

# PIPELINE

From the organization assuring clean water for a Greater Cleveland

## EXTRA!

Northeast Ohio Regional  
Sewer District  
Protecting Your Health and Environment

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## Board takes steps to improve efficiency, accountability

*District initiatives improve service to its customers*

In the interest of better serving its customers, the District's Board of Trustees and Executive Director Julius Ciaccia have implemented a number of changes to make the organization more accountable and its workings more efficient.

"Protecting public health and the environment is the District's mission. The Board must demand that public dollars are protected, too," said Board President Darnell Brown. "Over the last year, we have looked at best practices and focused on improving our processes and governance, to assure transparency and good business decisions."

### Improved board meeting format

The Trustees agreed to alter the format of their meetings to make the proceedings more open to public participation. A notable change was the creation of two "public session" segments—one dedicated to agenda-specific topics, the sec-

ond open to any subject matter. "Anyone can take the opportunity to address the Board, simply by signing in before the meeting," said Constance Haqq, Director of Administration & External Affairs.

Also new is a monthly Executive Director's report, which keeps the Board and the public well informed about capital expenditures and projections. Ciaccia's report details recent accomplishments, reforms, and ongoing projects in each of the District's departments.

In addition, a court reporter now attends all Board proceedings. "It is essential that we keep complete and accurate minutes of every public meeting," said Board member and Middleburg Heights Mayor Gary Starr, who initiated the change.

"Our Board and employees have always worked hard to serve the public, so some of these changes might seem trivial," said Haqq. "But the intended outcome is better productivity and account-

ability during these public meetings, and we've seen both improvements thus far."

### Code of Ethics

In March, the Board adopted a District-wide Code of Ethics, to safeguard against conflicts of interest and improper conduct. "This is an important step towards increasing the public's confidence in the integrity of the District," said Ciaccia.

The Code explains prohibited actions, such as accepting gifts or favors from vendors, giving preference to relatives in awarding contracts, and disclosing confidential District information. Each employee received a copy of the Code and was required to attend a brief workshop exploring these ethics issues.

Board members, directors, and deputy directors are now required to complete a form disclosing any outside business relationships with District contractors.

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## District leads beach monitoring program

*Edgewater Beach included in this summer's "Nowcast" advisories*

This summer, the District is leading a collaborative effort with local agencies to implement "Nowcast" advisory postings at Cleveland's Edgewater Beach. The Nowcast system provides real-time, same-day water quality predictions to help determine if appropriate conditions exist for swimming.

A Nowcast is similar to a weather forecast, but it estimates current water conditions in-

stead of future weather conditions. Taking into account such factors as rainfall, water appearance, and wave height, Nowcasts use a computer model to predict the likelihood that *E. coli* bacteria levels are GOOD (low) or POOR (high). Based on this prediction, a daily Water Quality Advisory is issued to the public.

*E. coli* bacteria are found in sewage and

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Throughout the summer at Edgewater Beach, daily postings indicate whether or not swimming is advised.



**INSIDE** :: Board makes changes at the District  
:: Edgewater Beach "Nowcasts"



**wheredoesitgo.org**

## District readies stormwater program for '09

The District is proceeding with its Board-approved plan to implement a regional Stormwater Management Program in 2009 to better manage the impact of wet weather on our urban environment.



We have met with more than half of our 61 service-area communities and other public stakeholders, gathering input about major problems that need addressing and the services needed to develop a successful program.

In addition, we have invited local leaders to be part of a Stormwater Advisory Committee (SWAC). The group will meet throughout the remainder of 2008 to discuss stormwater needs and concerns.

Visit [neorsd.org/stormwater](http://neorsd.org/stormwater) for more information. ■

**BOARD** *continued from reverse*

In addition, the Board adopted its own Code of Conduct and Decorum, establishing a protocol for professional conduct during meetings and with respect to the media.

### Bylaws revisited

In June, for the first time in District history, the organizational bylaws were overhauled. The District's public records management policy was clarified, in accordance with Ohio's "sunshine laws," which ensure public access to government records and meetings.

Also revised was the contractor hiring policy, its verbiage changed to reflect the District's improved approach to managing construction projects in a fiscally responsible manner. ■



**BEACH MONITORING** *continued from reverse*

animal wastes, and are often an indicator of infectious agents that can cause illness. It takes at least 24 hours to get results from traditional *E. coli* testing, while Nowcasts use quickly obtained measurements to estimate *E. coli* levels.

"Given our commitment to the environment and public health, the District is thrilled to lead the Nowcast initiative at Edgewater Beach," said Executive Director Julius Ciaccia. "This tool will help to better serve those that we promised to protect through our clean-water work."

Edgewater's Nowcast system is the

result of several years of research by the District and the United States Geological Survey to understand the variables affecting beach water quality. In 2006, Nowcasts were implemented at Huntington Beach, and similar systems are currently being developed for use at other area beaches.

The Nowcasts will be updated daily through Labor Day, providing up-to-date information by 9:30 a.m. The water quality advisories are posted daily at the entrance of Edgewater Beach. Updates can be obtained online at [neorsd.org](http://neorsd.org) or by calling **216.432.7301**. ■

