

Watts & Drops

Newsletter of the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments

Jennifer A. Pederson, Editor

Spring 2005

LWD to treat for iron build up

The town's Water Department will begin a treatment program this month in an effort to reduce the aesthetic water quality problems associated with naturally occurring iron and manganese concentrations. According to general manager Savas Danos, the concentration of these two elements in the ground water supplies has increased over the past several years to the point that treatment is warranted.

For the treatment, a blended phosphate product will be injected at the four drinking water supplies and work its way throughout the distribution system. The injected product, called CalciQuest, is a mixture of food-grade polyphosphates and orthophosphates that have been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use in drinking water. The blended phosphate product has several properties that will enhance the quality of the drinking water provided by LWD, Danos said.

Danos explained further that the product controls iron and manganese through the chemical process of sequestration, which binds the iron and manganese into a compound and thereby reduces the potential for staining of interior fixtures. Secondly, he said, the product gradually removes iron and manganese deposits from the interior of the distribution system, allowing for greater rates of water flow. And finally, he added, the product reduces lead and copper corrosion of interior plumbing by forming a protective barrier between the water and the metal surface of the pipes. Once formed, this barrier reduces the leaching of lead and copper into the drinking water, and also prevents mineral deposits from developing on the interior of the pipes.

One side effect of this injection will be the loosening and dislodging of existing iron and manganese deposits from the interior of the distribution system. If significant amounts of deposits are dislodged at once, the potential exists that customers will experience dirty-looking water. While it appears aesthetically unpleasing, this "dirty water" is safe to drink, Danos emphasized.

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Streetlight conversion program to begin

Over the past several months Littleton Electric Light Department has been seeking public input on the style and candlepower of new streetlights at two trial locations before beginning a conversion of the entire system.

The purpose of the conversion is to achieve the best illumination at the lowest operating cost, based on the FinCom's recommendation last year to cut the town's streetlight budget from the requested \$51,915 to \$12,000, given the unsuccessful override vote. The 75 percent reduction was approved as part of the annual street lighting article at annual Town Meeting in May.

Faced with the possibility of shutting off all but a minimum of lights at critical intersections, LELD instead opted to investigate more energy efficient replacement bulbs for the entire system.



Mercury vapor lights are currently used in the system. While long-lasting, these lights give off a blue hue. The metal halide bulbs cast a white light source for a truer rendition. To help determine an appropriate level and style of lighting, two trial areas were installed with different wattages and lenses. Residents were asked to state their preference of the bulb they believe provides the best illumination of the roadway.

Customers on New Estate Road and Orchid and Dahlia Drives commented that the 70-watt flat lens style was the most pleasing. The system-wide conversion will begin this spring and is expected to take several months to complete.

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Enroll in Direct Payment

Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments is happy to offer our customers Direct Payment. Through Direct Payment, you will never again have to write a check or remember to mail your light and water payments. You will still receive your monthly electric bill and quarterly water bill; however, on a specified date, the amount of your bill will automatically be deducted from your checking account.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Q.** Will it cost me more to enroll in this program?
A. No, in fact we will credit your account the amount of the base customer charge the first month that you are enrolled as a bonus for signing up.
- Q.** What if I think my bill is incorrect?
A. You have **14 days from the bill date** to call us to dispute the bill before the payment is deducted from your account.
- Q.** Where do I find my bank information?
A. Your **ABA Number** (also called your Bank Routing Number) is a nine-digit number located in the bottom left-hand corner of your check and is unique to your financial institution.
- Your **Bank Account Number** is also located at the bottom of your check, usually next to the ABA. The number of digits used for your bank account number varies among institutions.
- 
- ABA # ACCOUNT # CHECK #**
- Q.** If I already pay my bills online through a third party payment service like Fleet HomeLink, why should I change?
A. When you pay your bill through a third party payment service you may think that it is a direct electronic transfer, however, it is not. Third party payment services issue checks to us which cannot be processed by our bank. We must manually post the payments to each account, costing us time and money. Also, many services charge a transfer fee, while ours is free. Our Direct Payment program is an actual electronic transfer from your checking account to our bank account.
- Q.** How do I sign up?
A. 1. Complete the form below.
2. Attach a voided check.
3. Mail it to LELWD, PO Box 2406, Littleton, MA 01460 or drop it off at our offices at 39 Ayer Road, Littleton. **(PLEASE DO NOT ENCLOSE THIS FORM WITH YOUR BILL.)**

Direct Payment Authorization Form

Customer Name _____

Address _____ Town _____

Electric Account Number _____

Water Account Number _____

Bank _____

ABA Number _____

Checking Account Number _____

Signature _____

Joint Account Owner Signature _____

Your account number can be found at the top of your electric and water bills. Please note that it will be a different number for each account.

I agree to establish payment from my checking account beginning with my next bill. I authorize LELWD to instruct my bank to make payments directly from the account indicated on this form. I understand that I will control the payments, and that if I wish to discontinue this service I may simply notify LELWD at any time.

Save electricity by changing light bulbs

Did you ever think about how much electricity your bathroom light fixture may be using? Each bulb in a strip typically seen over a bathroom vanity can range between 40 and 60 watts. The number of bulbs in these strips varies from three to twelve bulbs, which can bring the amount of watts used up to 720 watts.



Newer style compact fluorescent bulbs are more aesthetically pleasing than previous models. Many companies are now making globe bulbs that look exactly like incandescent bulbs; however, they use significantly less energy. For a limited time, LELD will offer these globe bulbs to our customers for \$5.00 each. There are two sizes in stock, a 7 watt, which replaces a 30 watt incandescent and a 15 watt, which replaces a 60 watt incandescent. Replacing even one bulb can save you up to 45 watts and may help you reduce your electricity bill.



Iron treatment, continued

If a customer encounters dirty water, LWD recommends flushing the dirty water from the home via an exterior faucet. To reduce the potential of loosening large deposits at the same time, LWD will slowly increase the dosage over the course of several weeks before reaching the recommended injection rate. After several weeks of operation, LWD will initiate a town-wide flushing program to help dislodge and remove some of the iron and manganese deposits. The flushing program will occur sometime this spring. A listing of streets scheduled for flushing will appear weekly in *The Littleton Independent*, on the department's web page, www.lelwd.com and via a recording at 486-3104, ext. 460. It is likely that supplementary, localized flushing will be required through the summer months as additional deposits are loosened within the distribution system. A second town-wide flushing program is tentatively scheduled for October, 2005.

Customers with any concerns are encouraged to call the customer services department at (978) 486-3104 or view the department's website, www.lelwd.com for further information.

Spring construction is underway

As we approach the warmer months both LELD and LWD crews will be working on various projects throughout Littleton. LELD crews continue their work on the 2505 circuit from the Beaverbrook Road substation into Boxborough. The crews have completed the installation of spacer cable on Wychwood Drive and Lawrence Street; they are beginning to install spacer cable on King Street over the bridge. Once that has been completed, new spacer cable will be installed over the railroad tracks at the Depot. Customers along New Estate and King Street may experience brief power outages as they are transferred to the new cable. LELD makes every attempt to notify customers in advance via a door hanging if it will be a scheduled outage. Please be mindful of our crews as they work in these areas and once again we apologize for any inconvenience this construction may cause.



Also, LWD crews will be upgrading the water main on Laurel Road in anticipation of it being accepted as a town road.



Signs on utility poles pose safety threat

Posting signs on utility poles poses a threat to our line workers. Protruding nails or staples can tear a lineworker's protective clothing or gloves, increasing the chance of injury. Boots or climbing spikes may also get caught, causing a fall. Please help our lineworkers stay safe by refraining from attaching any signs to our poles.



Call before you dig

Spring is the time for working on projects around the house. If you intend to do any planting or digging around your yard, call Dig Safe first. Many utilities have underground services that you may not be aware of; and hitting one of these lines could cause disruption in service, or even worse, injury to you. Please call 1-888-DIG-SAFE (1-888-344-7233) and they will notify the utilities to go out and mark the area if there is any underground equipment. Dig Safe is a free service.

Long Lake to see improvements

There are many exciting projects being worked on to enhance the revitalization of Long Lake. Construction is being completed on a new boat launch at the lake. The launch was reconstructed with money received from a grant to restore Long Lake and special features include porous pavers and a gravel drive to reduce direct surface runoff into Long Lake. The surrounding area will be regraded to further discourage flows. A boat wash station will help reduce the transfer of plant material and debris from other water bodies. The design includes a stepped rain garden bordering the boat ramp. The tiered garden will retain surface flows from the ramp and the boat wash as well as redirected stormwater lines.

Water quality sampling equipment has been set up to monitor flows into Long Lake and the new constructed wetland. The data will help to assess the effectiveness of the restoration project.

Rain gardens will be installed in various locations throughout the neighborhood. The aim is to create an extensive network of garden features that are designed to hold back and treat stormwater flows that are currently piped directly into the lake. The reduction of these nutrient rich flows will reduce the proliferation of plant growth and silting that affects the health of Long Lake. This project addresses site-specific runoff through the use of plantings and landscape features. Participating residents will learn how these improvements to their properties can be both an asset to the neighborhood and help restore Long Lake.



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email the editor at jpederson@lelwd.com

One of the 40 Municipal Electric Utilities of Massachusetts... localight

Water meter replacement ongoing

The Littleton Water Department is in the process of replacing older meters with more modern meters or retrofitting existing meters with a remote device. The business office has been sending letters to customers to schedule appointments for this replacement; it is very important that you respond to this letter. The water meter, while in your house, is the property of LWD and we must have access to it. If you do not respond, you risk termination of your water service.



Department personnel always carry photo ID badges and are in department vehicles. If you have any doubts, please contact the Business Office at 978-486-3104.



LWD does not fluoridate drinking water

Newcomers to the community are surprised that Littleton does not fluoridate our municipal drinking water supply. There has been much debate on this issue and we have set as a policy that fluoride will not be added to the drinking water. It is well documented in the scientific literature that fluoride is an important element to help prevent tooth decay in growing children. However, addition of fluoride to the drinking water supply is a poor method for delivery. Over 90% of the water we deliver is not consumed, and the rate of consumption differs from individual to individual. In addition, discharge of fluoride into the ground and surface waters can become an environmental burden.

It is strongly suggested that those who wish proper fluoride in their diet, seek advice from your dentist and obtain fluoride tablets. In this manner, your child will receive the appropriate fluoride dose for their body weight and lifestyle.