

## FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER



**Capital Improvement Program.** We've made great progress this summer on our capital improvement program. We've about completed our planned FY 2025 installations thanks to Brent Binnall, the "collections" half of our licensed operator team. Brent has worked tirelessly since spring to organize and supervise the projects. We understand that replacing the lateral-to-mainline connectors has caused some neighborhood disruptions and we're most appreciative of your patience with the temporary road closures. Some of you have received new pump control units with alarms as part of our improvement program. More of you will be getting them next year, and in the years to come. Both the connectors and control units are expensive, and so we've elected to spread out the replacements over a roughly ten-year period.



**Contractor installing a new mainline connection**



**New pump control unit**

**And, speaking of \$\$\$.** Your sewer Board held public hearings on a proposed FY 2026 budget and fee increase. I was pleasantly surprised that we had only positive comments and broad recognition that we must keep our critical infrastructure up-to-date. Next year's budget begins December 1<sup>st</sup> and, for the first time in several years, we are projecting a tiny budget surplus. Thanks to the fee increase, we will maintain our contingency fund at the policy level while also fully funding our capital improvement program. The detailed budget is posted on our website: [bottlebaydistrict.org](http://bottlebaydistrict.org).

**Fee Increase.** Our capital improvement program comes with a price tag, of course. Consequently, beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, the Basic Fee will increase \$10/month, from \$29/month to \$39/month, or \$117/quarter. The Service Fee for connected users will increase \$5/month, from \$46/month to \$51/month, or \$153/quarter. The \$20/month debt service on the Wastewater Expansion Project remains the same.

**Sewage Treatment.** I rarely talk about our treatment plant. I should. It's stellar, thanks to the 2020 Wastewater Expansion Project and excellent management. In January, 2020, the Board borrowed \$1.7 million from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) at 1.75% per annum over 30 years. We were required to lock away \$73,393.60, the amount of the annual principal and interest, by 2030. But those good souls on that Board just stuck the full amount in an investment account with Idaho's Local Government Investment Pool. So, we're good, and by a recent policy change, we're counting the excess reserve produced from the interest income, as part of our self-imposed maintenance contingency savings requirement.



**How treatment & disposal works.** In a nutshell, the effluent from our collection system is pumped up to the treatment lagoons above Bottle Bay Road. In the first lagoon, the effluent is treated by natural processes, such as sunlight, wind, aerobic bacteria and algae, that break down the pollutants. Sludge is created at the bottom of the lagoon and must be periodically removed, among other routine maintenance chores. In the second lagoon, the wastewater is chemically treated, and then sprayed out into our surrounding forest land through an extensive sprinkler irrigation

system. This occurs in the warmer months of the year. IDEQ requires all sorts of monitoring of the entire process, including test wells in the irrigation zone to ensure that levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and bacteria, do not exceed regulated maximum amounts. Bob Hansen, president of Water Systems Mgt., Inc., our licensed operator, reports to the Board each month, providing data on the monitoring including inflows, lagoon capacity, and irrigation amounts, and the quality of the discharge. So far, we're doing just great.

**Two Reminders.** If you're packing up the cabin for the winter, DO NOT TURN-OFF the sewer pump switch in your circuit box. If you're constructing, or plan to construct, you MUST apply for a sewer permit. IDEQ is becoming ever more stringent about septic tanks, pumps, their use and placement, so we, I'm sorry to say, will be toughening up on our oversight. The days of "laissez-faire" sewer operation on Bottle Bay have come and gone. Please be patient with us!

**Bill Berg, District President**  
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