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October 28, 2021

RE: Heidelberg Heights Sewer System

Customer Notification of Required Work to Eliminate Sewer Overflows

Dear Customer,

The purpose of this notification is to inform customers served by Lehigh County Authority's (LCA) Heidelberg Heights sanitary sewer system about challenges the system faces during rain events, and what we're doing to correct the problem.

About the Sanitary Sewer System:

The Heidelberg Heights sanitary sewer system is owned and operated by LCA and serves 138 residential properties. The term "sanitary sewer" is used to denote domestic wastewater, not including stormwater. The sewage collection system and treatment plant are permitted by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to convey and treat up to 60,000 gallons of wastewater per day. However, during and after wet-weather events, much higher flows occur due to "Inflow and Infiltration" into the pipes. This becomes a problem when more flow is coming into the system than the pipes or the treatment plant can hold.

Defining Inflow and Infiltration:

"Inflow" is when stormwater enters the sewer system through manhole covers, sump pump connections, roof drains, or combined stormwater connections. "Infiltration" occurs when groundwater enters the systems through broken or cracked pipes, leaky pipe joints, and other system defects. Combined, Inflow and Infiltration (often called "I & I") can overwhelm the sewer system pipes and treatment plant to the point of sanitary sewer overflows.

Outlining the Problem and Required Action:

The Heidelberg Heights sewer system and treatment plant have been experiencing a high number of sanitary sewer overflows in recent years, and LCA and DEP have worked together to develop a formal "Corrective Action Plan" that LCA will implement to eliminate these overflows and ensure environmental protection. This Plan requires LCA to make significant upgrades to the public portion of the sewer system, and customer involvement will be required to address sewer system deficiencies on the private portion of the system as well.

Regarding the public (LCA-owned) portion of the sewer system, LCA has been replacing all the original clay sewer pipes in Heidelberg Heights with new PVC sewer pipes over the last several years. The new pipes have water-tight joints and water-tight manhole covers. These system upgrades have been effective in reducing the I & I that enters the sewer system, but more work is needed.

Every drop matters. Every customer counts.

Customer Involvement is Important:

LCA will begin conducting homeowner sewer system inspections in 2022, as authorized by Heidelberg Township Ordinance No. 2019-1. To complete these inspections, a contractor will be selected by LCA to review your plumbing system to look for leaks in the sewer pipe that connects your home to the public system, as well as surveying the home for any prohibited stormwater connections.

As part of LCA’s sewer system inspection program, we will also be conducting “smoke testing” of the sanitary sewer system. Smoke testing is a process where a safe, non-toxic smoke is injected into the sewer system. Because the smoke will float into the air, this is an easy way to detect leaks in the system – the smoke will simply rise to the surface, showing our inspectors where there are leaks, cracks, and roof drain connections.

Before we begin any of this work, including the home inspections and smoke testing, we will notify all customers about the details and schedule.

Future Customer Notifications:

Additional notices about this sewer system program will be provided to all customers by telephone, making it important for LCA to have good contact information for you. The contact telephone number currently associated with your account is «c_phone_number». If this is not correct, please update your information by using the form called “Update Contact Info” located online at www.lehighcountyauthority.org or contact our Customer Care Team at 610-398-1444.

We look forward to your support as we complete these important system upgrades to protect public health and the environment. If you have any questions about the information provided in this notice, please contact me at 610-398-2503 extension 148.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Jason Peters
Project Manager

Cc: Heidelberg Township