Inside City

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Scott J Morse Pump Station: Update on Site Expansion

The pump station located north of Ken-Caryl Ave & east of Zephyr Ct that provides water to the Columbine West Subdivision is on the move with the site expansion! This past winter, the site expansion at the Scott J Morse Pump Station began after the district acquired 0.34 acres from City and County of Denver. This expansion will consist of textured/colored pre-cast concrete fence on exterior boundary, wooden fence along north and east boundary surrounding adjacent property, new access from S. Zephyr Street, asphalt pavement, and concrete material storage bin for storage of materials to maintain water and sewer system. The entire expansion is scheduled to only take 3-4 months. Surrounding the property (existing and newly acquired District property) along the south, west and north boundary will be a precast concrete wall, stamped and colored to resemble stone accompanied by steel gates at each entrance. The security wall will provide protection for the pump station as well as restrict the view from the street. The existing cedar fence along to north and east boundaries of the existing property will remain. Along the east boundary of the newly acquired property will be a cedar fence to match the existing fence and providing a barrier from the neighboring condominium complex. The storage bin will be used for temporary storage of maintenance materials needed for maintenance of our water and sewer facilities including pipe, fittings, pipe bedding material (i.e. gravel), manhole covers, valves, and valve boxes. Materials will be stored within the bins, under the bottom of the structure. The structure itself will be lower than the surrounding security wall and not visible from the exterior of the fence. Materials stored will not include dirt or other materials which could cause windblown dust.

Access to the site will be limited to occasional use averaging once a week by District staff to check on the pump station operation and retrieve materials. District staff would typically access the site using District owned work trucks (pickup trucks). On less frequent occasions, perhaps monthly, larger trucks such as a flat bed or standard size dump truck may access the site for delivery of materials. The site will not be used to obtain material for any emergency maintenance as all repair materials are stored at an alternate site inside our main office garage. The frequency of access to the site will not be significantly different for the existing level of activity. The proposed access off of Zephyr Street will improve the safety of District staff and surrounding traffic compared to the existing access off of Ken Caryl. The paving has already been completed and the other plans are not far behind in being completed as well. If you have any questions about this project, contact Tony Cocozzella at 303-979-2333.

What Do I Do If My Sewer Backs Up?

Nobody wants to ever experience a sewer backup, but it’s face it...it can happen to any of us. If you experience a foul odor or notice slow drains especially in your tub/shower and floor drains on the lowest level of your house, you may be in the beginning stages of a sewer backup. Nobody wants to ever experience a sewer backup, but let’s face it… it can happen to any of us. If you experience a foul odor or notice slow drains especially in your tub/shower and floor drains on the lowest level of your house, you may be in the beginning stages of a sewer backup.

• Don’t run water down any drains or toilets until the problem is identified and corrected.
• Call the District! We can assist determining if it is a mainline service or lateral backup. There is no charge to the customer for this service.
• Check with your neighbors to see if they are experiencing anything out of the ordinary. This also can determine the problem location.

The sewer service (lateral) is owned and maintained by the property owner, including the connection to the district’s main. All maintenance and repairs within the lateral will be the responsibility of the owner, even the portion within the street. If it is determined to be a mainline blockage, district staff will restore sewer service and work with the owner to clean/restore affected areas. If the backup is within your sewer service lateral, a contractor must be contracted by the owner to restore sewer service. All damages are the responsibility of the owner. Many homeowner’s insurance policies contain an exclusion for sewer backup damages. Coverage is frequently available but must be requested as an addition to the policy. The district urges homeowners to discuss sewer backup coverage with their insurance agent.

Patrick Fitzgerald, 44 years with Platte Canyon

Pat Fitzgerald started working for Platte Canyon in March 1974. Believe it or not, the main sewer line was being completed as well. In just one other employee. In just two short years Pat’s hard work in the field paid off and he became the District Manager for Platte Canyon Water and Sanitation District.

Before Pat came to work for Platte Canyon he was a maintenance work- er for Lakewood Water and Sanitation District, just north of Platte Canyon District. His father worked for Lakewood and Pat needed a job for the time being so he went to work there for six months until he was offered a position with Platte Canyon. When asking Pat what he remembers about his first months with Platte Canyon, he said he will never forget learning how to drive the manual work truck. He had no idea how to drive stick shift, but also had no choice but to learn how to drive it, considering it was the only work truck the District had at that time. It was definitely something he won’t forget.

Pat has been with the district longer than anyone so when asked what the biggest change is he has seen through his time here, his answer was no change in the work he does at all. He said his favorite parts about his job is that he has been able to make upfort all the work he has done. From 300 customers to over 700 just in Platte Canyon District alone is astonishing.

Being the district manager Pat certainly has challenging moments, but the good definitely outweighs the bad. Pat is very proud of where the District is at and what it represents. He feels very lucky to be a part of Platte Canyon. Some of his favorite moments about being the District Manager at Platte Canyon is the freedom he is granted from the Board of Directors to operate without being micromanaged. He feels lucky to have such an honest and trustworthy relationship with the board members. He loves that he is involved with so many other districts and the partnerships and relationships he has made throughout the years is certainly a positive.

Pat did face challenges along the way in his 44 years at the District. Planning for growth was Pat’s biggest challenge he came face to face with. Being responsible in making sure water and wastewater is available was all and still is one of Pat’s challenges. Being a government entity, Pat has to deal with regulations and amendments. Increasing of federal and state regulations undeniably make providing water much more difficult and so much more costly. When the TABOR amendment passed almost 20 years ago, Pat struggled with the changes. TABOR was a restriction on taxes and it made it hard to generate revenue, especially for local water and wastewater Districts. Beyond the challenges Pat faced throughout the years he wouldn’t want to have it any other way. The challenges are what have made his career so rewarding.

He encourages anyone looking into water/wastewater careers to go for it! The opportunities are endless in a profession as such. From administrative to management to operations, there are multiple roles in this career choice. Pat says the great thing about water/wastewater is they will always be around. It is a critical public service and although it brings challenges it surely brings twice as many rewards.

While Pat tends to spend his time at work he does have some hobbies. Pat enjoys motorcycles and riding his Harley on his free time. He is an avid reader and enjoys history and non-fiction novels. He also adores spending as much time as he can with his three grandchildren. His daughter who lives in California has two children and his son who lives close by welcomed a baby boy this January.

Pat has accomplished great things in his 44 years at the District and will continue to provide public service to the wonderful customers of Platte Canyon. From all of us at Platte Canyon, we want to say congratulations on your years here at Platte Canyon, Pat!

It’s Fix-A-Leak Week!

Are you ready to chase down leaks? Household leaks can waste more than 1 trillion gallons of water annually nationwide, so each year we hunt down the drips during Fix a Leak Week. Mark your calendars for EPA’s tenth annual Fix a Leak Week, March 18 through 25, 2018—but remember that you can find and fix leaks inside and outside your home to save valuable water and money all year long. Learn how to find and fix leaks during Fix a Leak Week. To get more information about Fix-a-Leak week go to the EPA website: https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-a-leak-week

Common types of leaks found in the home are worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. These types of leaks are often easy to fix, requiring only a few tools & hardware that can pay for themselves in water savings.

Fixing easily corrected household water leaks can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills. To check for leaks in your home, you first need to determine whether you’re wasting water & then identify the source of the leak. Here are some tips for finding leaks:

• Take a look at your water usage during a colder month. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons per month, there are serious leaks. Check your water meter before & after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you probably have a leak. Identify toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak. (Flush immediately after to avoid staining) Examine faucet gaskets & pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe to check for surface leaks.

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• Check for water leaks at your outdoor faucets. If you have an underground sprinkler system you turn on regularly, have the city check the system for leaks, and change out gaskets & pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe to check for surface leaks.

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