

# PROTECTING OUR WATER

### KIDS' PAGE INSIDE: WIN A PRIZE!

### From the GM

It was a busy year for us:

agencies nationwide.

averages).

landscapes.

2015

# Looking Back; Thinking Ahead

▶ For the 17th consecutive year, we achieved 100% permit compliance, which means we kept pollutants out of Suisun

Bay and met all federal, state, and regional water quality

requirements. This earned us the National Association of

It's a distinction earned by only a handful of wastewater

Despite the intensified, drought-driven invasion of roots

into our sewer pipes, our hard-working crews kept the number of overflows down (well below statewide and Bay Area

We opened a new Residential Recycled Water Fill Station,

extreme drought by providing millions of gallons of recycled

water to our customers for hand-watering of gardens and

We were honored to receive the Dr. Teng-Chung Wu

Pollution Prevention Award from the San Francisco Bay

Regional Water Quality Control Board. The award recognizes Central San's leadership in public outreach about disposable

wipes (when flushed, they can cause sewage blockages and

We have a long history of providing excellent service to our

community, and this is because our employees take their jobs

very seriously. They know we own a critical role in protecting a

very fragile and delicate environment, and it's a never-ending

process. To continue earning the public's trust, we must

overflows that are costly to clean up and pose environmental

helping to augment potable water supplies during this

Clean Water Agencies Platinum-17 Peak Performance Award.

s 2015 nears its end, it's an appropriate time to briefly glance back at last year's accomplishments, and then stare boldly into the face of the new year's opportunities and challenges.

#### 2016 And Beyond

Regardless of how well we've done in the past, we are futurefocused, continuously challenging ourselves to improve.

Our Board of Directors has set strategic goals for the District that include exceptional customer service, financial stability, a reliable infrastructure, the recovery of wastewater resources, and the development of our human resources.

As Californians we know water is one of the premier issues of our time. As your wastewater service provider, we can play an essential role in helping to solve that problem by producing significantly more recycled water to augment the available water supply.

In 2016 and beyond, we will strive to become even more efficient in everything we do, and to optimize our operations while saving on costs. Cost does matter; not to be penny-wise and pound-foolish, but we recognize that we operate complex systems, and we must responsibly spend our customers' money to maintain those systems.

We will continue to look at our major cost components and ask ourselves, are we doing the best we can? Is there room for improvement? If so, where and how? Then we will work to make those improvements.

At the same time, we will remain financially savvy. We recognize that every dollar we spend is a dollar we collect from our customers.

We're here to serve the public; and the public expects – and rightly deserves – nothing less than excellence from us.

Roger S. Bailey, General Manager

# Who We Are

and public health hazards).

prepare for tomorrow's challenges.

#### We're your friendly neighborhood sewer utility... and so much more!

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San) has been protecting public health and the environment since 1946 by collecting and treating wastewater from residents and businesses in central Contra Costa County. Whatever goes down your drains travels through our vast sewer system to our treatment plant near the corner of Interstate 680 and Highway 4 in Martinez. We treat and disinfect about 35.6 million gallons of wastewater every day. Most of that treated water goes into Suisun Bay, but some of it receives further processing to produce nearly 2 million gallons of recycled water daily for landscape irrigation and industrial use. We also operate a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility and co-sponsor several pharmaceutical collection/disposal sites within the communities we serve. Please visit our website for more information: <u>CentralSan.org</u>.



### Army Reserve Center (Military Ocean Terminal)

410 Norman Ave., Bldg. 609, Concord

Recognized for capturing and reusing rainwater for washing vehicles and flushing toilets, and for operating a water recycling system for washing military cargo trains.



### Audi Concord

1300 Concord Ave., Concord

Recognized for their new facility that includes many systems to conserve resources, protect water quality, and reduce discharges to the sewer system and storm drains.





### Julia Lee, DDS, Inc. 2211 Olympic Blvd., Walnut Creek

Recognized for using digital (versus chemical) x-ray processing, for using organic cleaning products, and for not using mercury-containing amalgam fillings for more than 15 years.

Republic Services 441 North Buchanan Circle, Pacheco

Recognized for operating a 3,500-gallon recycling system on their wash pad, saving water, and discharging very little treated wastewater to the sewer system.



The winners were recognized at the Sustainable Contra Costa Leadership in Sustainability and Green Building Awards Gala on Sept. 23. Since initiating our program in 1992, we have recognized 104 local businesses for reducing pollution.

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### Fall Gardening Tips from Our Master Gardener

ne of our dedicated employees, Engineering Assistant Earlene Millier, is also a Master Gardener.

"I've spent 24 years working at Central San," she said, "and I've learned how pesticides can be toxic in the environment and pollute Suisun Bay."

**REPAIR**. Before winter sends

trails of ants

and other

pests into

your house

in search of

a cozy new

home, caulk

crevices and

repair holes

in screens.

cracks and

When she's not on the job, Earlene puts on her Master Gardener hat and helps people within our community learn how to have a healthy garden without using toxic chemicals.

"Fall and winter are great times for gardening in the Bay Area," she said. "Our mild weather allows us to garden virtually year-round. It's a good time to prune plants, and to get new plants in the ground, because the cooler weather and winter rains (we hope!) will help them establish healthy root systems in preparation for spring and summer's growth."

According to Earlene, fall and winter are also good times for planning to prevent or manage pest problems in the garden and the home using less-toxic methods.

#### Here are some of her tips to help you do just that:

#### **CLEAN**. Rake up debris, which can



harbor plant pests and diseases. While plants are dormant, prune and dispose of dead, diseased or damaged parts. Clean out your garage or garden shed and take any leftover toxic garden chemicals to our Household

Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, 4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez.

Get more tips from Earlene in this video: "Keep Pesticides Out of the Garden!" at <u>YouTube.com/</u> CentralSanDist



"Follow these tips, and you'll be well on your way to having a healthy, safe, pest-resistant garden!"

> - Earlene Millier Engineering Assistant and Master Gardener

PLAN. Plan to use less-toxic alternatives for pest control. You can find out about these at <u>CentralSan.org</u> (click on Healthy Garden Guide on the home page) or from the Contra Costa Master Gardeners website, <u>CCMG.UCDavis.edu</u>.

Baking

4

# Wipes Clog Pipes

'e've said it before and we'll say it again: wipes clog pipes!

These products were not designed with your plumbing - or our sewer and treatment systems in mind. Despite what manufacturers would have you believe, successfully passing through a toilet is NOT an adequate test for labeling a product as flushable.



Over the past few years, the conversion to lowflow toilets and fixtures. the growth of droughtthirsty tree roots invading our pipelines, and the huge number of people flushing wipes, have created a perfect recipe for sewer clogs and overflows in homes.

From forensic sewer surveys (yes, that's a thing) performed around the country, it seems a major

part of this issue is consumers buying, using and flushing baby wipes, because they are the cheapest wipe product on the market. Unfortunately, they are made of plastic fibers and were never meant to break down in a water environment.

ISPOSABLE

ATHROOM

ANTIBACTE

ushable

As if the clogging potential wasn't enough, many disposable cleaning and disinfecting wipes contain chemicals that pollute our waterways.

Please put wipes - even those labeled "flushable" - in the trash, not the toilet.

A mass of wipes is removed from a clogged pipe.

### **Toilet Talks** Trash About **Wipes**

This friendly talking toilet wants to ask you a personal question. Find out what it is by watching our new "Wipes Clog Pipes" video on YouTube (there's even a shorter version for children):

> YouTube.com/ **CentralSanDist**



FLUSHCLOTHS

"Just Wipe & Flush

# Small Device Prevents Big Problems

Ithough sewer backups and overflows are rare, they can cause a lot of damage, create a health risk, and be expensive to clean up.

Most overflows are caused by clogs in private side-sewers/laterals (the property owner's responsibility), but they can also occur in the public sewer main (Central San's responsibility). Installing an Overflow Protection Device is the best way to prevent sewage from backing up into your home or business, regardless of whether the problem is in the public sewer main or a private lateral.

That's why Central San has an ordinance requiring all homes and businesses in our service area to have an Overflow Protection Device. You can read the ordinance here: <u>tinyurl.com/OPD-ORD</u>

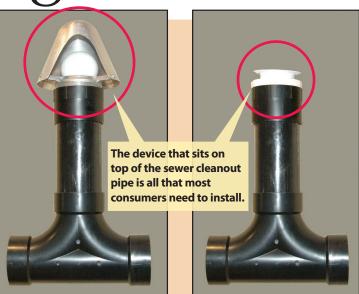
### Note: The device will not help if a clog occurs between it and the building, so keep your pipes free of grease, wipes, and anything else that might cause a clog!

Because proper elevation and location are critical for the device to function properly, we recommend that it be installed by a licensed plumbing contractor.

After installation, the device must be properly

maintained. Please keep it clear of obstructions such as dirt, plants, concrete, or anything else that might interfere with its operation. If you hire a gardener or landscaper, make sure they know this.

If an overflow occurs and there isn't an Overflow Protection Device installed and properly maintained, the property owner may be responsible for resulting damages.



There are different styles of Overflow Protection Devices. The "mushroom" style, pictured left, has been cut away to show the ball that sits on the pipe opening inside the metal covering. The style pictured at right (shown with the top popped up) is best for installing in driveways or other areas where above-ground protrusions are undesirable.

If you do not have this device yet, please have one installed right away. They typically cost less than \$50 (depending on the model) and are available at most local plumbing supply stores.

We can help you determine the best type of device for your home or business. Please call our Permit Counter staff at (925) 229-7371 for more information.

### Want to Know More?

re you a member of a large group that would like to know more about what we do to protect the environment, and how YOU can help? We offer powerful presentations, terrific tours of our treatment plant, entertaining event involvement, and motivating materials – all guaranteed to gratify your group! Contact Kit Ohlman at (925) 229-7329 or kohlman@centralsan.org. We'll do our best to impress!

You can also take a virtual tour any time by watching our "Follow the Flow" video on YouTube: YouTube.com/CentralSanDist

# Please Don't Flush Your Drugs!

lushing unwanted medications down a toilet, or pouring them down a drain, is a bad idea (no matter what you read on the Internet). Our wastewater treatment plant is not designed to remove sophisticated chemical compounds found in today's pharmaceuticals; traces will stay in the water as it's returned to the environment.

### If you flush your drugs, you will pollute Suisun Bay.

Putting drugs in the trash isn't a good idea, either. They might spill, be swallowed by kids or animals, or be washed down storm drains and into local waters.

Instead of flushing or trashing unwanted medicines, vitamins or pet medications, bring them to a free dropoff site for safe disposal. Transfer pills to a sealable plastic bag before putting them in the bin. Leave liquids in their bottles, but seal them in a bag to prevent leaks.

Please do not put sharps or anything other than medications in the container! A list of sharps disposal locations is online: **CentralSan.org/documents/ Alternative\_HHW\_Locations.pdf** 

For more information, visit <u>CentralSan.org/HHW</u> or call 1-800-646-1431.



### Pharmaceutical Drop-Off Sites

#### Alamo Sheriff's Substation 150 Alamo Plaza, Suite C

**Clayton Police Dept.** 6000 Heritage Trail

**Concord Police Dept.** 1350 Galindo St.

**Danville Police Dept.** 510 La Gonda Way

Lafayette Police Dept. 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 130

#### Martinez:

- Police Dept. 525 Henrietta St.
- Sheriff's Field Ops Bldg. 1980 Muir Rd.

Martinez (cont'd.):

 Contra Costa Med. Center Sheriff's Substation 2500 Alhambra Ave.

Moraga Police Dept. 329 Rheem Blvd.

**Orinda Police Dept.** 22 Orinda Way

**Pleasant Hill Police Dept.** 330 Civic Dr.

San Ramon Police Dept. 2401 Crow Canyon Rd.

Walnut Creek City Hall 1666 North Main St.

### Watch This!

heck out our new video, "**Don't Flush Your Medications!**" (Starring one of our Shift Supervisors, Frank Favalora, and County Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho) on our YouTube channel: <u>YouTube.com/CentralSanDist</u>



### **Recycle Grease & Cooking Oil** Prevent Clogs; Help the Planet

is the season for delicious home cooking! But it can also be the season for nastv sewer clogs and backups that can damage property and harm the environment if you let grease, fat, and cooking oil go down your drain.

#### Besides avoiding sewer clogs, here's another reason to prevent that stuff from going down your drain: biofuels!

Each year, our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility receives about 3,000 gallons of grease and used cooking oil from residents who know better than to pour it down a drain. Those people are doing more than just preventing sewer clogs and overflows - they're helping to create a sustainable, low-emission fuel supply! The grease and cooking oil received at the facility is sold to a company that produces biofuels.



When you have used oil or grease to dispose of (perhaps after deepfrying your turkey or other foods), please bring it to our facility so it can be recycled into biofuels. Your sewer pipes - and the environment - will thank you!

For more information, please call the facility at 1-800-646-1431.



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

Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Danville, Lafayette, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, and unincorporated Central County areas.

## Shining a Light on Hidden Toxins

luorescent lights contain mercury, one of the most toxic substances on earth. Old ballasts (the electrical component of fluorescent light fixtures) can contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), highly toxic synthetic chemicals (banned in 1978).

Please keep this in mind when changing out light fixtures: If you improperly dispose of fluorescent lights or ballasts and they break apart, their toxins can leach into ground water or surface waters, causing serious harm to the environment. Mercury is in the water – and in the fish – of San Francisco Bay.

#### The best way to safely dispose of fluorescent lights and ballasts is to bring them to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, 4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez.

• For fluorescent lights, put them in their original packaging, if possible. Otherwise, wrap them in newspaper to keep them from breaking. Secure them in your trunk or truck bed to avoid broken glass or mercury exposure in case of an accident. Please do not tape tubes together, as they will need to be loose to be recycled.

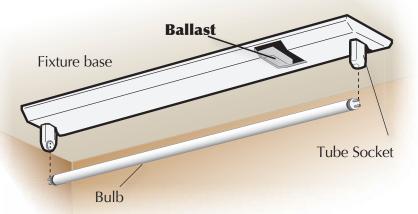
• Ballasts that do not contain PCBs are marked "No PCBs" on their labels. If a ballast is not so marked, assume it contains PCBs and bring it to the facility, but remove the ballast from the light fixture first. If the ballast is leaking, put it in a sealable plastic bag, and place all cleanup materials (rags, wipes, etc.) into the bag with it.

#### Fluorescents Are Still a Good Choice; LEDs are Better

Fluorescent lights are still a good choice because they use less energy than incandescent lamps and last up to ten times longer. Reducing energy use cuts down on power plant emissions of mercury and other pollutants.

Better yet, use LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights. LED lights are even more energy efficient, do not contain mercury or other hazardous materials, and can be put in the trash.

Please call 1-800-646-1431 for more information.





Charles McPherson and Winston Ingram prepare mercury-containing fluorescent lights for safe disposal.

**Fascinating** Last year our facility received more than 400,000 feet of fluorescent **Fact:** lamps. Laid end-to-end, they would reach from Martinez to Sacramento!

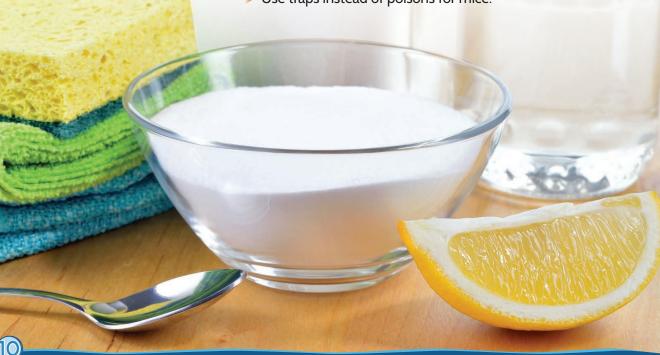
## Fewer Chemicals, More Ca\$h in Your Pocket

hen most people think about water pollution, images of leaking oil tankers, factories spilling toxic wastes into waterways, or garbage strewn along the beach come to mind. The truth is, the problem is a lot closer to home. In fact, it's in your home.

The major source of water pollution in the Bay Area is residents. Commonly used products like pesticides and cleansers can contain chemicals which, when poured down drains, pass through wastewater treatment plants and end up in local waters, harming fish and wildlife. Treatment plants are designed to treat biological wastes and cannot remove all of the metals, solvents, and chemicals contained in many of today's household products.

Here are 11 tips you can use to help keep pollutants out of our water environment. Many of these will also save you money, because they are less expensive than commercial cleaning products:

- Use baking soda mixed with water as an inexpensive, effective all-purpose cleaner instead of harsh commercial products.
- Use lemon juice or vinegar mixed with water to cut grease, clean glass, and clean vinyl and linoleum floors.
- Use toothpaste to remove scuffmarks from floors and watermarks from wood furniture.
- Use vinegar to remove mineral deposits around faucets caused by hard water. Cover the deposits with vinegar-soaked strips of paper towel for about an hour, then wipe clean.
- Use club soda to clean carpet and upholstery stains.
- Use olive oil or beeswax to shine leather shoes or polish unvarnished wood.
- Use linseed oil to revitalize old furniture.
- Use a plunger instead of chemicals to clear clogged toilets and drains.
- Use latex instead of oil-based paints. Use water-based paint removers.
- Use boric acid or diatomaceous earth instead of toxic pesticides to control cockroaches and ants.
- Use traps instead of poisons for mice.



# Smoke in the Water

enough to make you choke: burning wood, wrapping paper, and trash creates smoke full of carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde, and dioxin! These toxins not only pollute our air, they also get into our water, because the tiny particles within the smoke eventually come back down to earth. When those toxic particles settle onto the ground, they can get washed into storm drains during irrigation and (dare we say it?) rain. The particles also come down into streams, rivers, lakes, and the bay.

Dioxin (which is produced by burning organic materials such as wood and paper) is particularly nasty. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, it is a likely human carcinogen that increases the risk of cancer.

Like mercury, dioxin is being found in fish in San Francisco Bay.

Here are four things you can do to reduce these pollutants in the environment:

Do not burn wood, wrapping paper, particle board, plastic, Styrofoam or other trash.

2 Switch from a wood-burning fireplace to a natural gas device or pellet stove to reduce emissions.

Burn manufactured logs instead of wood. They burn with lower emissions of dioxin and other pollutants. Note: Follow instructions on the logs; some are not suitable for wood stoves or fireplace inserts.

Always check for Spare the Air alerts before burning.



### Infrastructure Improvements

he Central Contra Costa Sanitary District regularly maintains, repairs, or replaces sewer lines and other elements of our 1,500-mile wastewater collection system to decrease the likelihood of failures and to ensure continuous, trouble-free service for our customers. Our projects may cause short-term inconveniences, but they provide long-term benefits for you and your neighbors. We appreciate your understanding. Here's a brief summary of our major ongoing construction projects:

#### LAFAYETTE: The Lafayette Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 10, is renovating sewers in the Moraga Road and Happy

in the Moraga Road and Happy Valley Road. areas. Expected completion: November 2016. MARTINEZ: The Martinez Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 4, is renovating sewers west of Alhambra between Highway 4 and the high school. Expected completion: March 2016.

**PLEASANT HILL: The Pleasant Hill - Grayson Creek Trunk Sewer Project** is installing sewers in the Westover Drive and Pleasant Hill Road neighborhood. Expected completion: April 2017.

#### For more info...

For more information about these or other construction projects, please contact Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter at (925) 229-7200 or ccarp@centralsan.org, or visit <u>CentralSan.org/Construction</u>.

# Sticker Shock!

id you know most produce stickers are made of plastic? If they go down the drain as you wash your fruits and veggies, they can get stuck in your plumbing, or in our wastewater treatment plant pumps, hoses, screens and filters. Worse, they can end up in Suisun Bay!

It's extremely difficult for our treatment processes to remove small pieces of plastic from the wastewater. Please don't let these stickers go down the drain!

Keep them out of compost piles and green bins, too. Even so-called "compostable" and "biodegradable" stickers take a very long time to degrade. They can also get washed into storm drains when it rains, and add to the shocking amount of plastic polluting our environment.

Solarti

SolarTh



Keep your sewer system happy and trouble-free by throwing produce stickers in the trash!

### Solar Fever Thermometers Are Hot!

ercury is highly toxic. If you drop and break an old-fashioned mercury fever thermometer in the sink, its mercury could go down the drain, get into the wastewater that flows through sewers to the treatment plant, and ultimately pollute Suisun Bay. The treatment process cannot remove all traces of mercury from the wastewater.

The sale of mercury fever thermometers was banned in California years ago, but some people still have them at home. If you bring your mercury thermometer to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for safe disposal, we'll give you a free solar (no batteries!) digital thermometer to take its place!

For more information, please call 1-800-646-1431.

# KIDS' PAGE

Ollie Otter says...

"Hey kids, we need your help to protect the Bay from trash, grease, oil, plastic, chemicals, and other stuff that pollutes water! Protecting our water is one of the most important jobs on the planet – it's a big responsibility! Will you help us by promising to do your best to prevent water pollution? If you sign this Pledge and return it to Central San, they will make you an official Water Protector and send you a **free drawstring backpack!**\*"

\*Must reside within Contra Costa County.

FREE PRIZE!

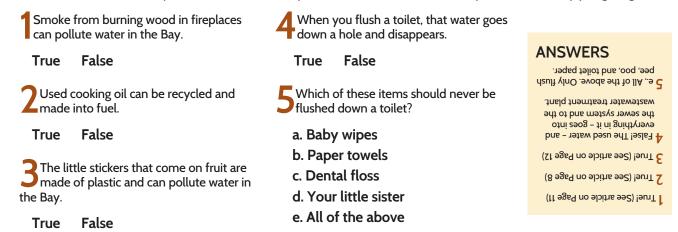
### WATER PROTECTOR PLEDGE

I promise to do my best to protect the Bay from water pollution!

Name (print)	 Date
Signature	
Address	 

### QUIZ

To learn more about water pollution, take this short quiz and then check the answer key to see how many you got right!





Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Attn: Ollie Otter 5019 Imhoff Place Martinez, CA 94553

Return Address

Place Stamp Here



FOLD HERE FIRST so that it covers part of Page 13

FOLD HERE SECOND so that it covers part of Page 13 and all of the first fold

Ollie Otter says...

"Hey Water Protectors: Don't forget to fill out the form on Page 13! Then cut this page out on the dashed line, fold it on the dotted lines and tape it shut. Write your return address and place a firstclass stamp where indicated. Mail it back to us and we will send you a free drawstring backpack! Remember, you must live in Contra Costa County to be eligible for the prize."



What we protect: Watershed Wonders

watershed is a basin-like landform defined by high points and ridgelines that descend into lower elevations and stream valleys.

A watershed carries water "shed" from the land after rain falls and snow melts. Drop by drop, water is channeled into soils, ground waters, creeks, and streams, making its way to larger rivers and eventually the sea.

Contra Costa County has 31 major watersheds and sub-watersheds containing more than 1,300 miles of creeks and drainages. The largest is the Walnut Creek watershed, which encompasses more than 150 square miles. It includes portions of Walnut Creek, Concord, Lafayette, Martinez, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Danville and Moraga.

Water is affected by what it touches: the land over which it flows, and the soils through which it travels. The important thing to remember about watersheds is: What we do on the land affects water quality for all communities and living things downstream.



California Clapper Rail:The watershed is its home!

# Handy-Dandy Flushability Guide

"Should I Flush it?"

> Is it Human Waste or ---- **"Yes!"** Toilet Paper?

> > FLUSH IT!

15

"No!"

### DO NOT FLUSH IT!

Check our online guide for the proper disposal method: www.centralsan.org/documents/Brochure\_Disposal\_Guide.pdf





PRSRT STD U.S. Postage PAID Concord, CA Permit No. 530



### It's Raining: Is the Recycled Water Fill Station open?

uring the rainy season, the Residential Recycled Water Fill Station will have fluctuating hours depending on extended periods of wet or dry weather. Check <u>CentralSan.org/RecycledWater</u> or call (925) 335-7717 for the most current information.

### Where to Call...

General information	(925) 228-9500 or <u>CentralSan.org</u>	
Sewer overflows	(925) 933-0955 or 933-0990	
Treatment Plant InfoLine (Report Odors)	(925) 335-7703	
Household Hazardous Waste InfoLine	(800) 646-1431 or CentralSan.org/HHW	
Sewer connection permits/Permit Counter	(925) 229-7371	
To report illegal discharges into sewer system	(925) 229-7288 (during business hours) (925) 229-7214 (after hours)	
Source Control	(925) 229-7288	
Job Hotline	(925) 229-7109 or <u>CentralSan.org</u>	
Student Education Programs	(925) 229-7310 or <u>CentralSan.org</u>	
Public InfoLine	(925) 335-7702	



CCCSD serves 476,400 customers within its 144-square-mile service area.

Wastewater collection & treatment; Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) disposal for 339,000 people.

Wastewater treatment & HHW disposal for 137,400 people in Concord & Clayton by contract.

HHW disposal only.

CCCSD's headquarters, treatment plant, HHW Facility & Residential Recycled Water Fill Station.

### **Board of Directors**

Michael R. McGill, President Tad J. Pilecki, President Pro Tem Paul H. Causey, Director James A. Nejedly, Director David R. Williams, Director

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

Roger S. Bailey, General Manager



Cover photograph © Mike Oria Photography www.mikeoria.zenfolio.com

#### The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

Written and designed by CCCSD to communicate pollution prevention messages to the people and communities we serve

> Bonnie Lowe, Editor, Writer Charles Waltmire, Graphic Designer

View archived issues online at CentralSan.org

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