bay an average of 5-7 times a year.

The quality of water leaving the plant does not meet anticipated stricter environmental regulations and EPA's revised interpretation of the Clean Water Act. That means Point Isabel will no longer be able to operate as an advanced primary treatment plant during heavy rains and the District must find a way to reduce infiltration of rainwater into the system.

Property owners are required to maintain the sewer lateral that runs from their home building to the sewer main and to present a Certificate of Compliance verifying the good condition of the lateral before the property is sold. In addition, the District has an aggressive ongoing rehabilitation program that identifies sewer mains that need to be replaced. Stege is one of the oldest sanitary districts in California and its hilly topography and frequent seismic

earth movement makes its lines particularly vulnerable to cracking. The District will need to accelerate its replacement of old pipes in order to significantly reduce system flows and meet the new environmental mandates. While the requirements will not be specifically defined until this spring or summer, it is expected that a significant rate increase of as much as \$4 to \$5 a month may be necessary once the EPA and San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board renew Stege's operating permit. Stege sewer service rates remain one of the lowest in the East Bay Municipal Utility District (figure 1) and Stege is committed to providing its customers with cost-effective and efficient service.

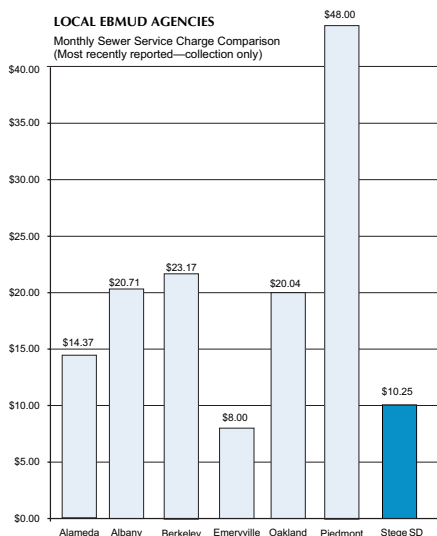


Figure 1: Comparison of monthly collection agency service rates in EBMUD

Stege Wins Three Prestigious Awards

Stege has been named a 2008 California Sanitation Risk Management Authority (CSRMA) Loss Control Program winner. CSRMA is a pool of 58 sanitation districts throughout California who have joined together to provide insurance for its member agencies. The organization employs a full-time loss-control specialist who conducts on-site safety evaluations and regional safety training seminars.

Despite being a small agency with fewer resources than many larger organizations, SSD has been a leader in adopting and customizing programs and practices to help control risk. In fact, Stege has had no lost-time accidents for over 10 consecutive years, beginning prior to its membership in CSRMA. The District was also awarded a "Safety Superstar" award from CSRMA for its record of no on-the-job accidents for five years. Stege owes its extraordinary safety record to its staff of ten employees, who are dedicated to their job and to the community they serve.

Stege also was the recipient of the California Water Environment Association (CWEA), San Francisco Bay Section, collection system award of the year for 2008. This award is given to the agency that displays the best regulatory compliance, accomplishments, maintenance, and training and safety programs of all similar systems in the Bay Area.



Stege staff with CWEA awards.

Our Shovels Are Ready

While government agencies anxiously await the details of the \$789 billion stimulus plan recently signed into law by President Obama, Stege stands ready to proceed on a number of projects that meet the president's criteria of immediately creating "green" industry jobs. In addition to having all environmental reviews and permits in place, Stege has a long history with the State of California in using public funds wisely and efficiently.

The stimulus plan is designed to create or save 396,000 jobs in California. Stege has submitted project requests to the State Water Resources Control Board that will create or save local jobs.



Easy Steps to Comply with Lateral Ordinance

1. **Videotape your lateral.** This step generally costs less than \$150.
2. **Bring the videotape to our office for review.** There is no cost for this service and results are generally available within 48 hours.
3. **Make repairs, if needed, and obtain your Certificate of Compliance.**

How to Contact Stege

Phone:

(510) 524-4668
(510) 524-4667 (after hours)

Mail:

Stege Sanitary District
7500 Schmidt Lane
El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537

Email:

staff@stegesd.dst.ca.us

Web:

www.stegesd.dst.ca.us



SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

Spotlight on Service

John Gerletti Maintenance Crew Foreman

In the 20 years John has been with Stege he's learned things they can't teach you in class—Things like where the old easements that run through neighborhood backyards are located or which manholes provide the best access for the rodder to clear the sewer lines or which dogs are friendly and which ones aren't. John has kept all this information in a little black book that he takes with him when he goes out with his crew of three to service and maintain Stege's 147 miles of sewer lines. Now that John is retiring, all that information was in danger of being lost. Fred Bondoc, who will replace John as crew foreman when John leaves this summer, or anyone who comes after Fred, would have had to start their own little black book all over again. To make sure that wasn't necessary, John has started transcribing his notes onto the large detailed maps Stege keeps of its system. Those notes are then digitized and added as a layer to Stege's digital map. This layer can be updated, revised, and added onto as new foremen collect more information.

The two things John is most proud of during his tenure with Stege are: the fact there was only one sewer main stoppage per month last year (many districts of Stege's size have 5 or more) and there have been no on-the-job injuries in the past ten years. John attributes both of these remarkable accomplishments to the ongoing training and commitment to safety for which Stege is renowned.

The Gerletti family members are long-time local residents. John's grandfather immigrated to the US from Italy and settled in El Cerrito in the early 1900s. John's father, John Sr., owned and operated the Gerletti Plant Nursery on San Pablo Avenue and continued selling Christmas trees on the corner of San Pablo and Orchard after the nursery was replaced by a NIBS restaurant. John still lives in the family home on Wenk Avenue with the youngest of his four daughters. After retiring, John plans to devote more time to the care of his aging mother. He'll miss the work and the guys, but he'll always be welcome to stop by and say hello—and maybe add just one more note to the map.



Smoke Testing

Smoke testing is used to identify areas where storm water can infiltrate the sewer system. Such infiltration can overwhelm the District's sewers during heavy rains.

Areas that may allow for infiltration include:

1. Sewer laterals with cracks, holes, or loose joints;
2. Missing or unapproved cleanout caps;
3. Roof downspouts and area drains that are cross-connected to the sewer system.

During testing, which will now be done annually in late summer or early fall, smoke is blown through the sewers and into the laterals that connect individual buildings to the main line. The smoke used during testing is specially manufactured for this purpose and is non-toxic and non-staining. It is harmless to humans, pets, and food.

Owners will be notified by mail and by door hangers about one week in advance of testing and are asked to be sure all plumbing traps in their buildings are filled with water to prevent smoke from entering the building. Any smoke that enters will clear within a few minutes. The presence of smoke, however, indicates that sewer odors could also enter the home. This may be caused by:

1. Defective, inadequate, or improperly installed plumbing;
2. Dry or defective traps.

Outdoor defects that are identified by the smoke testing will be noted and photographed and owners will be notified by mail with information on the problem and what steps they need to correct the situation. Property owners in Stege are responsible for the maintenance of their sewer lateral up to and including the connection to the District's sewer main. Connecting rain downspouts or sump pumps to the sewer system is prohibited.



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Demolition Makes Way for New Stege Facility

The land swap between Stege and the City of El Cerrito is complete. Once the recently-acquired property is completely cleared and graded, construction can begin on the new Stege headquarters building and maintenance yard. The District will continue to operate its office and maintenance yard at its present location on Schmidt Lane until the new building, to be located just west of the City’s corporation yard on Schmidt, is completed.

The current headquarters, built in 1959, will be replaced by a modern LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building that will be optimized for lighting, heating, and water efficiency. Construction will

be designed to minimize environmental impact and to control pollution. Building materials used will incorporate recycled content and be chosen for their low-emitting qualities. Landscaping will be water efficient.

Repairing and upgrading the old building would have cost almost as much as the new building. All building expenses will be covered by using reserve funds. There will be no rate increase to cover costs.

Construction bidding begins in March and construction may start as early as May. Construction should last 8-9 months.



Demolition is almost complete on the site that will house the future Stege headquarters and maintenance yard, which is shown in the upper right drawing.

STEGE HISTORY

On May 15, 2013, Stege Sanitary District will celebrate 100 years of service to the communities of El Cerrito, Kensington, and Richmond Annex. To get ready for this historical event, Stege is compiling a history of the District. Do you have any anecdotes or memories of the District you would like to share? Do you have photographs or news clippings that help tell the story of Stege? If so, the District would love to hear from you. Either write to 7500 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537 or email Staff@StegeSD.dst.ca.us.

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