



THE LAWRENCE LIFT NEWSLETTER

DEAR UTILITY CUSTOMER

Recently, our sewer repair crew has been out cleaning and inspecting the sanitary sewer system in various parts of the city. During the performance of this work, several instances were encountered where homeowners had either buried or otherwise covered or concealed the manhole lid located in their yard. While we realize that many of our residents find these lids unattractive, they are important access points for the repair and maintenance crew and are also located in dedicated utility easements. In an emergency, time spent hunting and uncovering these manholes delays response times and could result in sewer backups or spills. Thus, when we discover these buried manhole lids, we notify property owners and then raise them to grade so they are easily found and accessed. In an emergency, there would not be time to notify and the utility crew would remove whatever obstructions encountered. To avoid loss of plantings, flower beds, or damage to decorative items placed on the manhole to hide it, please just leave the lid unobstructed. While the unpainted lids are easier to spot, the Utility does not object to lids being painted, if that helps a resident with a manhole lid in their yard to better tolerate its presence. Unfortunately, we cannot simply move the manhole either.

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WHAT DO THESE NUMBERS REPRESENT?

925,152,150

\$662,368

1,170,928,109

\$844,449

891,210,712

\$656,056

What do the numbers above represent? They are the approximate number of gallons of clear water we have sent to be treated as "sewage" in 2015, 2016 and 2017, along with the costs we pay Citizens Energy to treat this clear water. When we conducted our system-wide sewer system evaluation in 2009-2010, the flow metering part of the study clearly showed a spike in flow in the sanitary sewer system during and after a rain event. This indicates that the water comes from not only defective manholes, but also defective customer laterals, missing or damaged sewer cleanout caps, and illegal connections such as foundation, roof/gutter and sump pump connections. This is different, and more impactful, than the slow infiltration of ground water into the system via pipe defects or pipe/manhole interface defects.

This excessive amount of water entering

the sanitary sewer system is taking up capacity in the system that should be there for sewage, leading to poor system performance and the resulting sewer spills and backups. These sewer spills (aka Sanitary Sewer Overflows or SSO's) is why the City is presently under an EPA Agreed Order to eliminate sewer spills. I mention all this to point out that there is a significant amount of cost avoidance to be realized by seeking out and eliminating prohibited connections such as sump pumps, foundation drains and roof/gutter drains, which is beneficial to our sewer operations. As of yet there is no program to enforce compliance with city ordinances regarding these prohibited connections, but it is something that may have to be considered as the problem continues.

I guess the big question is "How long are we going to be willing to continue to pay to treat rain or ground water?"



You may have noticed lately a lot more activity with regard to street sweeping and tree trimming in the right of way. The City's Street and DPW Department has recently made repairs to an existing sweeper and also purchased a new sweeper in order to step up efforts in this area. In addition a new flail mower was purchased to enhance tree trimming work along roadways. The focus will be on making sure intersection sight lines are cleared first then other areas where tree growth is interfering with traffic.

Many of you are probably aware of the increasing volume of trash along roadways and common areas inside the City. I am not sure what the explanation for this is. It seems to be worse now than in times past. I am sure that none of us want this to be the way our City is seen by visitors and others on business within the City, let alone something we have to see every day. I am pretty sure there is not a "Trashiest City" contest going on, nor do we have a permit to be a landfill.

The good news is that there are some simple things that we can all do to help clean up our City while the City crews step up their efforts to clean things up as well:

1. When putting out your trash and recycle totes, make sure the lids are closed by not over-stuffing them.
2. Police your property daily for litter.
3. Keep trees on your property trimmed so they do not overhang sidewalks or road ways. City ordinance states a property owner must make sure no branch from a tree on their property is below 10-feet overhanging a sidewalk.
4. Do not blow your grass clippings and leaves in the gutter line. These are swept into drainage inlets during rain events and end up clogging storm sewers.
5. Business Owners: If you have dumpsters, keep the lids closed! The trash blows everywhere!
6. Finally, as my wife likes to say, "There is a trash can where you are going. Keep your trash in your car until you get there!"

Together we can all make a difference in the appearance of our City and make it a place we are proud to invite people to come and visit (or to stay!).

Look for our Oaklandon Tower to be done soon as well as our new Richardt Water Treatment

Plant! The Wellfield Improvements Project has started too and we are set to move into the engineering part of our Phase II Water Capital Improvements projects and internal water capital improvements projects.

Lawrence DPW is also getting set to have street paving work performed on German Church Road from 46th to 56th, 59th Street on Fort Harrison and Elm Ridge Drive out by 75th & Sunnyside.

Thank you,

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