



# THE PIPELINE

Official Newsletter of Rogue Valley Sewer Services

Issue #16

Fall 2004

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## Here's what you'll find in this issue

- Higher Water Standards Lead to Modest Rate Increase
- *Backyard Ponds & West Nile Virus*
- Rate Increase/Decrease
- *Welcome Phoenix*
- What is Storm Water?

## Larry Rogers, Our Featured Employee

Larry was raised in Ashland and joined our company in 1980 coming to us from a local wood products manufacturing business in White City. Larry is a crew leader with our Video inspection equipment. He has operated our TV equipment for many years and

has grown with this technology. RVS has over 300 miles of pipeline that is inspected with closed-circuit cameras. The camera is moved

through the lines on a variety of transporters and records the condition of the pipeline. The location of each service is measured from the upstream manhole.

These inspections create a written report that includes video and still pictures and identify bad grade in the section, as well as root intrusion, broken segments, and protruding services and Larry helps local contractors identify problems in new systems being built for



RVS and locates portions of our system that need repair.

The TV reports are one of the tools used by RVS Engineering to update our electronic mapping files. These reports are used to prioritize maintenance and construction efforts. RVS has purchased

state of the art video inspection equipment this year. It can record and print color copies in any of RVS's pipelines from 6 inch to 66 inch in diameter. Larry completes our system inspection in

just 5 years, and then starts over again. RVS has used video inspection equipment since 1975. In the beginning the black and white camera was pulled between manholes by winches and recorded the inspection on a reel-to-reel recorder. Larry now has color, zoom, auto focus, pan and tilt, and the ability to steer as the technology burns DVDs. Larry's mechanical and technical expertise is one of the reasons RVS is growing along with our community.

## Higher Water Standards Lead to Modest Increase In Monthly Bills

In order to ***protect and improve the quality*** of the water in our wells, creeks and rivers the federal government has established a more stringent storm water program.

Over the last several years, area cities and Jackson County have cooperated in a study to determine the best and most efficient way to improve water quality. The study also addressed how to best meet these new Federal requirements. This group determined that to coordinate a storm water program would be the least costly way to deal with government mandated rules on the ***management*** and ***quantity*** of storm water. While all of the agencies would continue to work together on improving community awareness of the causes of poor water quality.

The next step was to determine who would do the rest of the work. The committee had lots of help in making these decisions. This help ranged from input through several public meetings, assistance from the Council of Governments, and from nationally recognized consultants. It was agreed that RVS would handle ***management*** for the agencies of Phoenix, Talent, Central Point and Jackson County. While each separate city would handle the ***quantity*** of storm water. It was felt

that tasks such as cleaning storm drainage systems could best be done while cleaning the streets, etc.

In looking at funding alternatives, a modest service charge ranked high because of its fairness to all and because of its dependability. To implement this charge, RVS will soon be adjusting monthly rates to cover the storm water ***management*** portion of federal regulation compliance. This will cost \$1 per month for each single family home and \$1 per month per 3,000 square feet of impervious surface for all others (commercial, mobile home parks, schools, etc.).

RVS will also collect \$1.50 for the cities of Phoenix and Talent. It will be included with RVS management bill for a total of \$2.50. These charges will be billed with the RVS sewer bill, so the City of Talent will no longer charge a separate storm water fee on their water bill.

The combined storm and sanitary sewer bill in those two cities will be \$16.40 per month. While we know that no one likes to pay more, we hope that you agree – protecting our water is worth it.

*Our Mission is to provide sewer services in the safest and most cost effective manner possible while maintaining the quality of life along with the health and safety of our Rogue Valley customers.*

## Capital Improvements

Here at Rogue Valley Sewer Services we are constantly working to make the system more reliable. One of the things we do to ensure reliability is to identify sewer mains that are either deteriorated or undersized and replace them before they cause problems.

We currently have two major sewer projects under construction. In Eagle Point we are replacing almost 4,000 feet of main line on Shasta Avenue and in Talent we are replacing 2,800 feet of main line on Highway 99. Both of these projects are designed to ensure capacity over the next 50 years.

We have over 30 major projects identified throughout the region that will be completed over the next 10 years. Within the next 12 months we plan to begin rehabilitation of Avenue G in White City and West Pine Street in Central Point.

## Rate Increase and Decrease

As we mentioned in our spring newsletter, the Regional Treatment Plant is increasing our costs. Since we have to pass this increase on, most of our residential customers will see a rate change from \$12.70 to \$13.90, an increase of about 10%.

At the same time, since we have been able to improve the condition of our 350 miles of sanitary

sewer lines, our Board of Directors has decided to standardize rates. Effective with the next bill, mailed out in late October, all of our residential customers will pay \$13.90.

This does result in slight increases, \$.60 in Central Point and \$.05 in Jacksonville. And, significant decreases, \$2.50 in Eagle Point and \$3.13 in Phoenix.

Since all of our cus-

tomers are receiving the same service, we felt that equalizing rates was the right thing to do. We pride our selves in giving everyone quality service, so we hope you agree that this is fair.

All of our multi-family and commercial rates will also be standardized, some up, some down. Please call our office at 541-779-4144 for more information.

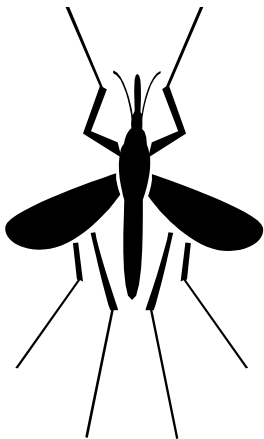


## Back Yard Ponds & West Nile Virus

With all the talk about West Nile Virus these days, how safe are those backyard ponds?

Pretty safe. Mosquito larvae does grow in standing water, but one way to control mosquitoes is to add mosquito fish (*Gambusia Affinis*) to your pond.

Mosquito Fish are able to survive temperatures below 30° and up to 100° Fahrenheit. The mosquito fish is an ideal form of biological control. It is a hardy and adaptable fish, tolerant of a wide range of temperature variations and presents a cost effective safer alternative to pesticides. That makes this solution to mosquito control an excellent choice for our area.



## Welcome Phoenix

As of July 1, 2004, we have been providing sanitary sewer service to all of the customers in the City of Phoenix. We are very happy that the City Council unanimously approved this change, and we are very glad to be able to reduce Their monthly sewer

fee from \$17.97 to \$16.40 then after October 1st, to \$13.90.

RVS now services Central Point, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Phoenix, Talent, White City, portions of Medford, and many areas between these cities.





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## What is Storm Water?

Storm water is the rain and snow which falls to the ground and flows into our streams and rivers. In a typical urban environment this water can flow across rooftops, lawns, driveways, streets, gutters, ditches and storm drain pipes and finally into a stream. Along the way the water will pick up a variety of pollutants including oil, grease, yard chemicals, fertilizers, pet waste and plain old dirt and debris. All of this is dumped into the streams with no treatment. The result is streams that are not suitable for swimming, drinking or fishing.

Under the Federal Clean Water Act local municipalities are responsible for the quality of the water discharged from their storm drains. The current phase of the law (known as Phase 2 NPDES) affects cities and urbanized areas with a population of more than 10,000.

Rogue Valley Sewer Services has teamed up with Jackson County and the cities of Talent, Phoenix and Central Point to develop a storm water management plan to help improve the quality of the water discharged onto the streams. Over the next few years we will be reaching out to the community to help people understand how the storm water system works and how their actions can affect water quality. We will also be establishing more effective standards for land development projects and will undertake infrastructure improvements designed to improve water quality.