



Save Our
Water
By Not
Wasting
Water

Oyster Bay Water District

A NEWSLETTER CONCERNING OUR WATER SUPPLY

SPRING 2005

SCHOOLHOUSE PLACE TANK REFURBISHED

As you may have witnessed, the District's elevated water storage tank on Schoolhouse Place has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment. The \$576,000 repainting project not only extends the useful life of the tank for another 15 years, it improves the exterior appearance of the tank, it brings the tank into compliance with the latest OSHA regulations and it improves the quality of the water that is stored in the tank. By continuing to maintain this tank, it could have a useful life of up to 100 years. The District utilizes this water storage tank along with our four (4) other storage tanks to maintain water pressure throughout the community and to provide large volumes of water on demand for fire flow protection.



As part of this project, a contractor was hired to sandblast off the old interior and exterior painting system and replaced it with a current state-of-the-art, Health Department approved coating. In addition, we have streamlined and consolidated the cellular antennas on the tank, improving the tank's appearance. We have added safety climbing devices and equipment on the tank make it safer for our employees and contractors to work on the tank.

The District would like to thank the neighbors for their patience and understanding during the time of this project. We expect that this tank will continue to service our community for many years to come.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PROTECT OUR WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

New York State Law requires that the Oyster Bay Water District maintains our water distribution system free of any outside source of contamination. One of the many ways that we provide this protection is by requiring backflow prevention devices to be installed on any water service line that the District deems to be a potential hazard. This includes all homes with automatic irrigation systems. In addition, each of these devices must be tested every year to ensure the device is working properly. The Nassau County Department of Health now requires the District to have 100% compliance with the annual retesting for the District to keep our waiver from disinfection.

Annually, the District sends a letter to those property owners that have these backflow prevention devices installed on their service lines. This letter reiterates the mandatory requirement to test the device. This test must, by law, be performed by a New York State certified backflow prevention tester. Failure to timely perform the test will require the District to perform the test for you. The District will then place a charge for that test on your water bill. Our charge will most likely be significantly higher than that of an independent tester.

If you receive the letter from the District but are not sure how to get your device tested, the District can assist you in locating a NYS certified backflow prevention tester. Please feel free to contact our office should you have any questions concerning backflow prevention devices and their testing.

NEW COMMISSIONER APPOINTED



On February 17th, 2005, the Town Board of the Town of Oyster Bay appointed Richard P. Niznik to fill the balance of late Commissioner John DeBellis' Water Commissioner term through December 31, 2005. Mr. Niznik brings to the Oyster Bay Water District over 40 years of experience with the Nassau County Department of Public Works. At the time of his retirement from Nassau County, Mr. Niznik was the Assistant Superintendent of Highways. In this position his duties included responsibility for 400 employees, supervising all operations, personnel, equipment, and vehicle purchasing, and procurement of materials.

During his tenure with the County, he was also actively involved in the Nassau County Emergency Management Program. He is currently a member of the Atlantic Steamer Fire Company No. 1. For the Fire Company, he has served as a Trustee, Treasurer and Chief. For the past 24 years he has also served as Treasurer and Trustee for the Oyster Bay Volunteer and Exempt Benevolent Association.

Richard is a Vietnam Veteran, where he was a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1964 to 1966. Since, 1967 he has been active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He is a life long resident of Oyster Bay. The District welcomes Commissioner Niznik and looks forward to making good use of his 40 years of public service.

WATER QUALITY

To insure that your drinking water meets the highest standards of purity, the Oyster Bay Water District is constantly sampling and testing the water delivered to its consumers.

The Nassau County Department of Health annually provides the District with its minimum mandatory sampling and testing requirements. The current list includes testing for over 130 physical, inorganic and organic parameters. Most of this sampling must be done at least four (4) times per year. In addition, at least 400 microbiological samples are taken annually at various locations throughout the District.

Additional sampling is performed as conditions warrant. All samples are tested in a New York State certified testing laboratory and all test results are reported to and monitored by the Nassau County and New York State Health Departments. A summary of last year's water quality testing is presented in the enclosed Annual Water Supply Report for 2004.

A major benefit of the constant monitoring and the high quality groundwater is the District's ability to apply for and receive a waiver from disinfection from the Health Department. **This waiver allows the District to deliver its water to its customers without adding chlorine as a disinfectant.** While chlorine is an excellent drinking water disinfectant, it can also create a taste and odor to the water.

It should be noted that in the event of a microbiological contamination detection within the system, the District maintains standby disinfection equipment at all of our supply sources. We can immediately respond to any microbiological event and disinfect the water, as necessary.

With a high quality water source, diligent sampling and water quality testing, and a good backflow prevention program, the Oyster Bay Water District intends to maintain our waiver from chlorination as long as the County Health Department keeps on issuing them. This will allow us to continue to provide the residents of Oyster Bay with great tasting water that meets all drinking water standards.

PROTECTING OUR DRINKING WATER!

Back in the late 1970's, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) designated Long Island as one of the only three (3) regions in the nation that rely on a sole source aquifer for their drinking water supply. This designation was made to highlight the extremely environmentally sensitive nature of the groundwater supply and reinforce the need to protect this natural resource that could not be replaced. The future of the 3 million people living and working above their water supply depends on our ability to protect this resource from contamination and mismanagement.

Over the past 30 years, the local regulatory agencies established numerous laws and regulations that have reduced the chance of groundwater contamination from the many sources and threats of pollution. But sometimes these regulations are still not enough.

The Board of Commissioners of the Oyster Bay Water District continues to work to further protect the water supply in Oyster Bay, as well as the rest of Long Island. Recently, the District has been working with the Long Island Water Conference (LIWC), an organization of public water supply professionals, to modify proposed federal legislation that would create a loop-hole in the regulations concerning the use of MTBE as a gasoline additive. The loop-hole would limit the liability of the gasoline manufacturers. The proposed "Safe Harbor" provision of the legislation would prevent a water supplier from taking legal action against the manufacturer of the gasoline should a water supply well become contaminated with gasoline and MTBE.

MTBE is a real threat to the Long Island public supply wells. Due to its chemical characteristics, MTBE moves extremely fast once it enters the groundwater table. Should a gasoline spill occur, the contamination plume of gasoline would move rather slow, but the MTBE portion of the gasoline would move so quickly, it may not allow for proper groundwater remediation treatment to be installed before it contaminates a public supply well. Once the well is impacted by the MTBE, it can not be used. This could create potential water supply shortages. Legislation was recently passed that prohibits the use of MTBE in New York State. The Oyster Bay Water District and the LIWC are now working with federal legislators to remove the "Safe Harbor" provision from proposed legislation that would prohibit the water supplier from seeking financial compensation from gasoline manufacturers to cover the cost of water treatment to remove the MTBE.

Another concern for the Oyster Bay Water District is the proposed actions by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP). The NYCDEP has proposed to conduct a pilot study in which the City would inject into the Long Island aquifers "excess" water from their reservoir system during water surplus times, with the option of pumping out of the Long Island aquifers during drought periods. The Oyster Bay Water District opposes allowing NYCDEP to proceed with this pilot study for several reasons. While on the surface, the concept of "storing" water in an aquifer for a later period may make some sense, the Oyster Bay Water District feels it could create many environmental problems.

First, the aquifers in Queens and Brooklyn are the same water bearing formations that are under Nassau County. Any problems that this pilot causes in Queens could eventually harm the Long Island water supply. The District feels that insufficient research has been conducted to determine what potential adverse affects could occur if "treated" water is pumped into the aquifer system. Noting that the New York City water is chlorinated and fluoridated, what affects could this have on the aquifers? Once again, the Oyster Bay Water District is working with the LIWC and the other water suppliers on Long Island to prevent the City from conducting the pilot study until more research is completed.

The unique aquifer system on Long Island is an amazing natural resource. The water we are drinking today was recharged into the aquifer system as much as 100 years ago as rain and snow. This renewable natural resource should be able to meet the water demands of Long Island for several hundred years if we agree to take all of the resources to protect it from contamination and mismanagement. The Oyster Bay Water District will continue to make sure we all have a sufficient supply of high quality water for many years to come.

We call upon the Nassau County Health Department in joining us in stopping the potentially adverse environmental impact this ill-conceived project will cause.

In Memoriam – John DeBellis

Commissioner John DeBellis passed away on January 13th, 2005 at the age of 76. John was first elected Commissioner in March of 1996 and proudly served the District until his passing. Prior to becoming a Commissioner, John was the proprietor of DeBellis and Sons Contracting of Oyster Bay.

He also was a member of the Volunteer and Exempt Benevolent Association of Oyster Bay, and the American Legion of Oyster Bay. John was an active member and past President of the Italian-American Citizen's Club of Oyster Bay.

He is survived by his son John Anthony DeBellis and grandson John Daniel DeBellis.

The Board of Commissioners and the staff of the Oyster Bay Water District mourn his passing.

A Newsletter From:
Oyster Bay Water District
45 Audrey Avenue
Oyster Bay, New York 11771
(516) 922-4848

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