



*Educational programs to stop pollution at the source*

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*Fulfilling our Mission: Five Awards in 2003/2004 tell the story*



**CUSTOMER**

# FOCUS

VOLUME I SUMMER 2005

Union Sanitary District

## The Quiet Utility

### Fun Facts About USD

- USD treats enough wastewater from homes, businesses and industries in the Tri-Cities to fill the Oakland Coliseum in just two weeks
- If all of USD's sanitary sewer pipes were laid in a straight line, they'd reach from our Union City treatment plant to Salt Lake City, Utah
- USD uses the byproducts of its treatment processes to generate power and save over \$500,000 per year on its energy bills



Do you know us? Since 1918, we've provided the Tri-City area with a service that most people couldn't live without, yet many of our customers have never heard our name! Union Sanitary District has always been a quiet utility; one that works behind the scenes without fanfare to efficiently collect, treat and dispose of wastewater for its community. With this first issue of Customer Focus, we'd like to introduce ourselves and tell you a little bit about what we do. We hope you'll contact us if you have any questions – we're proud of the work we do for you, and as always, we're here to help!

USD collects and treats up to 30 million gallons of wastewater every day from residential, commercial and industrial customers in Fremont, Newark and Union City, serving a population of approximately 323,000 people. Our treatment plant in Union City operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, cleaning wastewater to a safe level before it is returned to the environment in the deep waters of San Francisco Bay. We also maintain 764 miles of sanitary sewer pipeline that runs throughout

our service area and respond to customer trouble calls.

At USD, we focus on controlling costs and providing value for our customers. Our objectives center on meeting customer needs. We use performance measures to compare our strategies to those of other agencies as we strive to continuously improve and streamline our service.

As the Tri-Cities' "Steward of the Sewers", our goals are to safeguard public health and foster environmental protection. We work with various businesses such as restaurants and dental offices to encourage practices that reduce pollutants to the treatment plant and San Francisco Bay. We also visit classrooms to teach students how to prevent pollution at home.

We are extremely proud of the numerous awards and recognition that we have received for our facilities and employees, and of the many ways we work to enhance our customers' quality of life. We hope you enjoy learning more about us on the following pages.

# We're Educating To Stop Pollution At The Source

## What do YOU know about H2O?

Did you know that there's a difference between the sanitary sewer and the storm drain system? The sanitary sewer system flows to our Treatment Plant before it's discharged to San Francisco Bay. This allows USD to remove solids, metals, and other toxins coming from homes, businesses and industry. The storm drain system flows directly to local creeks and the Bay *untreated*. To raise public awareness of this difference, we offer free school outreach presentations to classrooms throughout our service area.

### Fifth-Grade Presentations

Fifth-graders learn how each of us can help prevent pollution from entering both the sanitary sewer and the storm drain. We feature a 60-



minute multi-media presentation that includes story-telling, video, a hands-on experiment and lots of give-aways.

### Sewer Science

This exciting week-long lab is offered to 9-12 grade classrooms for the first time this year. Students create an artificial

wastewater, then spend the week treating and analyzing it. The lab gives students the opportunity to be real scientists for a week. It helps them learn basic concepts of how wastewater is treated prior to being discharged into San Francisco Bay. Students gain awareness about the fate of household chemicals, and link science and technology to environmental impacts and issues.

### Treatment Plant Tours

As a follow-up to our presentations, classrooms are offered the opportunity to tour our wastewater treatment plant. Kids get to see first-hand how wastewater is turned into clean water!

If your child's classroom hasn't had one of our presentations, encourage his or her teacher to sign up for one! It's simple to do with our online scheduler ([www.unionsanitary.com/pp/schooloutreach](http://www.unionsanitary.com/pp/schooloutreach)) or by calling (510) 477-7620.

**Best of all... They're FREE!**



This curb label indicates a storm drain

## A message from the General Manager



Thank you for taking the time to read our first newsletter. Even though we are the "quiet utility", we believe it is important for our customers to know more about the quality services and stewardship we provide for the Tri-City area. Please contact us by phone or email and we will be happy to respond to any questions or comments you have about our newsletter or any of our services.

Sincerely,

*Richard B. Currie*



# USD's Maintenance Crews

Every weekday, USD's Collection Services teams climb into their service vehicles and travel throughout the Tri-Cities to clean, inspect and repair our sewer lines.



Maintenance teams use high-pressure hoses to flush out grease and other debris that might cause stoppages. Teams then insert a self-propelled television camera into each line to assist them in inspecting the pipes. This helps ensure continuous, uninterrupted service to USD customers. We complete the cycle of assessing all of our 764 miles of pipeline every six years. Construction

teams repair our lines, complete connections to our system for new construction, bring manholes up to grade after streets are overlaid, and mark utilities for digging.

Collection Services also responds to customer trouble calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "Our goal is to keep the sewers flowing properly and to minimize impacts to our customers," says USD Coach James Schofield. "If they don't notice us, we've done our job well."

## USD's Mission...

Our goal is to protect human health and the water quality of San Francisco Bay for all beneficial uses.

## ...Being Accomplished

- **Platinum Award** A national award received for the second time, for our plant complying with all of our requirements to protect the environment for the past ten years
- **Collection System of the Year** Best large Collection System (over 500 miles of sewers) in the Bay Area
- **Innovation Award** Statewide recognition of our Plant Operator III Trainee program from the California Association of Sanitation Agencies
- **Excellence in Management** National award for innovations in public utility management
- **Government Finance Officers Association Financial Reporting Award** Outstanding Financial Reporting

## Board of Directors

**Pat D. Gacoscos**  
Representing Union City

**L. Patricia Kite**  
Representing Newark

**Anjali Lathi, Chair**  
Representing Fremont

**Jennifer Toy, Vice Chair**  
Representing Fremont

**Dan Wilkowsky**  
Representing Fremont

### Our Vision:

To protect public health and the environment by delivering the highest quality wastewater services through visionary leadership and financial accountability to our communities

## General Manager

**Richard Currie**

USD works closely with over 80 industries in the Tri-City area. We tell them what they can and cannot discharge to the sewer, and we monitor and sample their wastes throughout the year.

Keeping industrial pollutants out of the Bay is an important element of our stewardship of the environment.

If you have questions, please call us at:  
(510) 477-7500

Protecting human health and the environment

[WWW.UNIONSANITARY.COM](http://WWW.UNIONSANITARY.COM)

○ SERVICE    ○ WATER QUALITY    ○ ENVIRONMENT

## Your Views Are Welcome

Meetings of the  
USD Board of Directors  
are open to the public

- Meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at our Administrative Headquarters
- Visit our website for the upcoming agenda

<http://www.unionsanitary.com>



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**Win FREE  
sewer service  
for a year!  
Details inside**

## Tips for Helping The Environment

### Disposing of Pharmaceuticals

Have you heard that it's okay to dispose of expired medications by flushing them down the toilet? Wrong! Recently it's been discovered that medicines and other personal care products are not completely removed from wastewater at treatment plants; therefore, they end up in San Francisco Bay where they can harm wildlife.

What should you do with your used medicines? You can bring both prescription and over-the-counter drugs to the Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Disposal is free to residents and no appointment is necessary. Call (800) 606-6606 or visit their website at [www.household-hazwaste.org](http://www.household-hazwaste.org) for facility location and hours of operation.

### Mercury for Mercury-Free!

Mercury from just one broken thermometer can pollute up to 5 million gallons of water—that's why USD has a thermometer exchange program. When you bring us your mercury thermometer, we'll give you a mercury-free thermometer at no charge to you. We'll dispose of your old thermometer properly so its mercury does not find its way to local water bodies, where it can harm fish and end up in the food chain.



Bring your mercury thermometer to our facility at 5072 Benson Road in Union City, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information about the exchange program or for Fremont or Newark drop-off locations, call us at (510) 477-7500, and check our website at [www.unionsanitary.com/pp/mercury](http://www.unionsanitary.com/pp/mercury).

### Got Grease?

Don't pour it down the drain! Grease buildup clogs sewer lines and causes overflows. If you live in the Tri-Cities, drop off your used cooking oil and liquefied grease FREE Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at BFI's Customer Service Center, 42600 Boyce Road in Fremont. Bring it to the self-serve drop-off in a sealed container along with proof of residency and it will be recycled into useful products. Dispose of solidified grease in your trash.

Questions? Call BFI at (510) 657-3500 or Union Sanitary District at (510) 477-7627

