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resident's Message

As we come to the end of 2008, it's important to look back on the year's accomplishments. In 2008, the District lowered sewer service rates by eight percent, entered into an agreement to purchase 500kW worth of solar power capacity at a discount to PG&E rates, maintained a safety

record that puts Oro Loma in the top 10% of similar agencies for the last three years, helped initiate a regional operator training program to fill a need for new wastewater operators, and met all wastewater permit requirements for the year.

Looking forward, the District will con-

tinue its service and responsibility to Oro Loma customers. Let us know your ideas, concerns, or comments, by calling, writing, or attending our Board meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 3 pm. You can also visit us online at www.roloma.org.



Solar Energy Project

Oro Loma presently generates 81% of the energy needed to operate its wastewater treatment plant, through the use of two 360-Kilowatt generators that run on methane gas supplied by the plant's five digesters. The power plant provides an economically advantageous and environmentally sound power source, but it still means that the District needs to purchase 19% of its energy requirement from PG&E. Last year the District purchased 2 million Kilowatt hours of electricity at an average cost of 15 cents per Kilowatt hour, for a total of \$300,000.

Because of the potential economic benefits and Oro Loma's commitment to the use of renewable energy, the District last year began to explore the possibility of using electricity generated by solar arrays.

Through its research, staff determined that the best approach would be to identify a company to provide solar power, and enter into a power purchase agreement with it. After receiving five proposals, the District identified Renewable Technology Inc. (RTI) as the provider with the lowest cost and best technology.

Under the terms of the agreement, the District will provide the land, and RTI will design, build, and maintain the solar array. The District will then purchase the power produced by the array. Electricity purchased from RTI will cost 11.8 cents per Kilowatt hour, which is a savings of 3.2 cents per Kilowatt hour over what the District is presently paying to PG&E.

The project should be completed in 2009.

No Drugs down the Drain

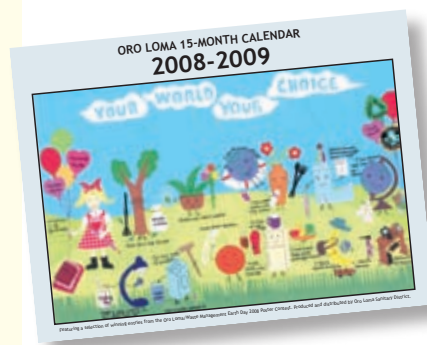
Prescription and over-the-counter medications are an important part of our lives. Sometimes our lives depend on them. But what about prescriptions that have expired or were never taken? What about those little red pills you think you bought for a cold last year, but you're not sure what they're for? How do you get rid of those? Your first instinct might be to flush them down the toilet. *That would not be right!*

Although modern wastewater treatment plants are efficient at removing many of those contaminants from the wastewater stream, no plant is able to remove them all. The EPA warns that sewage treatment systems are not specifically engineered to remove pharmaceuticals, and those drugs can pass intact into waterways, lakes and even aquifers when people dispose of unused medicines by flushing them down the toilet. Further, discarded pharmaceuticals often end up at dumps and landfills, posing a threat to underlying groundwater.

Traces of popular heart medications, anti-depressants, antibiotics, cholesterol-lowering drugs, chemotherapy drugs, veterinary drugs, and hormones are turning up in groundwater across the world. A recent water quality study found those and other drugs present in San Francisco Bay. The easiest way to limit the amount of these potentially hazardous drugs in our water is to not flush them down the toilet or pour them down the drain.

Alameda County residents can bring unwanted prescription and over-the-counter drugs to the Oakland, Hayward, or Livermore household hazardous waste site. If possible, medications should be in their original containers, but the sites will accept those that are not. Be sure to remove your name and identifying information from all medicine labels. Controlled substances are not accepted. For information on how to safely dispose of controlled substances, email HHW@acgov.org.

Alameda County residents should bring proof of residency when visiting a county household hazardous waste site. Hours of operation and directions are available at www.household-hazwaste.org or call (800) 606-6606. For more information on the potential danger of pharmaceuticals in the waste stream and what you can do about it, visit www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org.



Free Oro Loma 2008-2009 Calendars Delivered

Free 15-month 2008-2009 calendars, featuring winning posters from the Oro Loma/Waste Management Earth Day 2008 Poster Contest, have been delivered to schools throughout the District. Calendars may also be picked up at the District office at 2655 Grant Avenue in San Lorenzo.