

## District Takes Advantage of Lower Construction Costs

by Dave Kaiser, Engineering Director

Although the past decade ended with a thud from an economic perspective, looking back, the last ten years were good to the District. Thanks to steady growth in connections and efficient management by the District Board of Commissioners, the District was able to fund extensive improvements to its water and sewer systems. By taking advantage of the extremely competitive prices for labor and materials brought on by the recession, we were able to do much more with less within the past year.

The table to the right is a list of projects completed in 2009. As indicated in the table, bids for these projects came in at roughly 30% on average below the engineer's estimated costs.

Moving forward, the District's Board of Commissioners has instructed the Engineering Department to continue to take advantage of the very competitive pricing by building additional improvements to our system and upgrading our facilities. A few of the capital improvement programs and projects planned for construction over the next couple of years include the following:

### **The Sewer Extension Program**

Within the past decade, the District initiated a program to extend its sewer system into developed neighborhoods that presently use aging septic systems. By offering sewer service to these areas, the District will not only benefit from the additional revenue generated by those who choose to connect, but this program also benefits the environment by reducing sewage discharge into groundwater, streams and Lake Washington. The District is planning to construct two or three of these projects in 2010.

**Lift Station No. 10 Elimination** - The District is planning to eliminate a sewage lift station located on the shore of Lake Washington near Denny Park. The existing lift station represents

a liability to the District - in the event of power or pump failure due to storms, earthquakes or other natural disasters, raw sewage could discharge into Lake Washington. District crews are also required to be on-site at the station to monitor its performance and keep the emergency power generator fueled and running. The District is proposing to construct a gravity sewer that would bypass and eliminate the sewage lift station.

2009 Capital Improvement Projects

Project Title	Engineer's Cost Estimate	Low Bid	% Difference
Sewage Lift Station Generators	\$467,000	\$338,635	27%
2009-05 Water Main Replacement	\$179,131	\$123,641	31%
2009-06 Water Main Replacement	\$1,168,255	\$866,965	26%
2009-07 Water Main Extensions	\$297,593	\$193,244	35%
2009-02 Sewer Extensions	\$299,870	\$227,968	24%
2009-01 Water & Sewer Main Extensions	\$781,442	\$511,760	35%
Sewer Pipe Rehabilitation	\$195,844	\$93,295	52%
Trench Failure Repair	\$20,120	\$8,682	57%
Northshore Ridge Retaining Wall	\$34,880	\$32,685	6%

**Water Main Extensions** - The District is making an effort to extend water mains into neighborhoods that are presently served by private service lines ("spaghetti lines," as they are known in the industry.) Developers were allowed to construct these types of lines in the past as a less expensive alternative to extending water mains into the new developments. However, as is often the case, the inconvenience of poor quality lingers long after the thrill of a bargain is forgotten. As these private spaghetti lines age and fail, property owners must locate and repair the failures, which are often located in the common roadway. Needless to say, the resulting work, often performed by the homeowners themselves, not only disrupts the neighborhood and sometimes ruins friendships, it also frequently leaves the roadway in a state of disrepair. By

replacing the lines with a new water main that the District will own in perpetuity, responsibility for replacement and repairs will be taken away from the homeowners and placed in the hands of those who are trained to do so.

By taking advantage of the favorable bidding climate, the District is able to do more with less – that is, build more improvements to the water and sewer systems at lower costs. And in doing so, not only will our ratepayers benefit in the long term, but we are also reducing the impact on the environment and putting a few dollars back into the local economy. ♣



# 2010 Utility Rates

The District is currently reviewing its water and sewer service rates. The District reviews these rates annually to ensure that they are adequate to fund the respective utility. Our service rates are very competitive when compared to neighboring utilities. Please watch for any rate adjustments notice in the near future in the mail and on our web site at [www.nud.net](http://www.nud.net). ♦



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Commissioners:

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Board Secretary

Don Ellis  
Commissioner

Trudy Rolla  
Commissioner

Margaret Wiggins  
Commissioner

## The Spring Garden Fair is Coming!

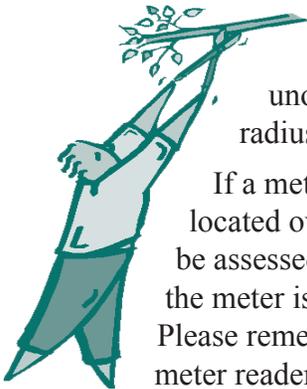


Mark your calendars for the 2010 Spring Garden Fair. The Fair will be held Saturday, April 24, 2010 at the UW Bothell Campus. There will be lots of informational booths to answer your difficult gardening questions as well as a plant sale. Master Gardeners and Composters will also be available to share tips on how to design, plant, and maintain a spectacular Water-

Wise garden. For more information visit [www.springgardenfair.com](http://www.springgardenfair.com). ♦



## Meter Access

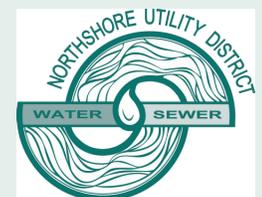


Now is a good time to check your shrubs or groundcover. Do they need a trim? Please remember to keep those meter boxes clear and unobstructed! Your water meter must have a clearance of at least a 2-foot radius around and 6 feet above; free of vegetation and debris.

If a meter is inaccessible due to debris, overgrown vegetation, parked vehicle located over the meter box or any other obstructions, the property owner shall be assessed a special access charge in the amount of \$25.00 for each instance that the meter is determined to be inaccessible for attempted meter reading or repair. Please remember that we read your meter every other month and want to keep our meter readers safe and unscathed during the performance of their duties. ♦

## Attention Rental Property Owners

All service accounts at Northshore Utility District are kept in the name of the property owners. Since properties can be liened and/or foreclosed upon for the collection of unpaid service charges, this policy is necessary for the protection of owners of rental properties. Owners of rental properties should make arrangements with their tenants (if the tenant is responsible for the payment of utility bills) to avoid unpleasant surprises. For your convenience, the District will send a duplicate bill, addressed to "Resident" or the tenant, at the service address. The property owner or his/her agent must request this service in writing. There is an additional charge of \$1.50 per billing for this service. For forms and additional information, please contact the Billing Department at 425-398-4400 or download the Duplicate Bill Request form from our web site at [www.nud.net](http://www.nud.net) and click on *Downloadable Forms* from the Homepage. ♦



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