

## Discovery Clean Water Alliance Pools Wastewater Resources

In the history of urban wastewater management in the United States, the progression from open sewers and raw sewage outfalls to tertiary treatment is one of increasingly centralized facilities. As treatment costs and discharge standards climb, the advantage of the next step, regionalization, takes on greater and greater pertinence.

In the southwestern portion of the state, the Discovery Clean Water Alliance, a new ownership entity, promises compelling benefits for each of its four partners.

Employing the innovative 2011 Joint Municipal Utility Services Act (JMUSA), partners Clark Regional Wastewater District (CRWWD), Clark County, and the cities of Battle Ground and Ridgefield have signed a Joint Municipal Utility Services Agreement effective September 27, 2012 and plan to register the Alliance with the state before the end of the year. The Alliance will assume ownership of all present and future wastewater transmission and treatment facilities that serve more than one of its partners. Each partner will appoint a Director for Alliance oversight. The CRWWD will manage the administrative affairs for the next five years with an option for Alliance renewal.

By way of comparison, the CRWWD serves a population of ~81,000, Battle Ground's population is ~18,000 and Ridgefield's is ~4,800. Clark County currently owns and operates regional infrastructure, but has no direct retail customers.

The Alliance was not quick or easy in the making. Extensive study and evaluation by the partners led to the first Memorandum of Understanding signed in September of 2009. In it the partners agreed to develop a "Regional Business Plan" that anticipated a joint ownership approach in which current and future capacities and stable rates were guaranteed.

They soon found that existing legal mechanisms were

not ideal. A battery of experts in such matters, including State Senator Joe Zarelli, attorneys Hugh Spitzer and Rod Kaseguma, and financial consultant David Findlay, among others, began crafting a solution culminating in Chapter 39.106 RCW, the JMUSA. With its innovative construction, the JMUSA offers opportunities for a broad range of cooperative interlocal functions, including, for example, collective purchasing and joint ownership of rolling stock and other assets.

In April 2012, the partners signed an MOU outlining the ensuing tasks. The document chartered a Transition Board that is overseeing the details such as completion of the Interlocal Formation Agreement just last month. Decisions by the Alliance Directors will follow a three-tiered procedure: less significant decisions by simple majority; "significant" decisions by dual-majority, requiring a yes-vote of 51% of the partners, plus a yes-vote of partners representing 51% of the Alliance's total allocated flow; and "select decisions of even greater importance" made only by a dual super-majority of 60%. As a fail-safe, individual partners can invoke mediation, then arbitration.

A vital element of the Alliance development was a vigorous campaign to bring public thinking into the plan, resulting in a statement of ten core values that were validated with a statistically valid telephone survey of area residents. The Ten Core Values include such tenets as transparency, equitable collaboration, efficiency, responsibility, and reliability. These Values serve as the "10 commandments of regional sewer" and are constant reminders that the ratepayer is the ultimate judge of the Alliance.

Alliance ratepayers in the CRWWD and Battle Ground will notice little difference in their billing and field service. Ridgefield, bowing to inescapable fiscal facts, is in the process of turning over ownership and operation of its wastewater utility to the CRWWD through a separate

*Continued on Page 8, see Alliance*

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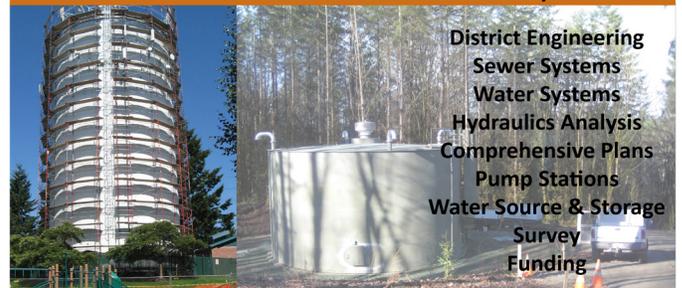
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**2012 Fall Scholarship Golf Tournament Winners**

Congratulations to the 1st place winning team in the fall scholarship golf tournament held on September 19, 2012 at the Liberty Lake Golf Course. The winning team was comprised of Mark Cassell, Mark Parsons, Gary Hajek and Dave Hutley. 76 players turned out for a beautiful day on the links. Approximately \$2,000 will be donated to the Associations scholarship fund as a result of this tournament.

The 2013 spring scholarship tournament will be held on April 3, 2013 at the Apple Tree Golf Course in Yakima, WA.

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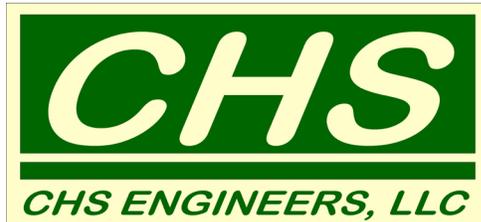
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PIPELINE



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## Presidents Corner

Ron Nowicki, WASWD President



Looking forward (and back!):

I am familiar with the idea that a newly elected president should issue a sweeping proclamation that hails the organization's move in a "new direction". If done according to the manual, this proclamation would not only set the tone for the president's

active engagement in the new role, but serve as a call to action for those members who might not otherwise be inclined to robust participation in the activities of the association. Because such a declaration is neither fitting, nor my particular style, I plan on skipping that in favor of a brief retrospective to thank those who have served as President before me, coupled with an earnest and hopeful look forward.

Over the terms of the past four Association presidents, WASWD has bounced between periods of random excitement and relative calm. Maury Hood was President during a relatively calm stretch. Jeannie Screws had the excitement of a change in the Executive Director. Steve Skipworth's tenure remained relatively calm. Our most recent president, Don Montfort had the excitement of addressing the second change of the Executive Director, and even filled the job until our new Director, Blair Burroughs, was brought on board. These over-generalizations aside, each of the past presidents faced unique challenges and served the Association and its members with dignity and selflessness. As for me, I hope that the pattern of the recent past holds and the winds of tranquility return (at least for one more year).

There is no doubt that WASWD has grown and matured. As a result, there is an increasing acceptance of WASWD in the many areas of the regulatory and policy-making world

that we represent the interests of members statewide. We have ongoing programs with the Department of Ecology, Department of Health, and the Auditor's Office to improve the relationship between our members and these agencies. We are co-sponsoring workshops on important topics, including the "dig law" and small district operational management. We are fortunate to have representation on the Public Works Trust Fund

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## PIPELINE

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### PRESIDENTS CORNER, continued from page 7

Board and the King County Regional Water Quality Council. We are active in the Washington Water Utilities Council. With all of these activities, there is no doubt that we are leaders in the water and wastewater universe. Of course more needs to be done.

During our upcoming “calm” year, I do see a few things that lie ahead for us. One of these is a change in the location of our offices. As our present lease expires in the near future, we have been investigating other office arrangements. While this is exciting, moving our operations to a new location will not occur without some inconvenience and disruption. We have several months of planning and scheduling to make the move as simple and hassle-free as possible. When complete, we will have better accommodations to serve our membership at lower cost.

Over the past year, Don Montfort has been repeating the mantra: We will make WASWD the most respected, informed, sought out, and influential authority on water and sewer issues in Washington State. One of my goals is to add the word “together” to the beginning of that sentence. It will take all members to become more active and

involved in committee work, to recruit new members, and to educate each other to reach the highest level of achievement that we can reach. Remember, even if you sing like me, in a chorus you can sound wonderful. Together we can make an impact and a difference.

### ALLIANCE, continued from page 4

Interlocal Agreement (think assumption in reverse).

As a result of years of effort by CRWWD Commissioners Neil Kimsey, Denny Kiggins, and Norm Harker, and by General Manager John Peterson, districts across the state can incorporate collaborative regionalization into potential solutions to growth, rising costs, and restrictive standards, within a safe, ironically decentralized structure that allows for regional infrastructure that is owned and managed by the agencies that depend on it. Learn more at [www.discoverycwa.org](http://www.discoverycwa.org) or by contacting John Peterson at 360-993-8819 or [jpg Peterson@crwwd.com](mailto:jpg Peterson@crwwd.com).