

June 2008

Water District News

**Bolivar Peninsula
Special Utility District**
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Water System Improvements Underway

Have you seen the big, blue pipes along Highway 87 through Crystal Beach? Many people have wondered what is going on and why these pipes are laid out. The answer is great news, especially for residents in the Port Bolivar area. Through low-interest loans from the Texas Water Development Board, Bolivar Peninsula Special Utility District is upgrading the water system to improve service to customers and to meet State requirements.

The first phase of the project consists of a new 20 inch water line from Singing Sands to the Boyt Road plant site. The new water line will replace the existing under-sized 12 inch water line. The contract amount for this project is \$3,782,005. The section of the new water line from Singing Sands to the elevated storage tower in Crystal Beach is already completed and in service, and the rest of the line is expected to be completed later this summer. The contract company that is installing the water line is Allco from Beaumont, Texas.

As the second phase of

the project, construction of a 500,000 gallon elevated storage tank at Boyt Road is now underway. Within the next month a large concrete pedestal should be completed at the site and the storage tank will then be constructed to sit on the pedestal. The new elevated water storage tank is required to meet Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) standards. The TCEQ is the State agency that regulates water systems in Texas and BPSUD has been in violation of pressure storage capacity rules for many years. The new tank will allow residents of the Port Bolivar area to maintain water pressure even in high usage times. The contract amount for this project is \$1,559,000 and the contract company that will be constructing the tank is Landmark Structures from Fort Worth, Texas.

As the third portion of this project, new pumping stations will be constructed to replace the under-sized pumping stations at the Singing Sands plant and at

the Port Bolivar Plant (at Boyt Road). The contractor that will construct the stations is Placo Ltd. from Lumberton, Texas. They have recently received a notice to proceed and should begin working on the project in the next few weeks. Residents will soon see the old concrete tank at the Singing Sands site demolished and the new pumping station will be erected on the slab from the tank. The contract amount for this project is \$1,299,960.

The fourth and final phase of the project will be to install larger water lines around Loop 108 in the Port Bolivar area. Bids were recently received and the contract was awarded to Allco. The contract amount will be \$1,260,374.

All of these projects combined will result in a reliable quantity of water to meet current and future demands and will allow for compliance with State regulations. The estimated completion date for all projects is early 2009.

**Calculate Your Water Usage
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Hot Topic: Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water

Protecting the health of our customers is our mission. While we understand that pharmaceuticals (i.e. drugs) are an issue of interest, to date research has not demonstrated an impact on human health from pharmaceutical compounds at the trace levels discovered in drinking water. Bolivar Peninsula Special Utility District conducts hundreds of analyses every year to ensure the water we provide meets or surpasses Safe Drinking Water Act standards, which were created to protect customers.

Unfortunately there is no “blanket” water test, and there are literally tens of thousands of individual compounds for which we could search. With the absence of any known health benefit and given the amount of resources required to conduct tests for pharmaceutical compounds, we have chosen not to conduct these tests in our community at this time. We will continue to work closely with others in the drinking water community to advance the science and understanding of this issue and will take whatever steps are necessary to protect the health of our customers.

Lead Panic on the Peninsula

There were a few moments of panic on the Peninsula after the District was required to send out letters to all customers warning that “some homes in this community have elevated lead levels in their drinking water.” But the fact is the water is safe! The water is purchased from the Lower Neches Valley Authority and does not contain lead. The elevated lead levels come from lead solder used to connect pipes in some homes built before 1986. When water stands in such pipes for more than six hours, lead from the solder can leach into the water.

People just need to take some common-sense precautions. It is suggested that residents flush their water system before drinking water that has been sitting in the pipes for six hours or more. Let the cold water tap run for 30 seconds until the water gets colder, indicating it is fresh from the outside main. Customers are also advised not to use hot water from the tap for cooking or drinking, since it has been sitting in the pipes and the hot water heater, where it could absorb lead that may leach from the home’s piping. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality also suggests replacing lead solder if it was used in your home, although this can be costly.

Anyone concerned about lead in their drinking water should have their water tested. Since the problem is not with the District’s lines, but with the pipes in some homes, it is the responsibility of the homeowners to have their water tested by a private water testing company. There are many laboratories in the Houston and Beaumont area that will perform water testing for customers.

Of 30 homes tested on the Peninsula, more than 10% of homes came back with lead levels greater than 0.015 parts per million. This triggered the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality’s requirement to send out a notice to all customers of the District. Unacceptable customer water samples ranged from 0.0168 parts per million to 0.0411 parts per million. The wording of the notice that was mailed to customers is mandated by the State and can seem very scary. Using common sense and flushing out the home piping before drinking the water should prevent lead ingestion.

How Much Water Do You Use?

Use the chart below to calculate your estimated monthly water usage inside your home:

Showers	Multiply the number of daily showers by the number of minutes each shower takes. Now multiply that number by 3 gallons per minute used. Enter the number in the box.	
Baths	Multiply the number of daily baths by 36 (gallons in a full bath) or 18 (gallons in half tub). Enter the number in the box.	
Toilets	Multiply the number of persons in the home by the number of daily flushes. (The average is four per person). Multiply that number by 3, the number of gallons used per flush. Enter that number in the box.	
Brushing Teeth	Multiply the number of persons in the home by the number of daily tooth brushings. Multiply that figure by 3 (the number of gallons used while the faucet runs for one minute). Enter that number in the box.	
Dish Washing	Multiply the number of times per day Dishes are washed by the number of minutes the water is running. Multiply that number by 3. Enter that number in the box.	
Hand Washing	Multiply the number of times per day hands are washed by the number of minutes the water is running. Multiply that number by 3. Enter that number in the box.	
Dishwasher	Add the number of times per week you run the dishwasher and divide by 7 to obtain the average daily usage. Multiply that figure by 12 (the number of gallons used by each wash). Enter that number in the box.	
Laundry	Add the number of loads of laundry done weekly and divide by 7. Multiply that figure by 44 (the number of gallons used per load). Enter that number in the box.	
Other Indoor Use	The people in your household use water in other ways. Multiply the number of persons in the household by 10 gallons. Enter that number in the box.	
ESTIMATED DAILY USE	<i>Now calculate your household's daily use. Add up all the boxes to get an estimate of the gallons of water used daily. Enter in the box.</i>	
ESTIMATED MONTHLY USE	<i>Next, calculate your monthly use by multiplying the amount used daily by 30. Enter that number in the box. This is your estimated monthly usage.</i>	

CONSERVATION TIP:

Try reducing the number of minutes you take showers, eliminate baths, and reduce loads of laundry done each week. Then, recalculate your usage and see how much water you can save! Can you think of other ways to save water?

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Did you know that in many households the single largest water users are automated sprinkler systems? These sprinkler systems can make up to 60 percent or more of the water used in homes in southeast Texas. If your home has an automatic sprinkler system, or if you are thinking of installing one, use these tips to ensure your system works efficiently:

- Only allow a licensed irrigator to install your sprinkler system. A permit for installation is required by the District and personnel will inspect the installation to ensure it's installed properly. To find a licensed installer in our area, check the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's website at www.tecq.state.tx.us.
- Use a rain sensor to save up to 30% on outdoor watering by automatically turning off your system when it rains. Be sure to place the rain sensor in an open area.
- Your yard requires less supplemental irrigation during cool and wet seasons, so change your watering schedule seasonally. Visit your controller box at least four times a year to adjust the schedule.
- Set your controller to start watering sometime between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m.