



# WEST LINN UPDATE

August 2014

## West Linn's Sewer System: Protecting Public Health & the Environment

West Linn's sewer service is provided by the Tri-City Service District. The Tri-City Water Pollution Control Plant in Oregon City cleans over seven million gallons of wastewater every day, protecting public health and the environment. The plant is owned and operated by the Tri-City Service District (TCSD), which includes the cities of West Linn, Gladstone and Oregon City.

In November 2013, Oregon City officials imposed a fee for utilities operating within their city right of way. TCSD is now required to pay Oregon City nearly \$250,000 in 2014-15, with the amount rising each year. As a result, rates for TCSD customers are almost certain to increase.

Oregon City's fee will not fund or enhance TCSD services. It is a hidden tax, unnecessarily levied on TCSD customers. In June 2014, TCSD filed a lawsuit against the City of Oregon City to eliminate or reduce the impact of the fee on TCSD customers.

### **Who is likely to be affected by Oregon City's fee?**

The Tri-City Service District Advisory Committee recommended to the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners that a differential rate be implemented for Oregon City on July 1, 2014, to ensure that West Linn and Gladstone ratepayers are not impacted by Oregon City's hidden tax. The recommendation was included in the budget passed by the Board of County Commissioners on June 26, 2014. Consequently, for the 2014-15 fiscal year, the rate increase needed to pay the fee will impact Oregon City customers only.

### **How much is Oregon City's tax? How will it affect TCSD rates?**

By the end of the 2013-14 fiscal year, Oregon City will have already invoiced TCSD nearly \$80,000, which TCSD was not given the opportunity to budget for. TCSD must recover the cost of this 2013-14 charge in the coming fiscal year. In 2014-15, Oregon City will charge TCSD approximately \$240,000. In addition to the \$1.65 District-wide increase to support services, Oregon City rates could increase an additional \$1.76 per month per household on account of the Oregon City tax.

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*Photographic evidence of wipes in pipes.*

## Wipes can 'wipe out' costly sewer systems

Wet wipes, baby wipes, cleansing wipes, disinfecting wipes, surface wipes, hand wipes, antibacterial wipes, bathroom wipes or disposable moist towelettes—whatever you call them, no matter what the packaging says, **DO NOT FLUSH THEM!** The packaging might say they're flushable, but wipes, no matter the cleaning purpose, are causing expensive problems for sewer operators all over the world and should be disposed of in a waste receptacle and sent to a landfill to decompose. Even though they are considered a convenience for the general population, they are clogging pipes in homes as well as public sewer lines and wastewater treatment plant equipment in cities all over the world.

"Wipes that are flushed eventually meet up with grease from kitchen drains and form solidified masses that can cause sewer overflows," said Lew McCutcheon, Clackamas County Water Environment Services Wastewater Plant Operator. To avoid expensive plumber visits and sewer repairs, do not interpret manufacturers' claims of "flushable" to mean "dispersible as toilet paper." Just because something can go down the toilet, doesn't mean it should. "Until these products are manufactured to break down as fast as toilet paper, they should be used and disposed of in the garbage," said McCutcheon.

### **Google It:**

To see what  
wipes do to  
sewer systems,  
Google  
"London's 15 ton  
Fatberg."



## PJ's to Pancakes - Old Time Fair Run Sunday, July 20 | Willamette Park, West Linn

8:00 a.m. Kids 1 mile run - FREE (registration required)  
8:15 a.m. 5K Run - \$8 preregistration or \$10 day of the event

The PJ's to Pancakes kids 1 mile run and 5K run are new events at the Old Time Fair. The run starts in Willamette Park and follows Volpp Street. We are encouraging all runners to show up in your PJ's for this great event. The kids run will stay within the boundaries of Willamette Park. All kids registered will receive a ribbon. The 5K run will be a loop and return to Willamette Park. All participants in the run will receive a free breakfast at the

conclusion of the run, provided by the West Linn Lions. Don't miss this opportunity to run a race in your PJ's. Packet pickup starts at 7:00 a.m., Sunday, July 20, at the park. Visit <http://westlinnoregon.gov/parksrec> for more information.

## Movies in the Park on Fridays Through August 22

Thanks to your votes, the movies for summer 2014 have been selected! Find your favorite West Linn park, mark your calendar and get ready for another great year of Movies in the Park. Visit <http://westlinnoregon.gov/parksrec> for more information.

- July 25 - Midhill Park - *Rudy*
- August 1 - Marylhurst Heights Park - *Despicable Me 2*
- August 8 - Willamette Park - *Iron Man 3*
- August 22 - Tanner Creek Park - *LEGO Movie*



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### How is Oregon City's tax calculated?

In the case of TCSD, Oregon City calculates the tax based on six percent of TCSD's gross revenue. The basis for this calculation is legally questionable, as the percentage of gross revenue has no relationship to costs that may be incurred by Oregon City to maintain the right of way, nor any relationship to how much infrastructure TCSD maintains in the right of way. This means that TCSD rates will need to be increased annually to pay the increasing fee.

### Has Oregon City offered an explanation or figures indicating the actual costs associated with maintaining the right of way?

So far, Oregon City has not provided figures conveying actual costs associated with right of way maintenance.

### Where do West Linn and Gladstone stand on this fee?

City officials in both West Linn and Gladstone are united with Clackamas County on behalf of TCSD in reducing or eliminating the negative impact of Oregon City's tax on ratepayers. Our communities want to see local governments working together, not imposing unnecessary and unnegotiated taxes on each other, raising rates for basic services.

### Why is TCSD filing a lawsuit?

The lawsuit is a last resort to reduce the impact of Oregon City's tax on TCSD ratepayers. In November 2013, Clackamas County Commission Chair John Ludlow and County Administrator Don Krupp testified to the Oregon City Commission as to the negative impact the tax would have on TCSD ratepayers. Additionally, Chair Ludlow, Mayor Byers (Gladstone), and Mayor Kovash (West Linn) jointly authored a letter requesting relief from the fee in May 2014. Oregon City denied the requests.

"Our communities want to see local governments working together, not imposing unnecessary and unnegotiated taxes on each other, raising rates for basic services."

Find out more at [Tri-CityServiceDistrict.org](http://Tri-CityServiceDistrict.org).