



# THE ENDEAVOR

A PUBLICATION OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

VOLUME XXII NUMBER 2

SERVING EL CERRITO, KENSINGTON, AND RICHMOND ANNEX

Fall 2016

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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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## Don't Pour Turkey Fryer Oil Down the Drain

**D**eep-fried turkeys have become popular. But what about all that oil left over from frying? Your first instinct might be to pour it down the drain. Out-of-sight, out-of-mind, right? Wrong. When Fats, Oil, or Grease (FOG) is washed down the drain, it sticks around, clogging household plumbing, the sewer lateral that connects a building to the sewer main, and even the main itself. Liquefied grease and animal fat will solidify and clog pipes, much like a clog in an artery. Liquid oils coat pipes and contribute to blockages.

Blockages have caused sewers to back up into homes, resulting in messy and expensive cleanup costs and repairs. When sewer mains overflow in the street, untreated wastewater can run into parks and waterways, causing environmental damage and posing health risks. Failure to properly dispose of fats, oils, and grease is a health ordinance violation and property owners can be held responsible for the cost of cleanup and environmental damage resulting from blockage overflows.

Running hot water after the grease won't keep it from solidifying in the pipes; neither will flushing detergent down the drain after the grease or using a garbage disposal unit. The only way to keep your pipes FOG-free is never to put fats, oils, or grease down the drain.

Small amounts of fats, oils, and grease can be wiped with paper towels and, where accepted, disposed of in your green waste cart. Larger amounts of oil from deep frying should be brought to a recycling center where it is converted into livestock feed or biodiesel. Stege customers can recycle used cooking oil at the El Cerrito Recycling Center at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, which is next door to the Stege Sanitary District main office. For more information on recycling cooking oil, go to [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com) and search for "residential cooking oil and grease drop-off." For a brochure on how to keep pipes FOG-free, call EBMUD at (510) 287-1651. 



Recycle cooking oil at the  
El Cerrito Recycling Center



## Richmond/ El Cerrito Firefighters Toy Program

For over two decades, firefighters in Richmond and El Cerrito have been collecting toys to make the holidays a little brighter for children in the community. Stege Sanitary District has been with them all the way, accepting donations of unwrapped new toys and monetary contributions from employees, District board members, and the public to add to the fund. After collection, toys are brought to the El Cerrito fire department for distribution. Through the combined efforts of businesses, organizations, and individuals, the Richmond/El Cerrito Firefighters Toy Program is able to add holiday cheer to 700 families in the communities served by the Stege Sanitary District. Over the years, the Distinct has been awarded several plaques, commemorating the District’s efforts in this noble cause. The plaques are proudly displayed in the District office.

Because of storage space constraints, the firefighters are only able to accept contributions for the toy program from November through December. The District, however, is able to accept toys throughout the year. Toys for preteens and teens, including board games, puzzles, and balls, are especially needed. Donations of clothes, blankets, and sleeping bags are accepted year-round at the following firehouses: 217 Arlington Ave., Kennsington; 1520 Arlington Ave., El Cerrito; and 10900 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito.

For those families who would benefit from the program, applications are available through the Richmond YMCA. S



## July 4th Celebration

As it has for many years, Stege Sanitary District joined the City of El Cerrito in celebrating Independence Day last summer in beautiful Cerrito Vista Park. The long-running July 4th event featured community and arts exhibits, carnival food and games, live entertainment, and an animal-free circus. At the District booth, event-goers were able to ask questions of Board members, view maps, learn about backflow prevention devices, and pick up useful pamphlets, and past newsletters. S

## Sewer Service Charge

Sewer Service Charges cover the cost of the operation, maintenance, and capital improvements to the sanitary sewer system. Stege Sanitary District collects and delivers sanitary sewer flows from its service area and delivers it to East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) for wastewater treatment. EBMUD charges a separate fee for wastewater treatment, and this is in addition to the Stege Sewer Service Charge.

Residential properties are charged a flat fee while non-residential and commercial properties are charged at a metered rate of water used. Sewer Service Charges are collected through the annual property tax bills issued by the County. A sample property tax bill is shown below. The fee shown for residential properties is an annual rate. The line item STEGE SEWER CHG are the fees assessed to your property by Stege Sanitary District. S

SPECIAL TAXES & ASSESSMENTS			
DESCRIPTION	CODE	INFORMATION	AMOUNT
WCCUSD PARCEL TAX	* CL	(844) 332-0549	\$150.90
STRM DRAIN RECONST	DA	(800) 676-7516	\$58.00
MOSQUITO & VECTOR	DV	(925) 867-3400	\$3.12
EMERGENCY MED B	DY	(925) 646-4690	\$10.00
AC TRANSIT-MEAS VV	FA	(707) 430-4300 X125	\$96.00
EL CERRITO-SWM CTR	G6	(800) 676-7516	\$58.46
FED STORMWATER A-5	IH	(925) 313-2023	\$38.00
WCCUSD ASSESSMENT	JA	(800) 273-5167	\$72.00
STEGE SEWER CHG	JX	(510) 524-4668	\$242.00
EASTBAY TRAILS LLD	* KA	(888) 512-0316	\$5.44
EBMD WET WEATHER	KO	(510) 287-2048	\$147.00
EL CERRITO ST LT	MZ	(800) 676-7516	\$72.00
WCC HEALTH-PRCL TX	NR	(866) 807-6864	\$52.00
EBRPD-MEAS CC-ZN 1	* NT	(888) 512-0316	\$12.00

# Two Different Underground Systems



**Y**ou might think that all those manhole covers you see in the streets lead to the same system of underground pipes. They don't.

The Stege Sanitary District is responsible for the collection and transport of wastewater from homes, schools, and businesses within its boundaries to the EBMUD wastewater treatment plant in Oakland. The District's service area includes the cities of Kensington, El Cerrito and a portion of Richmond known as the Richmond Annex. These areas employ a separate storm drain system that collects rainwater runoff from the streets and surrounding grounds and deposits the water into creeks that eventually lead to San Francisco Bay.

It's important that homeowners do not pipe rainwater, either from house gutters or a sump pump, into the wastewater system. The District's sanitary system is not designed to handle the large volume of runoff from a rainstorm. Overflows of the wastewater sewers might occur if rainwater is diverted into this system. Rainwater should be directed into the street, ground, or directly to the storm drain system.

Piping rainwater into the sewer system violates District, federal, and local ordinances. Penalties and fines may be imposed for these violations.

If you see a manhole overflowing in the street immediately call the District at (510) 524-4667 and we will promptly send a maintenance team to evaluate the situation. If you have any questions about the storm runoff system, call the following numbers: City of El Cerrito (510) 215-4382 and the City of Richmond (510) 231-3011. Residents of Kensington should call their Contra Costa County office at (925) 313-7000. **S**



*Sewer manhole cover*

*Storm drain*

## Helpful Reminders



### **Sewer Problems? CALL US FIRST!**



If you see water backing up into your home, **call Stege before you call a plumber.** That number is **(510) 524-4667**. It is answered 24/7 by a real person. The problem may be in your lateral, or it may be in the sewer main. If necessary, we will send a crew out to investigate. The inspection is free and we try to respond within one hour. **S**

### **Plumbing Contractors**

For a list of plumbing contractors registered to work on private laterals in the District, visit [www.stegesan.org](http://www.stegesan.org). Please note, Stege recommends getting at least three bids before starting work. **S**

### **Put Wipes in the Trash, Not in the Toilet**



Unlike toilet tissue, disposable "flushable" wipes don't disintegrate in water. They retain their form and accumulate in sewer mains where they can cause a sewer overflow into the street. Put all wipes where they belong—in the trash, not in the toilet. **S**

### **[www.stegesan.org](http://www.stegesan.org)**

Find the latest announcements; a list of registered plumbing contractors; sewer permit and fee information; Board meeting schedule, minutes, and agenda; and FAQs on the District's website, [www.stegesan.org](http://www.stegesan.org). **S**

### **Sewer Easements**

Over 26% of the sanitary sewer lines in the District are located on private property in easements or reserves that were established when the lands in the area were subdivided. Property owners may NOT construct permanent structures over these easements as it restricts District access to the sewers. To find out if you have a sewer easement on your property, call the District at (510) 524-4667 during business hours. **S**



**STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT**  
 7500 Schmidt Lane  
 El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537 (510) 524-4667

**PRSRT STD**  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 FREMONT CA  
 PERMIT #68

To Contact Us: **Phone:** (510) 524-4668 or after hours (510) 524-4667 **Email:** staff@stegesd.org **Web:** www.stegesd.org

# Spotlight on Service The Front Desk

Do you need a sewer lateral permit? Do you have a question you need answered in person? Are you a contractor looking to register with the District or have questions about the District’s specifications? Do you think you might have a sewer easement on your property but want to make sure? Do you want to talk to a real person about a backflow prevention system? Step up to the Stege Sanitary District front desk at 7500 Schmidt Lane in El Cerrito.

Here, in addition to help with the above, you will find a copy of the

District’s general guidelines, a list of pre-approved contractors, back issues of the District newsletter and other useful flyers and brochures. Mostly, though, you will find people eager to help you through any plumbing question or concern you might have.

The front desk is staffed from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on Friday by Cathy Kalahale and Julie McDonald. Whomever it is that helps you, you can be sure of getting friendly, knowledgeable answers to your questions. S



*Left: Cathy Kalahale;  
 Right: Julie McDonald*

## District of Distinction



The Stege Sanitary District was reaccredited as a District of Distinction through the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF). The District of Distinction accreditation is one of the most prestigious local government awards in the state of California and clearly validates the District’s commitment to good governance and to ethical and sound operating practices. The District has been accredited as a District of Distinction since 2009.

In order to win the award, the District had to undergo regular financial audits and conform to all state statutes and regulations. All directors, the general manager and executive staff had to receive training in governance as well as ethics training and harassment prevention training and the District had to complete and receive SDLF’s District Transparency Certificate of Excellence. S