



# The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

Volume 12, Number 1

A newsletter about protecting public health and the environment

Spring 2008

## Mercury Removal Remains A District Priority

As monitoring and testing equipment procedures grew in sophistication so did the ability of laboratories to detect the presence of elements like mercury in smaller and smaller amounts.

It was in the early 1990s that Regional Water Quality Control Boards began to put limits on the amount of mercury allowed in treated wastewater discharges. And those limits have become smaller and smaller each year.

What has Central Contra Costa Sanitary District done to address the problem?

*Mercury has been used in numerous processes and products – from laxatives to herbicides; from dental amalgams to antiseptics (remember mercurochrome?). It's been used to silver mirrors, develop photographs, and preserve wood.*

In its 10-year history, the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility has collected more than 1,200 pounds of mercury.

A great deal of that mercury came from the thermometer exchange program—bring in a mercury

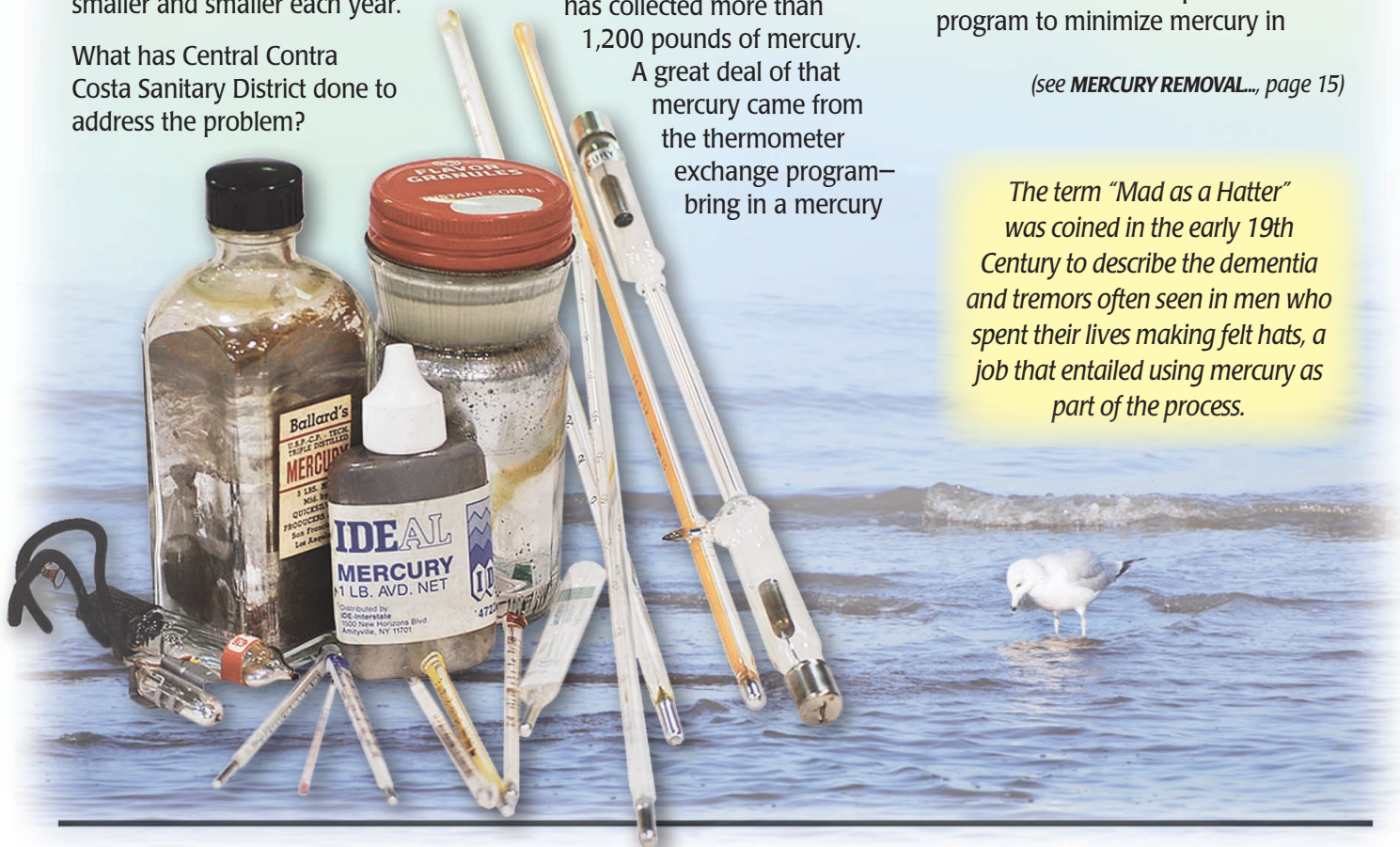
thermometer and get a free digital one in return.

In response to stricter discharge limits set by the Regional Board, last year the District began requiring all dental practices in the service area to install amalgam separators to keep mercury out of the wastewater flow. By the end of 2007 there was 98 percent compliance with the ordinance.

The next opportunity? High schools. The District has developed a new program to minimize mercury in

(see **MERCURY REMOVAL...**, page 15)

*The term "Mad as a Hatter" was coined in the early 19th Century to describe the dementia and tremors often seen in men who spent their lives making felt hats, a job that entailed using mercury as part of the process.*





# Sewer Construction: Investing Your Funds, Protecting Your Health

To protect public health and the environment, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD) must maintain, repair or replace sewer lines and other facilities within our 1,500-mile wastewater collection system. We realize construction work can be disruptive and we do our best to minimize the inconvenience our projects may cause to residents and businesses.

Here's a brief summary of our ongoing and future major construction projects:

## Concord

### 1 A-Line Relief Interceptor, Phase 2a:

This project will increase capacity and reduce the potential for wet-weather overflows in the A-Line Interceptor (the backbone of the District's collection system). It entails building 3,000 feet of 96-inch pipe from Buchanan Fields Golf Course to the intersection of Meridian Park Boulevard and Galaxy Way. An additional 1,300 feet of 48-inch through 72-inch pipe will be installed along Galaxy Way, then across Walnut Creek to the City of Concord Pumping Station. The project will also eliminate the need for the pumping station. To minimize construction impacts, 4,000 feet of the pipe will be installed by tunneling. Construction is expected to begin in March 2008 and finish in January 2009. Estimated construction cost: \$20.6 million.

## Martinez

### 2 Martinez Sewer Renovations, Phase 2:

This second phase of a multiphase project will install, replace or renovate approximately 7,000 feet of deteriorating or deficient sewers at several sites in Martinez. It will use open-cut and trenchless technologies. Construction of this phase is expected

to start in June 2008 and finish by January 2009. Estimated construction cost: \$1.0 million.

## Orinda

### 3 South Orinda Sewer Renovations, Phase 3:

This program (which may include up to six phases) will renovate deteriorating sewers in Orinda. Phase 3 will renovate approximately 8,000 feet of sewers in various locations south of Highway 24. Trenchless technologies will be used. Construction of this phase is expected to start in July 2008 and finish by February 2009. Estimated construction cost: \$1.3 million.

### 4 Camino Pablo Trunk Sewer and Force Main Renovation:

This project will replace approximately 1,500 feet of trunk sewer and two force mains carrying wastewater from the Flush Kleen Pumping Station off Camino

Pablo Road in Orinda. To minimize traffic impacts the force mains will be partially installed in a frontage road parallel to Camino Pablo Road. Construction of this phase is expected to start in June 2008 and finish by December 2008. Estimated construction cost: \$1.5 million.

## Walnut Creek

### 5 Walnut Creek Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 6:

This program (which may include up to 15 phases) will replace and renovate deteriorating or deficient sewers in Walnut Creek. Phase 6 will renovate approximately 10,000 feet of sewers at 11 sites using open-cut and trenchless technologies. Construction of this phase is expected

to start in June 2008 and should finish by February 2009. Estimated construction cost: \$1.5 million.

## Lafayette

### 6 Lafayette Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 5:

This ongoing program will replace or renovate deteriorating or deficient sewers in Lafayette. Phase 5 will renovate approximately 10,500 feet of sewers at 15 sites using open-cut and trenchless technologies. Construction of this phase is expected to start in June 2008 and finish by February 2009. Estimated construction cost: \$1.6 million.

For more information about these or other sewer construction projects, please contact Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter at (925) 229-7200. ❖

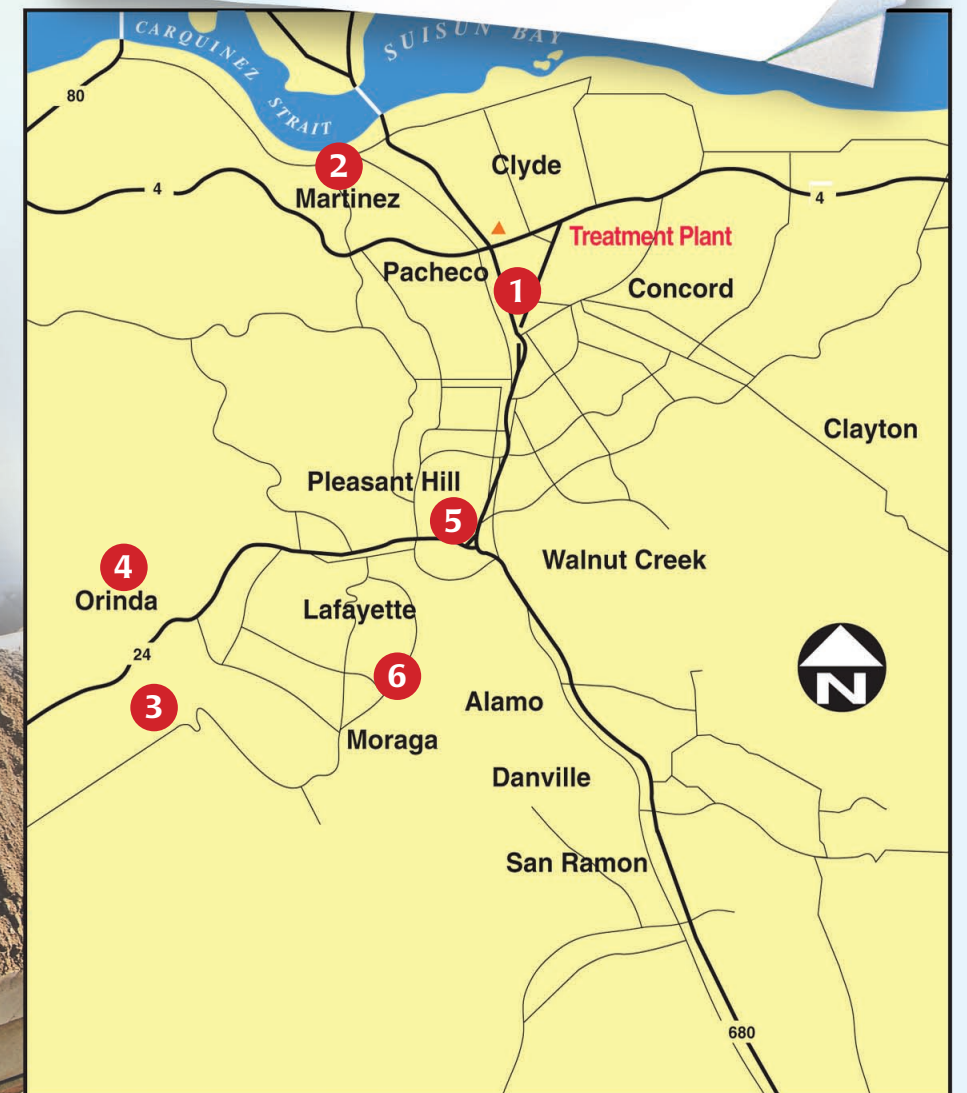
## Survey Coming...

Inquiring minds at CCCSD want to know what you think about us, your local wastewater collection and treatment agency. Why? So we can serve you better!

We'll be including a brief survey in the next issue of this newsletter and would appreciate your taking the time to share your opinions with us.

Of course, you don't need to wait for a survey to tell us what you think. Feel free to contact us anytime:

By e-mail: [webmail@centralsan.dst.ca.us](mailto:webmail@centralsan.dst.ca.us)  
By phone: (925) 335-7702





# GREEN: A Way of Life at CCCSD

Protecting public health and the environment is the primary mission of Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD). So, it is only natural that we strive to do all we can to use environmentally friendly and energy-conserving practices when possible and economically feasible.

While the term “going green” is fairly new to many people, at CCCSD it’s been the way of doing business for quite some time. Here are some of the things we’ve been doing, and are planning to do in our goal of “going green.”

## Recycled Water

In an effort to conserve water, CCCSD began one of the first recycled water programs in the Bay Area in 1994. By providing additional filtration and chlorination of treated wastewater, we produce a renewable product that is



safe for landscape irrigation and some industrial processes.

CCCSD produces approximately 600 million gallons of recycled water annually. The District’s recycled water sales exceeded 200 million gallons for the first time in 2007. In addition, we use over a million gallons of recycled water in and around the plant every day for irrigation and utility-related purposes.

One way of looking at this data is to realize that CCCSD’s recycled water frees up the drinking water supply for almost 3,000 families of four each year.

## Renewable Energy

CCCSD is one of only two wastewater treatment plants in the state that burn sludge—the biosolids removed during the wastewater treatment process—to produce energy. Our four-story, multiple-hearth furnace uses biosolids for fuel, supplemented by methane gas from a local landfill. Every 100 pounds of wet biosolids that enter the furnace are reduced to about seven pounds of inorganic sterilized ash. This ash is then hauled off site and sold to companies that combine it with food waste and other waste products to produce a commercial soil amendment (fertilizer).

In addition, byproducts of the incineration process, heat and steam, are piped to a turbine which provides power to our blower aeration system, to treat our wastewater. This reduces



the need for additional fuel or electricity, thus saving our customers money.

## Hybrid Vehicles

Perhaps one of the most obvious signs of “going green” at CCCSD is the hybrid vehicle. The District’s first hybrid vehicle was purchased in 2003, and today we have six hybrid sedans in our fleet. The hybrid cars are used on a daily basis for various off-site meetings and community outreach programs. This year the District will purchase its first hybrid pick-up truck. The hybrid vehicles get better gas mileage than traditional combustion engines, resulting in reduced fuel costs. And with less fuel consumption comes lower emissions, another plus for the environment.

## Recycled Product Procurement

CCCSD policy requires that we use recycled products and recyclable materials when feasible. Emphasis is placed on the purchase of products manufactured with post-consumer recycled material—new products made from used and recycled items (e.g., copier paper and plastic products).

Our on-site warehouse is currently conducting an audit of green-certified products used by the District. Once the review of current stock is complete, future stock will include guidelines that encourage the purchase and use of green-certified products. By doing this, we will be able to determine what green opportunities make sense for the District to pursue.



## Day-to-Day Things We’re Doing

CCCSD is a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week operation, so finding ways to conserve energy and protect the environment on a daily basis is imperative. Some of the ways we are doing this include:

- **Lighting:** In the early 90s the treatment plant was retrofitted with high-pressure sodium (HPS) outdoor lights because they are energy efficient, reliable, and have long service lives. In addition, much of the indoor lighting at CCCSD has been replaced with motion-activated-sensor lighting that only turns (or stays) on when movement is sensed.
- **Recycling:** Containers are located throughout CCCSD into which employees can place paper, aluminum cans, and glass for recycling. We also recycle our waste oil, scrap metal and the like.

By definition, managing a wastewater facility is an environmentally sensitive job, and in order to continue our mission of protecting public health and the environment, we will continue our ongoing efforts to “go green” while seeking out new ways to increase energy efficiency in the future. ❖

## Energy-Saving System Reaps \$88,280 Rebate from PG&E

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District’s heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) improvement project will save so much energy, PG&E presented the District with their Energy Efficiency Program Award—and a rebate check for \$88,280.

“Basically, PG&E offers money for every watt saved,” said Assistant Engineer Edgar Lopez, the project coordinator. “The rebate represents the anticipated energy cost savings during the first year of running the new HVAC system in comparison to the old system.”



According to Lopez, the energy savings come primarily from the new temperature controls installed throughout the headquarters and plant operations buildings, and the new steam chiller installed at the plant operations building.

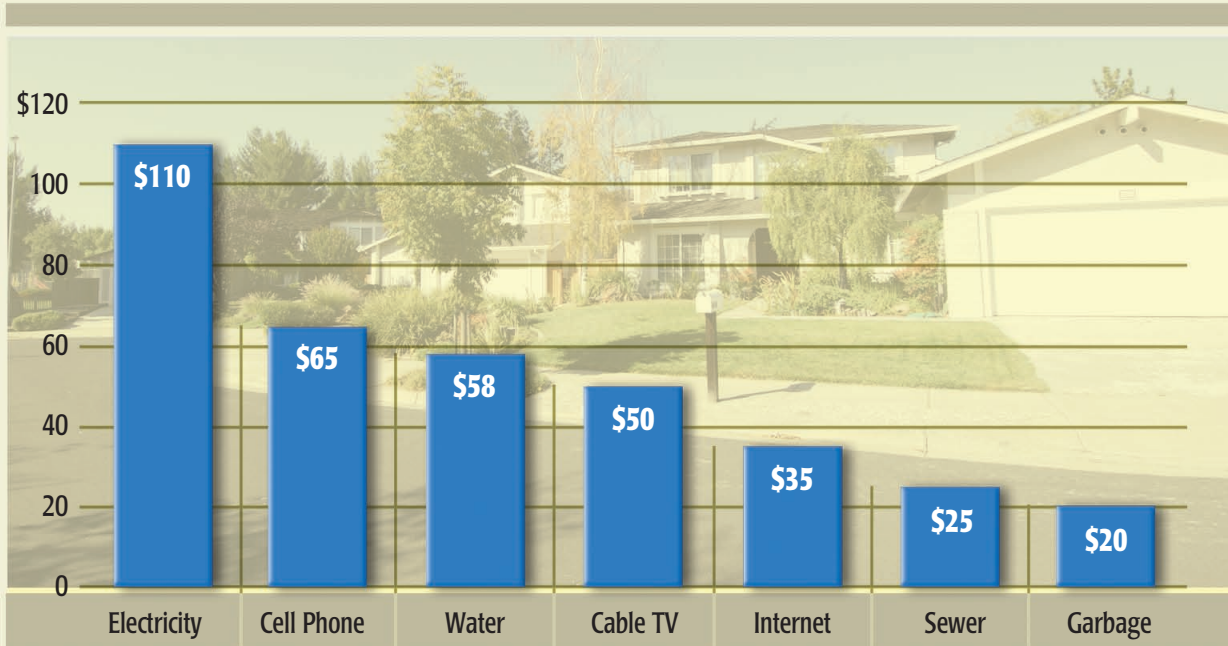




# Sewer Service Charges: Are You Getting Your Money's Worth?

Last July, the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Board of Directors raised the annual Sewer Service Charge for residential customers to \$300. This was done to cover rising costs associated with labor, construction and regulatory compliance.

Right now, residents are paying \$25 per month for sewer service. (The Board regularly reviews the District's financial situation and may adjust rates due to inflation, cost of living, or other factors.) Here's how our rates compare to average monthly costs of other utilities:



For \$25 per month, residents receive:

- Continuous, reliable sewer service from one of the best wastewater collection and treatment utilities in the nation. For the past nine years, CCCSD has had a perfect discharge record—zero violations of the permit that governs our wastewater treatment process and the quality of water we discharge into the bay. For us, that means we're achieving our mission of protecting public health and the environment. For you, that means cleaner water in Suisun Bay.
- The services of an award-winning Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility where you can safely dispose of paints, pesticides, chemicals, batteries, fluorescent lights and other

hazardous materials at no additional charge.

- A caring, well-trained staff dedicated to providing you with exceptional customer service 24 hours a day. If you contact us about a service problem, we'll have a crew respond within 45 minutes. Can your other utilities say that?
- Helpful information and tips about preventing pollution and using fewer toxic chemicals, available free to the general public via our web site ([www.centrialsan.org](http://www.centrialsan.org)), and to students at area schools via the grade school and high school educational programs we sponsor.

We know that we're "the only game in town" when it comes to

providing wastewater collection and treatment services in central Contra Costa County. But that doesn't mean we take our customers—or the fees you pay—for granted. Your fees allow us to maintain an infrastructure that includes more than 1,500 miles of sewer pipeline and a state-of-the-art treatment plant that cleans an average of 45 million gallons of wastewater every day. We work hard to provide maximum value at minimum cost. We hope you feel you are getting your money's worth. If not, please let us know what we can do to improve our service to you: (925) 335-7702 or [webmail@centrialsan.dst.ca.us](mailto:webmail@centrialsan.dst.ca.us). ❖

# Disposal Guide

## How to Get Rid of Stuff You Don't Want or Need

Did you know that many products labeled by manufacturers as “flushable” should not be flushed down the toilet? Flushing anything other than human waste and toilet paper down the toilet may clog sewer lines, harm the environment, increase the cost of wastewater treatment, damage our treatment plant equipment, or even harm our workers!

So what should you do with stuff like expired medicines, used dental floss, cat litter, cigarette butts, feminine hygiene products, disposable wipes and other items? Follow our handy disposal guide! It tells you how to dispose of common household waste in safe, simple and environmentally healthy ways.

Item	Disposal Method	Notes
<b>Aluminum Cans</b>	Put in recycle cart or take to recycling facility	
<b>Automotive Fluids</b> (oil, antifreeze, brake fluid, carburetor cleaner, gasoline, etc.)	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility	Some communities offer scheduled curbside pick-up of transmission fluid, used motor oil; oil may also be taken to some service stations or auto parts stores
<b>Band-Aids, Bandages</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Batteries</b> (car and household batteries)	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, or to retail store that accepts/recycles them	Consider rechargeable batteries
<b>Bones</b> (fish, chicken, etc.)	Put in trash	
<b>Cardboard</b>	Put in recycle cart or take to recycling facility	
<b>Cat/Kitty Litter</b>	Put in trash (even the “flushable” kind)	If you bag it first, please use biodegradable bags
<b>Chemicals, Chemical Products</b> (not otherwise listed)	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility	
<b>Cigarette Butts, Matches</b>	Put in trash	Be sure they are completely out and cold
<b>Cleansers, Detergents, Disinfectants, Household Cleaning Products</b>	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility (even “biodegradable” products)	
<b>Coffee Grounds</b>	Put in trash	Can be used in compost
<b>Condoms, Contraceptives</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Cotton Balls, Q-Tips</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Dead Pets/Animals</b>	Small fish (under 3 inches) may be flushed; put small animals (less than 10 pounds, such as mice, hamsters) in trash; take larger ones to pet cemetery or bury on own land	Check with Contra Costa County Animal Services Department for more information: 925-335-8300

Item	Disposal Method	Notes
<b>Dental Floss</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Disposable Cleaning Wipes</b>	Put in trash (even the “flushable” kind)	
<b>Disposable Diapers, Incontinence Products</b>	Remove and flush fecal material, or wrap in leak-proof container; place in trash (even the “flushable” kind)	Consider reusable diapers or a diaper service
<b>Drugs, Medications, Pharmaceuticals</b>	Remove from original containers; put in sealable container (such as zip-style plastic bag); add substance to make drugs unusable (small amount of liquid, used coffee grounds, kitty litter, garbage); seal container; put in trash. Remove personal info from original container and recycle	Check with your pharmacy to see if it offers a drug take-back program  Never flush, pour down the drain, or put in recycle cart
<b>Eggshells</b>	Put in trash	Can be used in compost
<b>Electronic Waste</b> (e-waste: computers, cell phones, TVs, etc.)	Watch for and use free e-waste collection events; or take to: Contra Costa Transfer & Recovery Station, Hauling Pros, Rapid Recycle, Recycle for Breast Cancer, or other e-waste recycling facilities	Some communities offer biannual curbside collection of e-waste; check with your garbage collection service.  Call CCC Recycling Hotline: 800-750-4096
<b>Feminine Hygiene Products</b> , (tampons, menstrual pads, panty liners, sanitary napkins)	Put in trash	
<b>Fertilizers</b>	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility	Consider using slow-release organic fertilizers or compost
<b>Food Waste</b>	Small amounts may go down garbage disposal (except for bones, fats, oils or grease); or put in trash	Can be used in compost
<b>Hair</b>	Put in trash (small, incidental amounts can be washed down drain)	
<b>Light Bulbs--Fluorescent, including CFLs</b> (Compact Fluorescent Lights)	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility	They contain small amounts of mercury
<b>Light Bulbs--Incandescent, Halogen</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Mercury Thermometers, Thermostats, Switches and other Mercury-Containing Items</b>	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility	Exchange mercury fever thermometers for digital ones at Facility—free
<b>Needles, Syringes, “Sharps”</b>	Put in containers designed specifically for sharps disposal (or a puncture-resistant unbreakable container); seal; put in trash	Do not put in recycle cart

Item	Disposal Method	Notes
<b>Newspaper, Paper Products</b>	Put in recycle cart or take to recycling facility	
<b>Oil, Grease, Fats</b> (from food products)	Put in sealable container (such as coffee can); let solidify or mix with absorbent material (such as kitty litter); seal container; put in trash	Bring large amounts (such as from turkey fryer) to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility
<b>Paint, Stains</b> (latex, oil-based enamel, alkyd, epoxy), <b>Paint Thinners, Turpentine, Solvents, Varnish/Lacquer, Wood Preservatives</b>	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility; empty, dried-out (hardened throughout) containers may be put in trash	Use up or give away excess to friends
<b>Paper Towels, Napkins</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Personal Care Products</b> (hair color, makeup, nail polish, nail polish remover, etc.)	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility or put in trash	
<b>Pesticides, Weed Killers</b>	Bring to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility	If using a reusable sprayer, pour rinse water on ground—not down drain; consider using safer alternatives to toxic pesticides
<b>Pet Waste</b>	Dog waste can be flushed, but preferred method is to put in trash (in biodegradable bag); put cat waste in trash (in biodegradable bag); pet waste may also be buried on own land (not in vegetable garden)	Cat waste may contain parasites harmful to aquatic life and difficult for treatment processes to remove, so it should not be flushed
<b>Plastic Bags</b>	Take back to grocery store or put in trash	Consider reusable bags. Do not put in recycle cart.
<b>Plastic Bottles</b>	Put in recycle cart or take to recycling facility	
<b>Styrofoam</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Tissue</b>	Put in trash	
<b>Yard Waste</b>	Put in “green waste” trash carts; or take to Acme Landfill or Contra Costa Transfer & Recovery Station	Can be used in compost

## Questions?

- For solid waste disposal, call **925-603-1144**
- For household hazardous waste, call **1-800-646-1431**
- For recycling, call **1-800-750-4096**
- For composting, call **925-906-1806**



# CCCSD Salutes Businesses for Preventing Pollution

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District believes local businesses that take extraordinary steps to protect the water environment deserve special recognition. That's why we created a

Pollution Prevention Awards program 16 years ago. Since then, the District has recognized more than 80 local businesses for keeping pollutants out of area waterways.

The award program is held in conjunction with National Pollution Prevention Week, with the goals of raising awareness of various pollution prevention opportunities available and encouraging activities that protect the environment.

Here are the winners of the 16th Annual Pollution Prevention Awards

**16<sup>th</sup> Annual Pollution Prevention Awards**

- Dr. Tom Fasanaro, DDS, Inc., Pleasant Hill
- Dr. Michael Huguet, DDS, Pleasant Hill
- Miguel's Steam Cleaning, Vacaville (Serves Contra Costa County)
- Orinda Chevron Service Station, Orinda
- Systron Donner Inertial, Walnut Creek

ORGANIZED JULY 15, 1948  
CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SANITARY DISTRICT  
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIF.

Protecting Public Health and the Environment

Every year, the District identifies and rewards businesses in our service area that do more than just comply with water quality regulations; these businesses take proactive steps to protect the environment. They promote recycling and waste minimization; use equipment, practices and procedures that prevent pollutants and hazardous wastes from entering the sewer or storm drains; and educate their employees about the importance of water quality issues. They go "above and beyond" when it comes to environmental stewardship. ❖

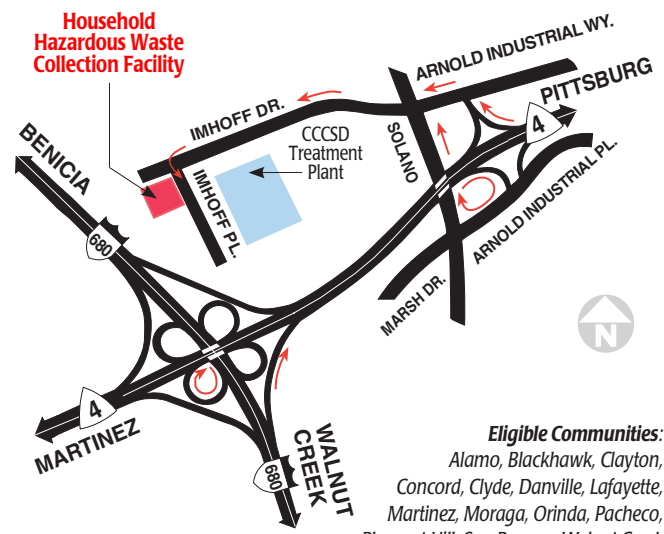
## Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility Hours and Location

**Residents:** Tuesday – Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
(Reuse Room closes at 3:30 p.m.)

**Businesses:** Tuesday – Saturday, by appointment only

### Holiday Schedule

**Closed:** July 4, 2008  
November 11, 27 and 28, 2008  
December 22, 2008 - January 1, 2009



**Eligible Communities:**  
Alamo, Blackhawk, Clayton, Concord, Clyde, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek and unincorporated Central County areas.

- From Hwy. 4 take the Solano Way exit.
- From I-680 take Hwy. 4 East to Solano Way exit.

**Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility**  
4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez, CA 94553-4392



## CCCSD 2007 Statistics

- Gallons of wastewater treated **15,002** million  
*(an average of 41.1 million gallons per day)*
- Tons of furnace ash produced by incinerating sludge **4,207**
- Discharge permit related tests performed by lab *more than* **15,000**
- Percentage of effluent meeting the requirements of our discharge permit **100%**

## CFLs: A Bright Idea, But Handle with Care

As you've no doubt learned from the overwhelming amount of advertising PG&E has done over the past year, compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) use far less energy and last much longer than incandescent light bulbs.

But did you know they contain small amounts of mercury?

Mercury, even in small amounts, is toxic. Because of this, CFLs must be handled carefully and disposed of properly as household hazardous waste. It is against the

law in California to put them in the trash. This is not made clear on most CFL packaging.



After their energy-efficient life is over, please carefully pack and bring your CFLs to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for proper disposal along with your batteries, paint, chemicals and other household hazardous waste items.

For more information about CFLs, including how to safely clean up a broken bulb, visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov). ❖

## Would You Wash Your Child's Hands with Pesticide?

Many of today's antibacterial soaps and cleaning products contain triclosan. Triclosan is an EPA-registered pesticide. It's toxic to aquatic organisms and is found in local waters because wastewater treatment plants are designed to remove biological wastes, not toxic chemicals.

We don't want triclosan in the Bay, and you don't need it in your home.

According to the American Medical Association, the best protection against bacteria is to wash hands with ordinary soap. The physical act of washing removes bacteria and other microorganisms, including viruses

that cause colds and the flu (which are not destroyed by antibacterial agents).

So check the label before you buy, and choose products that do not contain triclosan. If you wish to dispose of your triclosan-containing soap, please bring it to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility along with your batteries, paint, chemicals and other household hazardous waste items. ❖



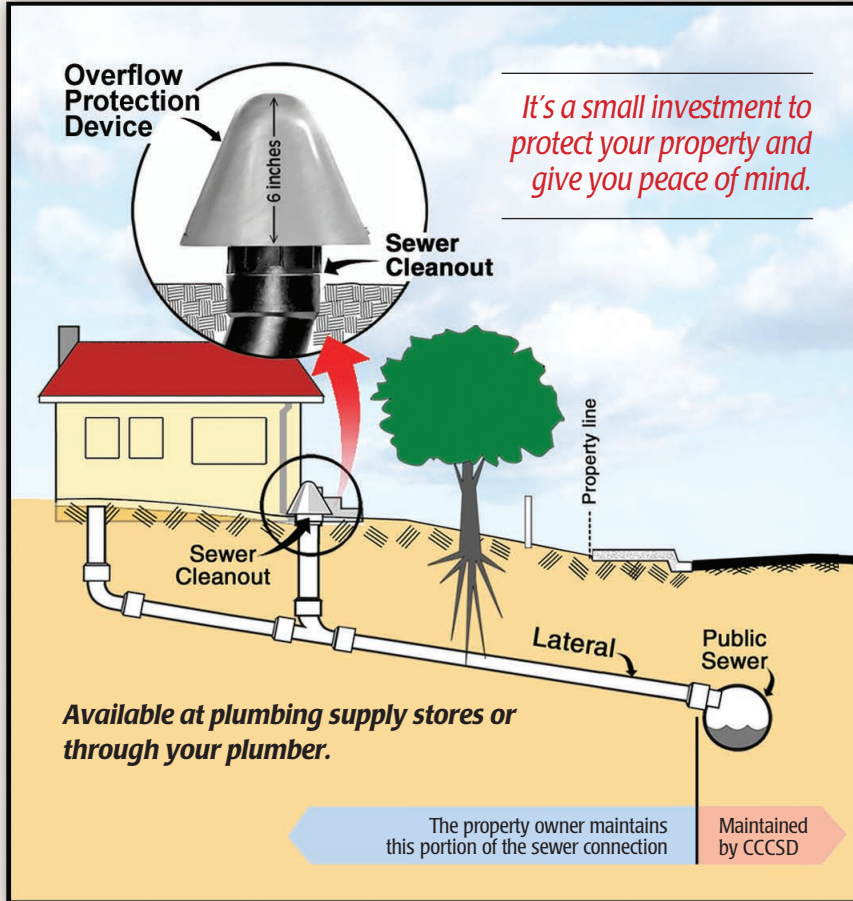
## District Wins Awards

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's people and programs are among the best in the industry. This fact was acknowledged recently when the District won three California Water Environment Association (San Francisco Bay Section) awards:

- **Collection System of the Year**
- **Mechanical Technician of the Year:**  
**DeWayne Derrick**,  
Maintenance Technician III,  
Mechanical
- **Engineering Achievement Award** -- Plant Control System Improvements Project.

# Protect Your Property From a Sewage Overflow

Wherever a sewer system exists, so does the potential for overflows.



## This inexpensive device can protect your property.

Sewage overflows can occur when pipes are blocked or restricted by roots, grease buildup or other obstacles that cause wastewater to back up in the pipe and spill from the first outlet it comes to. In most cases, that outlet is a manhole; but sometimes it can be a drain inside your home. Installing an overflow protection device can help to prevent this. The device causes wastewater backing up in the pipe to be released outside your home, rather than through drains inside (unless the blockage is between the device and your home).

The device is required by CCCSD Code, and is available at plumbing

supply stores. Most models cost about \$55. Because position and elevation are crucial for the device to function properly, we recommend it be installed by a licensed plumbing contractor. Once installed, it should be kept clear of obstructions such as dirt or vegetation that might interfere with its operation.

It's a small investment to protect your property and give you peace of mind.

For more information about this important device, please visit our web site at [http://www.centrsan.org/sewersystem/overflow\\_prevent.html](http://www.centrsan.org/sewersystem/overflow_prevent.html) or call the CCCSD Permit Counter staff at (925) 229-7371. ❖

## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL DISTRICT CUSTOMERS

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) offers free Overflow Protection Devices (OPDs) to residents of nine Bay Area counties, including Contra Costa County. Unfortunately, these free devices do not meet Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's Code standards and may not protect your home from a sewage overflow. The District would not be liable for any overflow damage to properties inadequately protected by this free OPD.

Installation of a District-approved OPD is required for all sewer connections in the CCCSD service area. The District's Approved Materials List allows two styles of OPDs: a "mushroom" type device or a sewer popper device. The spring-loaded device from ABAG is not acceptable by District standards.

For more information on OPDs, check our website at: [www.central-san.org/sewer\\_system/overflow-prevent.html](http://www.central-san.org/sewer_system/overflow-prevent.html) or call our Permit Office at 925-229-7371.





## Ongoing and Future Challenges

# Out With the Old; In With the New (Pollutants, That Is)



Local waters have experienced an extraordinary decrease in pollutants since the 1960s. This is due to several factors: (1) increased environmental awareness among the public; (2) more stringent federal, state and local water quality regulations; and (3) continually improving pollution prevention efforts, water treatment processes, and water quality monitoring technologies among the Bay Area clean water agencies (including Central Contra Costa Sanitary District).

Various sediments, organic matter, bacteria, and toxic metals such as copper and nickel have been reduced by as much as 99% in some cases—even while area population has dramatically increased.

Unfortunately, while those “old” conventional pollutants have decreased, other contaminants still threaten the health of our local water environment. These include:

- **Mercury:** a highly toxic metal used in thermometers, thermostats, switches, fluorescent lights and many other household items. Mercury contamination of local waters is a major concern because it accumulates in high concentrations in some fish and wildlife species.
- **Dioxins:** highly toxic organic chemicals that can be found in the wood preservative

Pentachlorophenol (“Penta”), but are primarily by-products of combustion. Burning firewood, for instance, releases dioxins into the air which eventually come back down, often into local waters.

- **PBDEs (Polybrominated diphenyl ethers):** a class of toxic, flame-retardant chemicals used in plastics and fabrics to make clothing, furniture, appliances and other items less likely to catch fire and burn. Two types of PBDEs have been banned in California, but one is still in use (primarily in electronics).
- **PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls):** persistent, toxic organic chemicals that were widely used by electrical utilities and industries. They were banned in 1979, but are still present in the environment.
- **Pesticides:** toxic chemicals sprayed on lawns and gardens by residents cause more pollution than agricultural pesticides used on farms. While highly toxic organophosphate pesticides such as Diazinon and

Chlorpyrifos have disappeared from store shelves after being banned in 2004, their “replacement” products made with Pyrethroids are toxic to fish and other aquatic life.

These are just a few of the pollutants being detected by water agencies and regulators; there are many others. For example, new concerns are rising about pharmaceuticals and personal care products. Studies show the chemicals in some pharmaceuticals polluting local waters may be mutating some species of fish and other aquatic organisms.

Keeping pollutants from entering wastewater in the first place is more effective than trying to remove them at our treatment plant (which is designed to remove biological wastes, not toxic chemicals, solvents and metals). That’s why we constantly promote the use of our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, provide public and student education programs about pollution prevention, and take other proactive measures to protect the environment.



*New contaminants continue to threaten our local water environment*

## What can you do to help?

First and foremost, be an informed consumer. Before you buy products, consider how they are manufactured, their ingredients, and their impact on the environment when used and discarded. And for the items you do purchase, remember the three Rs:

**Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.**

While we’ve come a long way in keeping pollutants out of our water environment, there are many challenges ahead. We’re all in this together. We appreciate your support! ❖



## East Bay Water and Wastewater Agencies Sponsor Operator Training for a New Generation

*"In the next seven to ten years, close to 50 percent of all water and wastewater treatment plant operators in the U.S. will reach retirement age"*

A recent issue of AARP Magazine noted that a 62-year-old woman was the first Baby Boomer to apply for retirement benefits from Social Security. She was just the first of an entire generation and the impact of other Baby Boomer retirements is beginning to be felt in public and private industry around the country.

"In the next seven to ten years, close to 50 percent of all water and wastewater treatment plant operators in the U.S. will reach retirement age,"

notes Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD) General Manager James Kelly. "That translates into more than 1,000 wastewater jobs in Northern California alone. For years now, water and wastewater agencies have been cannibalizing each other to fill vacancies; vacancies often created when another agency hired away an experienced operator."

So, where will the next generation of treatment plant operators be found? One option is through college-level

courses that prepare students for the State-administered operator tests. No college in Contra Costa County offers that training now, but rather than hope that such a curriculum might eventually be taught locally, a coalition of special districts, agencies, and municipalities in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties came together to address the problem head on. CCCSD joined Contra Costa Water District, Delta Diablo Sanitation District, Diablo Water District, Dublin San Ramon Services District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, City of

Livermore, Mt. View Sanitary District, Rodeo Sanitary District, and West County Wastewater District to bring college-level Water/Wastewater Operator training classes closer to home.

Solano Community College in Fairfield was the only school in the region to offer such training. So, under the auspices of the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), the coalition contracted with Solano Community College to offer such classes at CCCSD's headquarters.

Starting in September 2007, more than 75 adult students—from as far away as Alameda and as close as Martinez—registered for three different classes, each taught one evening per week by three experienced

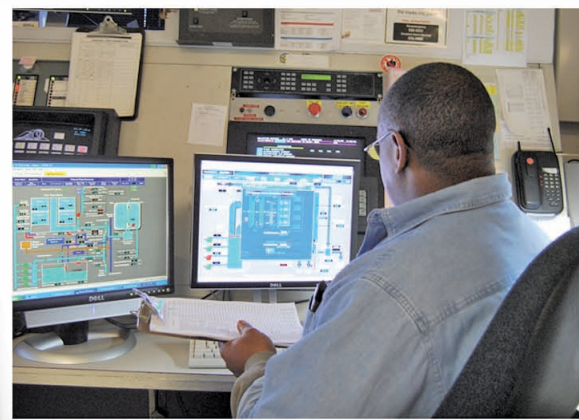
teachers, all staff members at one of the participating agencies. Final exams took place in December with 61 students getting passing grades in Intro to Water & Wastewater Treatment, Mathematics of Water & Wastewater Treatment, or Intro to Water Supply & Treatment.

Based on the success of the first semester, four additional classes are being offered in a second semester that started in early January 2008. Three of the courses are being taught at CCCSD, the fourth at West County Wastewater District in Richmond. Fiscal commitments from three more agencies—Oro Loma Sanitary District, Union Sanitary District, and Zone 7 Water Agency—allowed for the additional course and an expansion of the student base.

"A third of the students we've seen have had no affiliation with wastewater or water agencies," noted Doug Craig, Director of Plant Operations at CCCSD. "Three students have already been hired by two of the participating agencies and more hires from the group are expected this year. The classes are paying for themselves."

Jim Kelly offered his agreement. "These students are preparing themselves for careers that involve protecting public health and the environment; careers that provide excellent pay, benefits, promotional opportunities, and are marketable anywhere in the country," he said. "Given the interest we've seen to date, we hope that local colleges will see the viability of offering such courses in the near future."

For more information on the Water/Wastewater Operator Training courses, or to be placed on a mailing list for future courses, call (925) 335-7728 or send an e-mail to [class@centralsan.dst.ca.us](mailto:class@centralsan.dst.ca.us) ❖



**Begin a career with a future**  
Winter 2008 Semester

If you like the challenge and responsibility of protecting public health and the environment, a job in the Water or Wastewater industry could be for you!

**Become a Water or Wastewater Professional!**

Entry-level operators can earn more than \$50,000 in their first year.

Solano Community College offers Water/Wastewater Technology courses at the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District and at West County Water District

For more information, email [class@centralsan.dst.ca.us](mailto:class@centralsan.dst.ca.us) or call (925) 335-7728

Winter 2008 Semester—6030-1107

## Mercury Removal ... (continued from front)

*The waters of the Bay Area cover mercury-laden sediment dating back to the Gold Rush of 1849, when mercury was mined throughout the Coastal Range and used to extract gold from ore. Urban runoff continues to wash mercury into area waters.*

schools. The Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility will accept any mercury, mercury compounds, or mercury-containing items from any school in the service area and will waive the standard disposal fee charged to schools and small businesses.

To raise the stakes a bit higher, the District will exchange Classroom Thermometer Kits containing 16 spirit thermometers (with a temperature range of -10 to +110 degrees Celsius) for a comparable number of mercury thermometers. There is no limit on the number of thermometers that can be exchanged. And best of all, the exchange is absolutely free.

Why is the District so focused on getting rid of mercury? Because mercury is one of the most toxic substances known. The mercury in a single laboratory thermometer can contaminate 500 million gallons of water.

*Dangers posed by mercury to the American public for the first time. Photographer W. Eugene Smith's stark black and white photos showed birth defects, physical deformities, blindness, insanity, and death in a small fishing village in Japan. A chemical company had used nearby Minamata Bay as a dump site for mercury compounds that found their way into the bay's fish and shellfish which was consumed every day by those villagers.*

Schools interested in disposing of mercury at the facility should call 800-646-1431 for a small business form and a drop-off appointment. CCCSD will send instructions for packaging and transporting.

Another element of the High School Program is the District's "Mercury Minimization Environmental Achievement Certificate." It's proof of the school's commitment to protecting its students and the environment by reducing or eliminating mercury throughout the school. Call 925-229-7107 for details.

For more information, look us up at [www.centralsan.org](http://www.centralsan.org) or call 800-646-1431. ❖





## About CCCSD

Our mission is to protect public health and the environment. We do this by collecting and treating wastewater, providing recycled water, and promoting pollution prevention.

Our treatment plant in Martinez collects and treats an average of 48 million gallons of wastewater every day. Some highly treated wastewater is recycled for irrigation use on golf courses and parks, and the rest is safely released into Suisun Bay. We also operate a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility that allows our customers to safely dispose of hazardous materials. ❖

## Where to Call...

General information	(925) 228-9500 or <a href="http://www.centrialsan.org">www.centrialsan.org</a>
Sewer overflows <i>(When there's an overflow in the street or a backup in your home, call this number and in most cases, a crew will be there within an hour.)</i>	(925) 933-0955 or 933-0990
Treatment Plant InfoLine (Report Odors)	(925) 335-7703
Household Hazardous Waste InfoLine	(800) 646-1431
Sewer connection permits	(925) 229-7371
To report illegal discharges into sewer system	(925) 229-7288 (during business hours) (925) 229-7214 (after hours)
Job Hotline	(925) 229-7109 or <a href="http://www.centrialsan.org">www.centrialsan.org</a>
Student Education Programs	(925) 229-7310 or <a href="http://www.centrialsan.org">www.centrialsan.org</a>
Public InfoLine	(925) 335-7702 or <a href="http://www.centrialsan.org">www.centrialsan.org</a>

Past issues of the "Pipeline" are available on our web site:  
<http://www.centrialsan.org/education/publications.html>

CCCSD Pipeline is brought to you by:  
Board of Directors  
**Gerald R. Lucey**, President






**Barbara D. Hockett**, President Pro Tem • **James A. Nejedly**, Board Director  
**Michael R. McGill**, Board Director • **Mario M. Menesini**, Board Director

Board meetings are open to the public and are generally held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. in the CCCSD Board Room, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez.

**James M. Kelly**, General Manager



**CCCSD serves 448,737 people within its 140-square-mile service area.**

-  Sewage collection and wastewater treatment (and HHW collection service) for 314,437 people
-  Wastewater treatment for 134,300 residents in Concord and Clayton by contract and HHW collection service
-  HHW collection service only
-  CCCSD's Headquarters, treatment plant, and HHW Collection Facility are located in Martinez
-  CCCSD's Collection System Operations Department (sewer maintenance) is based in Walnut Creek

### The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

Printed and designed by the CCCSD Communication Services Division using desktop publishing. This newsletter is published periodically to provide useful information to our customers and those in the Mt. View Sanitary District.

**Michael Scahill**, Editor • **Bonnie Lowe**, Writer  
**Son Nguyen**, Graphic Designer



**Protecting Public Health and the Environment**



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