

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER



Happy Birthday, America. On this 250th anniversary of our nation's founding, it is easy to focus solely on the grand virtues of our founding: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But this morning, I find myself thinking about a different American virtue: participatory democracy at the hyper-local level. It is what Alexis de Tocqueville, in his 1835 masterwork *Democracy in America*, called the "science of association."



Our sewer district is a remarkable, if not unique, example of this association "science" in action. Fundamentally, we are a few hundred neighbors bound together in a singular, vital mission: to protect and promote the health of our shared resource, Bottle Bay.

In the 1970s, a few forward-thinking neighbors looked at a weed-choked bay and convinced their fellow property owners to build a sewer system. In the 1990s, property owners stepped up again, agreeing to expand the District to serve Sourdough. And just six years ago, a board of unpaid, elected directors locked in a low-interest loan to complete our modern treatment facilities.

In a classic American tradition, we have collectively agreed to protect our environment and bear the cost of doing so ourselves. This, my friends, is the true virtue and daily benefit of our democracy.

Capital Improvement Marches On. We budgeted \$60,000 for capital improvement this fiscal year and Brent has completed seven mainline connection replacements so far. The image on the right shows the deterioration we're up against. We're still under budget for the year and may get a few more replacements done in the fall. We're also purchasing replacement pump control units with the now-required solar back-up alarm systems. We're replacing the oldest pump control units at District expense. A reminder that our rules require homeowners to upgrade their units at their expense when they add a bedroom or ADU, or the property changes hands.



Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign.¹ Thanks to Director Steve Shearer and Brent Binnall we've posted signs throughout the District reminding folks that you must apply for a sewer or encroachment permit before you begin construction that affects (or could affect) the residential sewer system. We've had some unfortunate and expensive remediation where landowners have proceeded without approval and inspection. We try very hard to work efficiently with contractors. So, please, have your contractor contact our compliance officer, Rob Behrens, early in the process (406-360-0666). Forms and rules are available on the District website, www.bottlebaydistrict.org.



¹ Whoa! Sign, sign, everywhere a sign/Blockin' out the scenery, breakin' my mind/Do this, don't do that, can't you read the sign? Five Man Electric Band (1971).

Paperless Push. Our website has a reminder about how you can receive your sewer bill:

HOW TO RECEIVE MY BILL

Bills can be received by any of the following methods:

Email

To receive your bill by email provide susan@plattecpa.com with the email address you would like your bill sent to.

US Postal Service

To receive your bill by US Postal Service you do not need to do anything. You will be billed an additional \$1.00 to cover costs. For Canadian delivery you will be billed an additional \$1.50.

No Bill

If you are enrolled in 'Auto Pay' you can choose not to receive a bill at all.

What we really want you to do is agree to receive your quarterly invoice by email. Note that we're adding a modest fee to cover the cost of mailed invoices. On the other end, **please consider "Auto Pay"** where you authorize us to automatically withdraw your quarterly fee from your checking account. I find it works very well. Just email susan@plattecpa.com if you want to sign-up for email invoices and/or auto pay.

Email Addresses. We have many email addresses for our members, but not all. If you're still getting this Newsletter through the mail, then please forward your email address to Susan at susan@plattecpa.com.

Watch the Show. Our website, www.bottlebaydistrict.org, contains a link to our Zoom board meetings as well as agendas, minutes and supporting information. Our next meeting is Monday, July 20th at 4 pm where we will be authorizing publication of the FY 2027 budget. There will be a public hearing on the budget at our August 17th meeting.

Bill Berg, District President
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July 4, 2026