



# THE ENDEAVOR

A PUBLICATION OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

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SERVING EL CERRITO, KENSINGTON, AND RICHMOND ANNEX

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## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT

It shall be the mission of the Stege Sanitary District to plan and operate a safe, efficient, and economical wastewater collection and transfer system for the present and future customers of the District.

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## Help Prevent Sewer Overflows

### Throw Disposable Wipes in the Trash — Not in the Toilet

Time was when cleaning was simple, if not easy. A bucket of hot water, a scrub brush, and some soap was all that was needed to tackle almost any cleaning chore. But that was then. Now, manufacturers race to bring out evermore specialized cleaning products. There are cloths for dusting furniture and others for wiping floors. There are rags meant to be used in the kitchen and others that belong in the shop or garage. There are wipes that contain sanitizing agents and others that contain lotions. And all of them are disposable.



That's where the problem comes in. While suppliers expect consumers to toss their products into the trash after one or two uses, these wipes and cloths are often flushed down the toilet instead. Here, they can cause major damage. Unlike toilet tissue, they don't disintegrate in water. They retain their form and accumulate in the sewer mains where they sink to the bottom and lodge

against pipe joints, backing up the wastewater that flows behind them. In fact, a frequent cause of sewage overflows in the Stege Sanitary District in 2003 was blockages caused by the handi-wipe type of disposable cloths.

Sewer overflows are nasty, messy things. Untreated wastewater can back up into homes and businesses. Sewage can flow out of manholes and into nearby yards, creeks, and storm drains where it can continue to flow untreated to the Bay. Emergency crews are called out at all hours of the night and day to deal with the overflows and the situations they create.

But you can help.

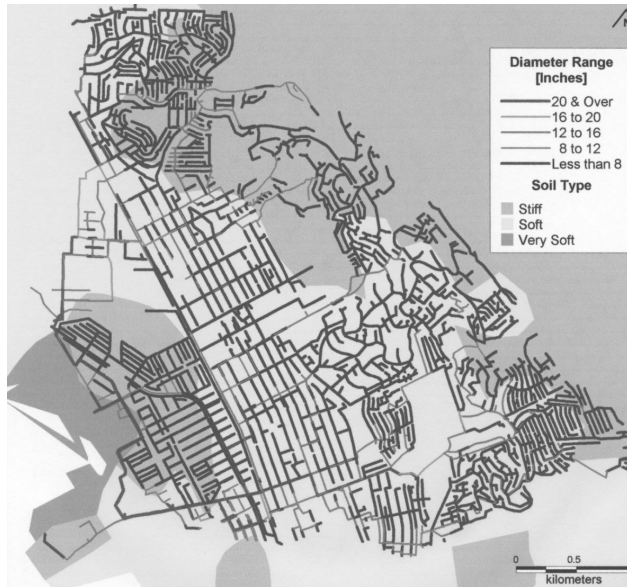
Don't flush anything not meant for the toilet. Toss used disposable wipes and cloths into the trash, where they belong.



# Risk Assessment Project

**W**e all know earthquakes can cause damage, sometimes a lot of damage. But just how much? Where is the damage most likely to occur and what will it take in terms of time and money to make repairs? How likely is it a major earthquake will hit in the first place? These are the kinds of questions the District asked when it commissioned the Stege Risk Assessment Project. Knowing beforehand the likely extent of damage to the District's sewer lines and pumping stations from an earthquake allows Stege to prepare for this eventuality.

The study was conducted by Durham Technologies, Inc. using the Federal Emergency Management Agency's HAZUS model. HAZUS is a tool that incorporates state-of-art approaches for characterizing earth science hazards including ground shaking liquefaction and landslides to estimate damage to pipelines



and other infrastructure. The technology is built on an integrated Geographical Information System (GIS) platform that produces regional profiles and estimates of earthquake losses.

The model looked at damage caused by an earthquake that might be expected every 20 years through ones that might occur every 50, 100 and more years. For example, an earthquake of the magnitude that might occur every 20 years is estimated to cause 13 leaks and 27 breaks in the Stege system and take 907 hours to repair. In addition, the model looked at where damage was most likely to occur.

The information from the Stege Risk Assessment Project will allow the District to reserve the appropriate financial and material resources needed for earthquake response and damage repair.

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## Plumbing Problems? Call Stege First

A sewer backup may be caused by a blockage in the property owner's lateral (the pipe that connects the home plumbing to the sewer main), or it may be caused by a blockage in the sewer main itself. Before contracting with a private company to clear or repair your lateral, call the District at (510) 524-4667. A real person will answer whenever you call. Stege will dispatch an emergency crew if it is clearly or likely to be a main line problem. For problems in the lateral, Stege maintains a list of plumbers who have met the District's requirements for licenses, bonds, and insurance. This list is available online at <http://www.stegesd.dst.ca.us/plumber.htm> or in printed form from the District.

## APWA Fair



On May 22, 2003, Stege, along with the City of El Cerrito, participated in an American Public Works Association (APWA) Fair that was held on Schmidt Lane. Here, the public was invited to inspect the District's maintenance trucks and get a better understanding of how Stege's 150 miles of sanitary sewer lines are maintained, constructed, and repaired.

## SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

### Walter Lunn, Maintenance Supervisor

Walter Lunn is on call 24-hours a day, every day of the week, every day of the year. Emergencies can bring him out at two, three o'clock in the morning, and on holidays like Christmas and New Year's Day. His job requires him to get down and dirty with raw sewage.



Walter Lunn loves his job. And, no, he's not crazy.

Walt has been with Stege for over 14 years and has more than 30 years experience in the wastewater collection industry. As supervisor of maintenance, Walt is not only responsible for responding to emergencies, he is in charge of Stege's ongoing program of regular line cleaning and upkeep. This includes scheduling clearing lines of roots and debris with a truck called a rodder and blasting sewer walls with water to wash away grease and grime. He also helps District engineering staff coordinate the work of contractors who perform video inspection and repairs on District lines.

So, what makes someone love a job that deals with something most people want to avoid? The opportunity to help people is first on Walt's list, especially older people who, without him, might fall prey to unscrupulous contractors. Working outside and meeting new people also rank high on Walt's list.

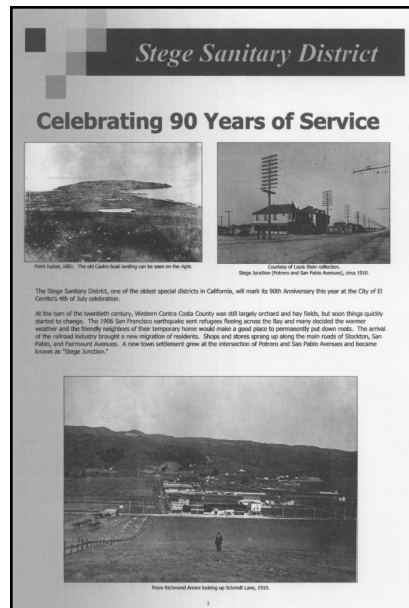
When not working on sewer lines, Walt might be found working on his Harley. In fact, Walt has owned 18 Harley Davidson motorcycles and has just returned from a trip to Milwaukee. He lives in Hercules with his wife Sharon and has a grown son.

## Stege Celebrates the Fourth of July with an Exhibit on District History

Every year, Stege sponsors a booth at the El Cerrito July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. Here, fairgoers can learn about Stege, meet District directors and ask questions, and pick up useful pamphlets and other literature. Last year was special in that 2003 marked the District's 90<sup>th</sup> year of existence and service.

To commemorate this important anniversary, the District

created an historical display that highlighted the origins of the Stege Sanitary District and showed familiar landmarks as they appeared almost a century ago. The display, which is a must-see for anyone interested in local history, can now be viewed at the District office at 7500 Schmidt Lane in El Cerrito.





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## Community Meetings

On May 15, 2003 and July 17, 2003, the District held public hearings to explain the need for the modest sewer service charge increase that went into effect on July 1, 2003. These meetings were held at the District office on Schmidt Lane.

The plan that was presented to the public called for a graduated increase over a three-year period to a final \$9.25 monthly charge. This overall rate increase, the first in six years, is less than \$2 a month for residential properties. In addition, multi-unit dwellings, which under the old rate structure were charged less per unit than single-family residences, are now charged the same rate per unit as single residences. Commercial, industrial, and institutional rates also saw a modest monthly increase.

Even with these increases, the sewer collection charge to Stege customers remains the lowest in the surrounding communities (see chart). Information on the proposed changes was sent to all Stege customers with address, phone, and email contacts for comments.

The response from the public was overwhelmingly positive and the District thanks its customers for their support and understanding.

### How to Contact Stege

**By phone:**  
 (510) 524-4667

**By mail:**  
 Stege Sanitary District  
 7500 Schmidt Lane  
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