

The Mainstream

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



From The Director

Winter is finally over, the grass is turning green, and the temperatures are rising.

Although this past winter was mild by historical standards, winter is still a tough time for our infrastructure, which delivers water to your homes and collects and treats the wastewater you generate. The cycle of freezing and thawing of the soil which lies over our water mains puts a great deal of stress on old lines. When this stress reaches a certain point, the lines break and our repair crews respond, day or night, in any weather, to repair the damage.

Fortunately, new materials which are used for new construction and replacement of existing mains are much less prone to this type of stress-related damage. Sewer main cleaning continues year-round, but conditions in winter in which we work to keep them clear and running are sometimes miserable. Widespread

electrical outages, like those caused by the winter ice storm in January and the wind storm in March, mean that YCUA crews were out with portable generators keeping all of our sewage lift stations operating twenty-four hours a day. The community has much to be proud of with the dedicated employees at YCUA working to keep services operating and maintaining 300 miles of water mains and 250 miles of sewer lines.

- **Larry R. Thomas,**
YCUA Director

DID YOU KNOW?

THAT one cubic foot of water is 7.48 gallons and that one unit of water is 100 cubic feet. YCUA measures and bills your water in units of water and sewage. The basic rate for water is \$1.22 in the City and \$1.04 in the Township. The rate for sewage disposal is \$1.54 per unit in both the City and the Township.

Construction Begins at YCUA

Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority has begun an ambitious capital improvements and construction program for the next five years. In the current fiscal year that ends on August 31, 2002, the Authority plans to spend \$26,698,800 on capital improvements and expansion. The improvements are expected to improve the reliability of water and sewer services to the community, improve water pressure, reduce wasteful leaks or infiltration, and reduce the opportunity for sanitary sewer overflows.

The Wastewater Plant expansion and construction is scheduled to start in March with the construction of the Ultraviolet Disinfection facilities that will disinfect the water leaving the plant with UV light rather than chlorine. This toxic chemical has required special handling procedures.

Bonds were sold by Ypsilanti Township to pay for their share of phase 1 of the project. The City is proceeding with their financing.

The \$110 million project to be completed by 2006 will in-

clude improvements to the Administration Building, Maintenance Building, Filter Building, Disinfection Systems, Grit and Screen Building, Clarifiers, and Basins. Major modifications will also be made to the plant's Solids Processing Building.

Representatives of the Authority have made presentations to the Ypsilanti community at Ypsilanti Township Board Meetings and City of Ypsilanti Council Meetings. Preliminary design engineering and value engineering (independent review for cost effectiveness) have been done on the Solids Processing Building, alterations for additional capacity, renovations, disinfection of effluent leaving the plant, plant maintenance facilities, and administrative offices.

The Western Townships Utilities Authority (WTUA) will pay the full cost of the expansion of the capacity of the plant from 28.9 million gallons per day to 45.9 million gallons and the cost of the improvements to the present plant will be split between YCUA and WTUA.

The new YCUA Sewer Use Ordinances are now published in their entirety on our website at www.YCUA.org.

Major Capital Improvements in Fiscal Year 2001-2002

City Water Line Replacements	\$8,000,000	Harris Road Water Line	\$400,000
Second Connection to Detroit Water System	\$5,000,000	Sweet Road Sewer	\$370,000
Willow Run Interceptor Sewer	\$2,458,000	Sewer Relining	\$150,000
Wastewater Treatment Plant (UV Disinfection)	\$1,080,000	New Roof for the Stone Water Tower	\$145,000
Congress Street Water Line Replacement	\$857,000	New Roofs for Wastewater Pump Stations	\$125,000
Sewer Leads in College Heights	\$600,000	Upgrade Water Pumping Stations	\$120,000
Meter Replacement Program (Radio-read)	\$550,000		



The sprawling Wastewater Treatment Plant and sewage sludge incinerator on State Road will increase its treatment capacity from 28.9 million gallons a day to 45.9 million gallons a day.

Other modernizations of the facilities will occur such as a new incinerator to reduce pollutants by 80-90%, UV disinfection, upgrading of the office and meeting spaces, and other renovations of the plant.

DID YOU KNOW?

DON'T FLUSH OLD MEDICATIONS. Wrap old prescription and over-the-counter medications in plastic and dispose of them in the trash, not down the drain or in the toilet. Septic systems do not remove medications, which means these substances can leach into ground and surface water resources. The effect of medications on wastewater treatment plants is, at this time, inconclusive.

Sanitary Sewer Overflows

A sanitary sewer overflow occurs when the system is overwhelmed by more sewage flowing in the pipes than they can handle, blockages, or breaks in the lines.

YCUA commissioned a study in 1999 to identify problems in the system. YCUA will be adopting a plan this year to address these problems. Often, such occurrences as basement flooding are due to ground water getting into the sanitary sewer system in older parts of the system or basement footer drains connecting into the sanitary sewer system. The practice of tying those footer drains to the sanitary sewer system was discontinued in the early 70s. In the last year, YCUA has added a crew to jet clean the sewers regularly to keep them running clear without obstructions that might create backups. It is our goal to not have any basement backups or overflows from YCUA's sewer main. However, occasionally overflows into basements do occur. You may wish to contact your insurance company to determine if your home is covered against sewer backups. If this happens to your basement, you need to take immediate action.

CALL 484-4600 and describe your situation to our operator who will provide immediate assistance to get a YCUA crew to determine the cause of the sewage backup. If the overflow is caused by YCUA, we will take immediate steps to identify and address the problem. Based on the cause of the backup, the homeowner may be responsible and should contact his/her insurance carrier. Be sure to be as specific as possible in listing what property has been damaged and include pictures of damaged items. If YCUA dispatches personnel or catastrophe/cleaning service, have them verify and document damaged property. As much as possible, include documentation of purchase for those items. Our policy is to depreciate items when handling claims. Homeowners are advised not to store items on the basement floor, especially near drains; and NEVER store

items of personal importance or sentimental value in the basement. We cannot pay for items of sentimental value.



Changes at YCUA

In December, Gwyn Belcher, former Director of the EagleCrest Conference Center, became the new Human Resources Director, replacing Kent Herbert. Ms. Belcher holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Michigan Business School. She resides in Ypsilanti Township with her family.



Ms. Belcher has been active with the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce for many years, holding the positions of co-chairperson for Leadership Ypsilanti, chairperson of Ypsilanti PRIDE, and chairperson of the Education Division in the past. Currently, she is a member of the Board of Directors for the Chamber, member of the E³ Award Committee through the Chamber, and serves on the Lincoln Consolidated School District Board of Education.

In September, Larry Doe, Ypsilanti Township Treasurer, was



named to replace Kenneth Hall on the Board of Directors. Larry Doe was appointed Treasurer of Ypsilanti Township in January, 1999, and elected in November, 2000. He served on the Ypsilanti Township Planning Commission and is active with many community organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, Visitors and Convention Bureau, American Heart Association, and Heritage Festival. He has been an

Ypsilanti Township resident for 56 years and retired in January 1999 after 37 years of employment with Ford Motor Company. Larry and his wife, Fran, have three children and attend the Presbyterian Church of Ypsilanti.