

# Watts&Drops

AUGUST 2025



## LELWD Now Serving Devens

The LELWD has signed an eight-year contract to maintain and operate the electrical system at Devens, a 4,400-acre mixed-use community with about 850 electrical meters.

The LELWD won the competitive bid conducted by MassDevelopment, which will pay the LELWD about \$1 million annually to operate and maintain the system, plus provide additional funding for capital improvements. MassDevelopment will continue to manage customer service and billing.

The LELWD assumed operations and maintenance on July 1, 2025, from the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant. The additional revenue and service territory will allow the LELWD to strengthen its team of line crews and not impact rates or service for its existing customers.

## Expanded Sewer System Nearing Finish

The expanded Littleton Common sewer collection system is substantially completed. Roads dug up to install sewer infrastructure, if not already paved, are set to be resurfaced this fall.

The sewer mains and sewer pump stations are completed. Remaining punch list work includes some service lines connecting the main to properties and a deep man-hole at Village Lane.

The water resource recovery facility at 242 King Street, where the sewage will be treated, is also nearing completion. The start-up of equipment has begun and will take up to three months before it is fully operational.

## LELWD Promotes Importance of Cybersecurity

America's longest running news magazine, "60 Minutes," is preparing a segment on Chinese government-backed hackers breaking into the computer systems of small public utilities in the United States.

In early August, correspondent Scott Pelley and a CBS production crew interviewed Nick Lawler, P.E., the LELWD General Manager and former chairman of the American Public Power Association. The interview focused on the risks to even small-town utilities and how to improve cybersecurity.

In 2023, about 200 New England utilities and other organizations were targeted by a Chinese cyberespionage group, Volt Typhoon. Of those, only LELWD is using the experience to caution colleagues about the importance of cybersecurity.

"We can now publicize the threat and the solution with the goal of educating other small utilities. You would never think that you'd be targeted, but there is a real threat from foreign adversaries," said Lawler.

In November 2023, the LELWD was alerted by the FBI of the potential online trespass and worked with its cybersecurity experts to confirm the situation. It then coordinated with the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to briefly monitor the activity of hackers and then removed unauthorized system access by that December. In these cases, hackers exploited firewall flaws to access computer systems. At the LELWD, hackers accessed a file server that stores public

records. The hackers did not access any computer systems used to operate the electric and water systems. No customer-sensitive data and no system operations were impacted.

The LELWD is a distribution company, and its systems do not have access to or control of the larger, critical electrical grid infrastructure. It appears the LELWD was targeted simply because its system used a firewall with a known security flaw. The then-managed service provider had not updated the firmware.

In response, the LELWD switched managed service providers for its computer systems and now uses a system monitoring platform to track and spot unusual activity. In addition, the network's architecture was changed to render unusable any system information potentially obtained by the hackers.

The cybersecurity improvements were led by David Ketchen, Assistant General Manager, whose efforts were recognized by the state's Executive Office of Technology Services & Security. Ketchen received the Cybersecurity & Risk Management award at the Massachusetts Excellence in Technology Awards in September 2024.

The report is scheduled for broadcast in the upcoming "60 Minutes" season, which starts in late September.

For more information on how the LELWD responded to the system intrusion and how it actively monitors its operational technology, read the Case Study at <https://www.lelwd.com/cybersecurity-case-study/>.



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Mon. - Thurs. 6:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed Fridays

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## Fenway Park Outlasts Water Main

Crews recently installed new water main along a portion of Taylor Street and took a 113-year-old water main out of service. The cast-iron main was installed in 1912 – shortly after the municipal water department was formed and the same year Fenway Park was built and the Titanic sank.

With more than 90 miles of water main, the water department is working to replace aging and corroding infrastructure to prevent breaks and improve water pressure throughout the system. For example, the crews who installed the new sewer lines also replaced the water mains while the roads were already dug up.

## Dry Conditions Require Water Restrictions

Due to dry conditions and low stream flows, nonessential outdoor water use is restricted, per the conditions of the LELWD's Water Management Act permit. Nonessential outdoor water use is limited to one day per week, before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Water customers can choose which day they water.

Nonessential outdoor water uses include:

- Irrigation of lawns via sprinklers or automatic irrigation systems.
- Washing of vehicles, except in a commercial car wash or as necessary for operator safety.
- Washing of exterior building surfaces, parking lots, driveways or sidewalks, except as necessary to apply surface treatments such as paint, preservatives, stucco, pavement or cement.

Per the MassDEP, the water restrictions do not apply to:

- Irrigation to establish a new lawn and new plantings during the months of May and September.
- Irrigation of public parks and recreational fields by means of automatic sprinklers outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Irrigation of lawns, gardens, flowers and ornamental plants by means of a hand-held hose.

For more information, visit

<https://www.lelwd.com/outdoor-watering-restrictions>

## Request Free Shade Trees by Labor Day

The deadline for the LELWD customers to request free shade trees planted in their lawns is Labor Day or 100 applications, whichever comes first.

The LELWD staff will plant the trees in a mutually agreed upon location the first week of October. The Shade Tree Program has planted 1,210 trees since 2016.

Trees provide natural cooling and consume carbon dioxide. A mature tree can lower energy use between 100-250 kilowatt-hours per year.

Apply online at <https://www.lelwd.com/greenrewards/trees/> to request up to two trees. First-time customers only, please.

