

Utility

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Lehman Township supervisor and Oak Hill resident Ray Iwanowski disputes many of the utility's claims. He says there are regular main breaks at Oak Hill, including one last week and another Monday. He also thinks the chlorine levels are too high.

"Every time they ask for a rate increase, they give us lots of lip service. We'll see their trucks around here almost every day," Iwanowski said. "It looks like a cosmetic attempt on their part. Then, after they get the rate increase, they go back to doing things the same way."

Iwanowski said water pressure has improved, but that may be the reason the lines blow out, since they are in such poor condition. He said that, out of desperation, some home owners are drilling their own wells, which can be a financial hardship on the modest community of young families and retirees.

At Rhodes Terrace, the company upgraded the chlorination equipment.

"We are also replacing our chemical feed systems, which chlorinate the water, with more reliable equipment," Bontrager said. "We have never had a bacteria test come back positive."

Bontrager said in December that the cost of water testing, which the company now spends about \$8,000 a year in its 19 divisions on, has increased 600 percent from 1988, mostly due to increasingly stringent state and federal water quality regulations.

He said the PUC's accusation that National Utilities has failed to repay \$50,000 in state loans is "an error in timing."

"They looked at the payments made through the end of September, 1994," he said. "We were still collecting late payments after that date. We paid everything, but we paid it late."

The company is \$125,600 in arrears to the state for loans because it couldn't collect enough money to repay everything and also remain in operation, Bontrager continued.

"If we get the rate increase, we will set up a payment schedule with the state," he said.

Lehman Township supervisor and Oak Hill resident Ray Iwanowski said township road master Doug Ide confirmed the improvements to the Oak Hill system, but said the company hasn't

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Ray Iwanowski
Lehman Twp. supervisor

properly repaired any of the pavement cuts it made to access and repair pipes in the last two years.

"They only filled their holes and covered them with cold patch asphalt," Ide said. "We have specific requirements for backfilling all pave cuts, which must be covered with hot patch asphalt and sealed around the edges with tar. National Utilities hasn't done any pave cut repairs to specifications."

Harveys Lake resident Betty Gray, who lives near one of National Utilities' water towers at Warden Place, said she hasn't seen any repairs to pipes in her neighborhood.

"Last summer they repainted the tower - they just slapped some paint over the rust," she said. "It's peeling off already."

The company also hasn't repaired the many leaks in the black plastic hoses which make up the Warden Place system, she said. The hoses still run partially buried and partially along the ground to the homes.

"The Department of Environmental Protection was up here with the company twice last week," she said.

Mrs. Gray is on the summer water system and carries her water in jugs from a friend's home between late October and April 15. To extend the winter water line to her home would cost her \$40 a foot.

"The winter system's water sometimes smells very strongly of chlorine," she said.

She is also concerned because the pump house at the water tank doesn't have any locks on it. "There's high voltage up there," she said. "If kids get in, they could electrocute themselves."

If approved, the rate increase request would affect customers of the Oak Hill, Rhodes Terrace, Warden Place and Midway Manor water companies.

Oak Hill water company customers' bills would increase from \$357 to \$496 annually, based on an average usage of 48,000 gal-

Oops! Campaigns signs go up in wrong district

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

JACKSON TOWNSHIP - With the Back Mountain split between two legislative districts, municipal boundaries can become confusing for political candidates posting campaign signs.

Republican candidate William James, who is running for representative in the 120th district, a seat held by Phyllis Mundy, learned the hard way which municipalities are in his district when Jackson Township zoning officer John Krupa found several of James's signs during a routine inspection this past weekend.

Jackson Township is in George Hasay's district, the 119th.

"I don't have Mr. James on file for political sign permits," Krupa said. "All candidates must obtain permits, may post political signs 45 days before the election and must remove

them within 30 days after the election. Violations of this ordinance are punishable by a fine of up to \$500."

James said he had obtained political sign permits and regulations from all municipalities in the 120th district.

"I'm not sure how they got out there," he said. "I'm not familiar with that end of the Back Mountain. Isn't Jackson Township near Larksville Mountain?"

James said he had sent two workers out Sunday to post signs for him. They had a list of the municipalities in the 120th district and kept records of where they posted signs, he added.

He said he would get in touch with Krupa and have his workers remove the signs immediately.

"If I inconvenienced or offended anyone, I apologize," he said. "Every once in a while something slips through the cracks."

lons, while customers of Rhodes Terrace at Harveys Lake would pay \$371 per year instead of \$249, based on usage of 42,000 gallons.

Customers of Midway Manor in Kingston Township and Warden Place at Harveys Lake would pay \$339 instead of \$208 annually, based on an average usage of 60,000 gallons.

The Oak Hill system serves 486 customers, while Warden Place serves 180, Midway Manor serves 575 and Rhodes Terrace serves 275 customers, according to figures supplied by the Department of Environmental Resources.

National Utilities last filed for a rate increase in November, 1993, which went into effect the following September. Each application to the PUC costs the company about \$60,000, which it passes on to the customers, Bontrager said.

The PUC and administrative law judge Debra Paist will conduct two public comment sessions Wednesday, April 10, at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Dallas

Township Municipal Building on Route 309, just north of the Country Club Shopping Center.

Customers' testimony will become part of the record on which the PUC will base its decisions on the rate hike request.

Jackson

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for approximately \$188,000, currently at 4.77% with PNC bank. He said that he may be able to "secure a new loan at 3.95% for the remaining 2 1/2 years of the loan, resulting in a savings of \$3,500 to \$5,000" for the township.

The loan, originally for \$360,000, for the purpose of paying off renovations to the township municipal building and removing contaminated soil from the area in front of the building, was already refinanced once from 7.5% to the current rate.

The board passed a resolution authorizing officials to prepare the necessary documents for the re-funding. Glogowski declined to release the name of the new financial institution until the deal is completed.

Supervisor John Wilkes announced that FEMA inspected and approved the township engineer's plan to restore Bulford Rd. due to the flood damage in January. However, he said, FEMA is "awaiting an actual bid figure before final authorization" to release funds.

The bids for the Bulford Rd project were as follows:

- * Evans Asphalt Co.: \$21,895.90
- * American Asphalt Paving Co.:

- \$23,954.20
- * Linde Enterprises, Inc.: \$28,463.20
- * Vincent Construction Co.: \$23,182.50
- * Stella Excavating & Trucking Inc.: \$19,917.00

The contract was awarded to the lowest bidder, Stella Excavating, subject to FEMA approval.

Wilkes also announced that free firewood and fill is available to township residents. Residents in need of firewood should contact Wilkes at 675-6008 for availability and those needing fill delivered should also call ahead of time for scheduling and to sign a waiver.

In other business, Wilkes made a motion to advertise the sale of the township's 1985 GMC truck with a plow and spreader.

The township's audit committee completed the 1995 annual township audit March 9 and reported in their letter presented to the board that once again, "the township books and receipts are in order."

The committee, made up of James Hutchins, chairman, Donald Werkheiser, secretary, and Danielle Kmetz, auditor, reported that although no problems were found, it was recommended that the township get updated computer software programs.

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