



# THE IRONHOUSE INSIDER

www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com

Emergency line: 925-625-2279

Autumn 2016

"This accreditation demonstrates our resolve to provide the highest level of service to our community."

— Chad Davisson, ISD general manager  
on receiving District of Distinction



## DISTINGUISHED

ISD EARNS HONORS FOR PRUDENT FISCAL POLICIES, PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Ironhouse Sanitary District recently became one of only three special districts in Contra Costa County to receive the coveted District of Distinction accreditation from the California Special Districts Association and the Special Districts Leadership Foundation.

The award is one of the most prestigious local government honors in the state, and it validates ISD's commitment to good governance, prudent financial management, and ethical and sound operating practices.

"This accreditation demonstrates our resolve to provide the highest level of service to our community," said Chad Davisson, ISD's general manager. "We are honored

to receive this designation."

### A TERRIFIC TOUR

Adding to the accolades, in August ISD was also hon-

ored with the California Association of Sanitation Agencies' Excellence in Public Education and Outreach Award in recognition of a school program the district coordinated in March, titled "It's a Tour Like Never Before."

The program included two days of tours of the Water Recycling Facility for every sixth-grader at Delta Vista and O'Hara Park middle schools. "It's great to get so much recognition for the hard work we are doing to educate our local community," Davisson said. □



ISD earned CASA's public outreach award (left) for a school tour given to 650 Oakley students. "Ironhouse was proud to reach nearly every 11- and 12-year-old in our service area," said ISD General Manager Chad Davisson. "Children this age are just learning the concept of social responsibility."

## Oakley utility tax will affect ISD customers

This November, the City of Oakley will be asking voters to approve a Utility User Tax (UUT). The City has chosen to include sewer service as one of several utilities that will be taxed. In addition to sewer, the City will tax electricity, water, gas and cable TV as part of the UUT initiative.

If voters approve this tax, Ironhouse Sanitary District will be required, by this City initiative, to increase annual sewer service fees by 3.5 percent for properties within Oakley.

The UUT is a general tax, requiring voter approval of 50 percent plus one.

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## ISD continues effort to cut energy costs

Energy consumption is one of the most significant costs of treating wastewater. To manage these expenses, ISD continues to pursue and develop innovative ideas.

In recent years, the district installed energy efficient blowers at the Water Recycling Facility. This installation resulted in a PG&E rebate of \$220,000.

Through contracting with a local solar provider in 2014, the district built a solar panel field. This fixed-price solar contract provides long-term protection from rising

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## CELEBRATING POLLUTION PREVENTION WEEK — SEPTEMBER 19-26, 2016

## GREASE IS THE WORD

...BUT DON'T FORGET THESE OTHER PIPE NIGHTMARES

As we mark this year's annual Pollution Prevention (P2) Week — Sept. 19-25 — we are highlighting the many efforts of ISD and our community to prevent pollution before it begins.

The third week of each September is dedicated to a national campaign where public agencies work to educate their customers about the P2 message of environmental stewardship.

Thank you to those in the community who have gotten into the habit of bringing their household fats, oils and grease to ISD's award-winning FOG House for recycling. When ISD first began its FOG campaign four years ago, many seemed surprised that kitchen grease could not be just poured down the drain. Now residents are saving their grease in containers for drop-off at the FOG station.

## FROM FOG TO FUEL

Today, ISD sends approximately 400 gallons per month to be recycled into bio-diesel fuel. But that's just the tip of the "fat-berg" being poured down drains in Oakley and Bethel Island. Please consider bringing your FOG to ISD's FOG House.

Convenient "flushable" wipes

— the kind used to clean a baby's bottom — are costing ISD and its ratepayers thousands in manpower and materials to dispose of after being flushed down the toilet. Once inside the sewer system, they don't break down.

ISD operates 34 pumping sta-

tions, where wipes can get stuck even if they do not foul residential or commercial sewer pipes.

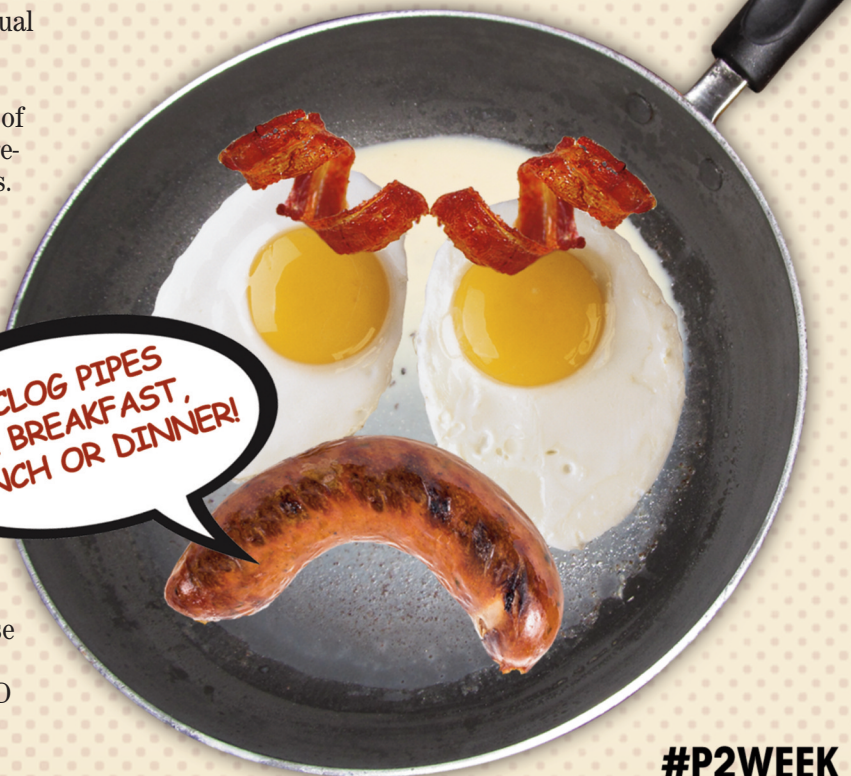
## WIPES CLOG PUMPS

ISD's maintenance crew clears wipes from 15 to 20 pump stations a month. While there are several wipes on the market that claim to be flushable, ISD asks our customers not to flush even these, as they don't dissolve fast enough between the time they're flushed down the toilet and when they reach the pump station. ■

## DRUG TAKE-BACK EVENT

Several local police departments will accept unwanted prescription drugs on Saturday, Oct. 22, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

I'LL CLOG PIPES  
FOR BREAKFAST,  
LUNCH OR DINNER!



## #P2WEEK

## STAFF PROFILE

## Internship leads to new career

Taking a tour of a local sanitary district opened the door to a new career for ISD's **Victor Benitez**. After visiting the system in his hometown of Brentwood, Benitez decided to look into what it would take for him to start a career in wastewater service.



Victor Benitez

"After going through the tour I found that the whole process was very interesting," Benitez said.

Benitez found the Water and Wastewater Technician program at Solano Community College and started taking classes as soon as the new semester began. Once he started classes he found that Ironhouse was accepting internship positions. In September 2014, a week after starting his first class, Benitez was able to begin working as an intern.

He continued his internship until the program ran out. Benitez enjoyed working at ISD so much he decided to continue as a volunteer for a few months until a full-time job opened.

Now as a Plant Operator II at ISD and already a Wastewater Treatment Class II operator, Benitez is still continuing his education at night to prepare for the Class III license.

"I am still learning a lot and really enjoying learning all the new procedures," Benitez said. ■

## Recycled water wins battle of drought at veterans memorial

Oakley veteran Larry Jones has been an avid ISD Residential Recycled Water Fill Station user since last summer, watering his own lawn and helping other veterans with irrigating their homes.

When Jones saw that the gar-

den around the Oakley Veterans Memorial was in need of extra water, he brought his trailer filled with recycled water to the site.

Soon Jones had other members from the Veterans of Oakley organization helping him with

his endeavor to keep the memorial site clean and looking fresh and beautiful.

These kinds of projects are exactly what ISD had in mind when we first opened the water fill station last summer. ■



## TAX

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ISD provides sewer collection and treatment services to every property connected to the public sewer system within the District's service area.

To fund these services, the District collects an annual fixed "sewer service fee" via your property tax bill. ISD does not send out monthly sewer bills to residents and businesses.

The District's board of directors has worked to stabilize rates by reducing costs and managing resources. The board did not increase sewer fees for the 2016-17 fiscal year (FY), but

has increased services by providing unlimited free recycled water for residential customers and millions of gallons for the freeway projects, at the height of the drought.

What will the UUT mean to Oakley ratepayers?

The City's UUT will require ISD to increase annual sewer service fees by 3.5 percent. All of the monies collected through this tax go to the City of Oakley, not Ironhouse Sanitary District.

Based on FY 2016-17 rates, ISD residential customers in Oakley would see an increase of \$23.03 on their 2017 annual fee assessment.

| Sewer service fee for FY 2016/17 |                                   |          |          |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| City                             | Current Sewer Service Fee(annual) | 3.5% UUT | New Fee  |
| Oakley                           | \$658                             | \$23.03  | \$681.03 |
| Bethel Island                    | \$658                             | 0        | \$658    |

*Businesses are assessed fees based on the total service units assigned to the property. The city's proposed UUT requires an additional 3.5 percent increase for Oakley businesses. There will be no increase for Bethel Island businesses.*

Unlike the flat residential sewer fee, business customers are assessed fees based on the total service units assigned to the property.

The City's UUT will also require ISD to assess business customers an additional 3.5 percent increase to their sewer use fees.

ISD wants to ensure that residential and business property owners in Oakley are made aware

of this measure that will appear on the Nov. 8 ballot and of the potential increase in their sewer service fees as a result of the UUT.

Because the UUT is a City of Oakley measure, the increase in ISD's fees required by this City tax initiative will apply only to Oakley properties that are connected to the public sewer system. Bethel Island customers will not see any increase

in their annual sewer service fees, nor will properties that are connected to a septic system and do not receive sewer service from ISD.

Property owners interested in more information about the proposed City of Oakley Utility User Tax should contact the City by calling 925-625-7000. City offices are located at 3231 Main St., Oakley, CA 94561.

The City's website is [www.ci.oakley.ca.us](http://www.ci.oakley.ca.us).

For questions about your sewer service, please visit ISD's newly redesigned and updated website at [www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com](http://www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com) or contact us at 925-625-2279. □



### Understanding ISD's Sewer System Management Plan

## GIVE US A BREAK

While most people were asleep one recent summer night, members of the ISD maintenance staff used a robot camera to mend a "trouble spot" on Oakley's Main Street, between Hall Street and O'Hara Avenue. The work employed a trenchless method to fix a broken underground pipe. The pipe was repaired by using a fiberglass sock to seal the inaccessible damage.



## ENERGY

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PG&E rates and creates a green, sustainable energy supply. These solar panels provide a renewable energy source to satisfy a significant amount of energy demand.

Most recently, the district analyzed the benefit of changing to a different PG&E rate schedule. "By changing the rate schedule we anticipate the district will save \$80,000 annually, based on our analysis of prior year energy demands," said Robert



Gonzales of V.W. Housen and Associates, the district's engineering firm.

Going forward, staff will continue to explore ways to reduce ISD's energy needs through energy audits, as well as evaluating on-site energy storage to reduce peak period energy demands. □



## THE BOARD

**Doug Scheer**/President  
**Susan Morgan**/Vice President  
**David Contreras**/Director  
**Chris Lauritzen**/Director  
**Michael Painter**/Director

### ISD board meetings

Public meetings are held the first and third Tuesday of each month.

## IRONHOUSE SANITARY DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

**Chad Davisson**/General Manager  
**Sue Walde**/District Secretary  
**Chris Christean**/Plant Manager  
**David Dal Porto**/Ranches & Levees

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**District Transparency**  
**Certificate of Excellence Recipient**







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Oakley, CA 94561

**Emergency 24/7 contact  
number: 925-625-2279**

ECRWSS

PO Box Holder  
Postal Customer  
Oakley, CA 94561

### IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept. 17: Heart of Oakley Festival.
- Sept. 17: Bethel Island '50s Bash.
- Sept. 20: ISD Board of Directors-Planning & Programs, 6 p.m. regularly scheduled meeting.
- Oct. 4: ISD Board of Directors meets at 7 p.m. for regularly scheduled meeting.
- Oct. 18: ISD Board of Directors-Planning & Programs, 6 p.m. regularly scheduled meeting.



*This newsletter is printed using recycled paper. Every ton of recycled paper saves 7,000 gallons of water.*



## What a site! ISD gets more interactive

ISD is proud to announce the recent launch of our new web-site, which can still be found at its familiar URL: [www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com](http://www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com).

Our goal with the redesigned site is to provide customers with an easier way to learn about ISD and access the district's transparency information. Best of all, the new site provides improved access to board meeting agendas and minutes, as well as more comprehensive information on agenda items.

Site visitors can create their own personal account, complete their profile and receive notifications to keep up to date on ISD news flashes, reports, calendar items, career opportunities, hours of operation for the Residential Recycled Water Fill Station and more.

Among its new features, the site contains integrated social media buttons for Facebook and Twitter to foster improved com-

munication with ratepayers. We will continuously update our content with helpful information, articles, blogs, newsletters, district announcements and more.

We hope you appreciate the fresh look and intuitive interface. We also wish to establish the site as a trusted information portal for all who visit. □



*ISD's redesigned site includes an Agenda Center with archives of meeting minutes.*

