

# The Mainstream

A semiannual newsletter dedicated to enhancing water and wastewater services brought to you by  
Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority



The Mainstream

## From The Director

October is "Fertilize Sparingly and Caringly" month. **Protect our environment: remember you're not just fertilizing your lawn.** Want a vibrant lawn in the spring? Sounds funny, but the best way to get it is by fertilizing in the fall. That's because fall is the best time for plants to absorb nutrients and develop into a healthy plant with a strong root system. Remember that the storm drains found in our streets lead directly to our lakes and rivers. Excess fertilizer that washes from our lawns into the storm drains contains chemicals that can be harmful to our water resources.

**What's the issue?** Storm drains found in our streets and our yards empty into our lakes and streams. So, when we fertilize our lawn we could also be fertilizing our lakes and streams. While fertilizer is good for our lawn, unfortunately it's bad for our water. Fertilizer in our lakes and streams causes algae to grow. This can form large algae blooms and uses up oxygen that fish need to survive. With a majority of the 1.5 million homes in Southeast Michigan fertilizing their lawn, all of us need to be aware of the affects of our lawn care practices.

**What can you do?** Here are some simple steps you can take to help keep our water clean. Give them a try. A few simple changes can make a big difference! Plus, you'll save time and money in the process.

**Lawns love leftovers.** Use your fallen leaves as mulch...they are good food and insulation for your plants and trees.

**Follow the directions.** Too much fertilizer isn't a good thing and will just run off the lawn if it rains.

**Take control.** Consider a fertilizer spreader with a directional control that allows you to spread over the entire lawn, avoiding non-lawn areas.

**Go slow.** Select an organic or slow-release fertilizer. Check the label. A slow release fertilizer has at least half of the nitrogen in water insoluble form. These fertilizers gradually release nitrogen to plant roots. This provides a steady supply of plant nutrients over an extended period of time. Because you need less fertilizer, you will save time and money.

**Buy low.** Select a fertilizer with low or no phosphorus. Most lawns already contain enough phosphorus. Excess phosphorus is the primary culprit of algae blooms in our lakes!

**Mow high.** Make your lawn cheaper and easier to maintain by mowing high - three inches is the rule! Tall grass promotes root growth and shades out weeds. Let short clips fall back on the lawn. Clippings recycle nitrogen back into the soil, so fertilizer can be reduced by 25% or more!

**Sweep it.** Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways will easily wash into storm drains. So, save money and our lakes and streams by sweeping fertilizer back onto the lawn.

**Don't guess . . . soil test.** A soil test will tell you what, if any, fertilizer is needed in your yard. Contact your county Michigan State University Extension office for more information.

**Make fertilizer-free zones.** Keep fertilizer applications at least 20 feet away from the edge of lakes, streams, or storm drains.

**Hire smart.** Select a lawn service that uses organic fertilizers or offers a slow-release nitrogen, low phosphorus option.

Visit [www.semco.org/ourstoprotect](http://www.semco.org/ourstoprotect) for additional information like public service announcements, and kids' activities, or to order materials such as tip cards, posters, and displays. You can also contact SEMCOG's information services at [infoservices@semco.org](mailto:infoservices@semco.org) or 313.961.4266. For questions about the "Our Water. Our Future. Ours to Protect." program contact Iris Steinberg at [steinberg@semco.org](mailto:steinberg@semco.org) or 313.961.4266.

- YCUA Director

## YCUA's New Board Members

On March 27, 2007, Gregory A. Peoples became a Commissioner of the Authority. He was appointed to serve in this position by the Charter Township of Ypsilanti.

Mr. Peoples has been a practicing educator for over thirty years. Mr. Peoples currently serves as the University Ombudsman for Eastern Michigan University, advocating for student rights and concerns.



He is active as a community leader as well. In 1993, Mr. Peoples was awarded the Community Service Award by the Ypsilanti-Willow Run Chapter of the NAACP. In addition, he served as a trustee for the Willow Run Board of Education, President of the Lincoln Consolidated School Board, and a Board member of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District. Mr. Peoples also serves on the Board of Directors for the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB).

In addition, he has served as Vice President of the Hope Medical Clinic Board of Directors, a clinic dedicated to providing free medical services for indigent families in Eastern Washtenaw County. Mr. Peoples has been recognized by the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., as well as the Washtenaw

United Way for his leadership in the Greater Ypsilanti area.

He and his wife Alice reside in Ypsilanti, Michigan with their four children.

Deedra Climer Bass was appointed to serve on the YCUA Board of Commissioners on June 22, 2007 by the Ypsilanti City Council. Ms. Bass completed her Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Leadership at the University of Memphis and will complete a Master of Human Resources and Organizational Development at Eastern Michigan University in December of 2007.



With over 15 years of Human Resource and Management Consulting experience, Ms. Bass currently serves as a Senior Consultant with the Organization and Human Resource Development team at Henry Ford Health System.

Ms. Bass also serves as the Vice President of Programming for the Ann Arbor Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development, on the Chapelle Community School PAB, and is active in many other areas of the Ypsilanti community.



## YCUA Receives MWEA Municipal Health and Safety Award

On June 26, 2007, YCUA was presented with the Municipal Health and Safety Award at the MWEA's Annual Conference Awards Banquet at Boyne Highlands. Health and Safety Supervisor Scott E. Robinson accepted the award on behalf of both the leadership and workforce of YCUA. This award is given annually in recognition of the commitment to health and safety in a municipal wastewater treatment facility as evidenced by an effective, well established and documented health and safety program. This award is a direct reflection of the organization's dedication to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.

The MWEA Health and Safety Committee is dedicated to the education of wastewater industry professionals and the evaluation and recognition of sound health and safety practices throughout the water and wastewater professions.

For more information,  
please visit our website at:  
[www.ycua.org](http://www.ycua.org)

## 2007 YCUA Water System Improvements

**Ecorse Road (M-17) Water Main Improvements**—This project consisted of replacing approximately 6,700 feet of aging water main on Ecorse Road between Towner and Dakota Streets. The work was completed in conjunction with road improvements made by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Project cost totaled \$ 1,790,900.00.

**Hewitt/Valley/Congress Water Main Improvements**—This project consists of replacing approximately 11,400 feet of aging water main on Hewitt, Congress, Valley, Midvale, Merrill, and Burns streets. The construction phase of this project is ongoing and approximately 70% of the construction is completed. Project cost is estimated at \$ 2,600,000.

**Lowell Street Paving and Water Main Improvements**—This project consisted of replacing approximately 2,100 feet of aging water main on Lowell Street between west Forest Avenue and North Huron Street. The work was completed in conjunction with road improvements made by the city of Ypsilanti. Project cost totaled \$900,000.

**Clark and Devon Water Main Improvements**—This project will consist of improvements to water supply and wastewater collection mains along Clark Road, west of Devon Street. The work will be completed in conjunction with improvements by Superior Township. Project cost is estimated at \$139,000 and will be completed by the end of 2007.

**Midway Road Water Main Replacement**—This project will consist of replacing approximately 1,400 feet of aging water main on west side of Midway Road between Holmes and Clark Road. The construction phase of this project commenced in the second week of September 2007 and is ongoing. Project cost is estimated at \$300,000.

**Whittaker Road Bridge Replacement**—This project consisted of replacing approximately 155 feet of water main within the Whittaker Road right-of-way at Paint Creek. The work was completed in conjunction with improvements to the roadway bridge over Paint Creek by Washtenaw County Road Commission with construction costs paid by the Road Commission. Project cost totaled \$30,000.

**Carol Street Water Main Replacement**—This project consisted of replacing approximately 300 feet of aging water main on the west side of Carol Street, north of Holmes Road. This project was completed by YCUA personnel at a cost of \$18,000.

## Advanced Odor Control Technology Pilot Study

In October of 2007, YCUA initiated a pilot study testing the viability of a biofilter as a means of treating the hydrogen sulfide and other noxious emissions that are present during the wastewater treatment process. Over a three-month period, data will be collected and evaluated regarding the presence of odoriferous gasses during the various stages of wastewater treatment. If deemed successful, YCUA will undertake the installation of full-scale biofilter technology throughout the plant.

In an effort to minimize odors around the State Road facility during the testing period, an odor-masking agent comprised of citrus fragrances will be continually sprayed at the fence line. YCUA would like to thank its neighbors for their patience and understanding and the Authority will continue its efforts to mitigate odors associated with the treatment process.

## It's Time To Winterize!

The time to prepare your home for winter is before the freezing temperatures and snow arrive. Follow these tips to help prevent frozen pipes in your home:

1. Disconnect outdoor hoses and make sure hose bibs are not dripping.
2. Insulate pipes in unheated areas or seal off unheated areas.
3. Find your water meter shutoff so if a break does occur, you can turn off your water service quickly.
4. If you have an in-ground sprinkler system, contact your dealer about scheduling an appointment to have your system thoroughly winterized.
5. If your home's water will be turned off for winter, there should be heat to protect the meter as well as the plumbing.
6. YCUA always recommends that customers winterize their homes just in case there is a complete power outage.