

The Main Stream

Volume IV, Number 3
Fall 2000

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

AUTUMN IS UPON US



Fall is here and winter is fast-approaching. This issue of *Main Stream* offers you tips for protecting your water lines during cold weather. Although this summer has had above-average rainfall, we will surely face drought conditions in the future. Check out the article on native landscaping for tips on reducing outdoor water usage and saving time in summers yet to come.

Our negotiations with the Western Townships Utility Authority, which collects sewage from Plymouth, Canton and Northville Townships, appear to be nearing a positive close. An expansion of the YCUA Wastewater Treatment Plant to treat up to 46 million gallons of wastewater per day is likely to begin later this year. This expansion will be a benefit to both the WTUA communities and YCUA's existing customers, because it will allow us to keep operating costs low through effective use of our existing plant and economy of scale. It is an exciting time and future for YCUA and the customers and the communities we serve!

Sincerely,

Larry R. Thomas, Director
734.484.4600
director@provide.net

PUBLIC PARTICIPANT SOUGHT

Stacie Campbell of Ford Motor Company was the first customer volunteer to serve on YCUA's public relations committee. Her year-long term is nearing a successful completion, and it is time to find a new volunteer. Responsibilities include attending monthly committee meetings (typically the last Monday of the month at 2:30 p.m.), and commenting on the content of public information pieces, such as this newsletter.

If you are interested in volunteering, please send a letter of interest to Larry Thomas at director@provide.net or 2777 State Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. A participant will then be selected at random to serve a one-year term, starting in January 2001.

Did you know . . .

YCUA bills may be paid at the following locations:

Key Bank - Ypsilanti Branches; National City Bank - Rawsonville Road Branch; and
YCUA Headquarters - 2777 State Road

GO NATIVE THIS FALL!

Fall is a great time to transform a portion of your garden or lawn with native plants. Native plants provide a beautiful, hardy, drought-resistant, low-maintenance landscape while benefiting the environment. Once established, native plants will save you time and money by eliminating or significantly reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, water and maintenance equipment. Among the most recognizable native plants in Michigan are the black-eyed susan and purple coneflower. However, there are many beautiful native grasses and flowers from which to choose.

Two common concerns with native plants are rodents and allergies. On the contrary, native plants will attract butterflies, birds, frogs, and the like, which will help control pesky bug populations such as mosquitoes. As for allergies, native ragweed is highly allergenic, but it is the non-native plants (e.g. Kentucky bluegrass) that cause the most pollen in the air.



Here is a list of the top reasons to go native this fall:

- Native plants do not require fertilizers or pesticides, thus protecting surface and ground waters for safe drinking supplies, recreation, and animal and aquatic life.
- Native plants rarely need mowing, reducing air pollution
- Native plants bring more birds and butterflies to your yard
- Native plants save time and money, when compared to the maintenance associated with non-native grasses

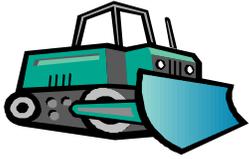
If you would like more information on native landscaping, visit www.epa.gov/greenacres or www.for-wild.org or call the Ann Arbor Chapter of Wild Ones at 734.528.9743.

COLD WEATHER PREPARATION

Remember to complete these tasks prior to November 15th, or the first hard freeze:

- Disconnect and drain hoses
- Insulate pipes and faucets in unheated areas
- Turn off water to outdoor spigots
- Seal off access doors, air vents, or cracks
- Locate master water shutoff, in case of emergency
- Winterize automatic sprinkling systems





CONSTRUCTION PROJECT SUCCESS

The following construction projects were recently completed:

- **Golfside Road Sanitary Sewer Emergency Repair** (between Ellsworth and Packard) Completed June 2000 at a cost of \$25,000. The sewer had collapsed due to heavy corrosion from hydrogen sulfide sewer gas. The section was replaced with modern, corrosion-proof pipes.
- **Berkley Sanitary Force Main** (Packard at Stradford and Berkley) Completed by YCUA staff in June 2000 at a cost of \$15,000. 600 feet of new force main was installed to replace the original line, which had numerous breaks.
- **Prospect Street Water Main Replacement** (between Cross and Holmes Road) Completed September 2000 at a cost of \$247,000 (road resurfacing will be completed thereafter). As described in the Summer 2000 edition of *Main Stream*, the line was replaced using a pipe-bursting replacement method, which is less disruptive to the neighborhood and to traffic.

COMPOST PILOT RESULTS

The biosolids composting pilot project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant has been completed. YCUA staff had the unique opportunity to learn about composting during the trial period, and found the project and the experience to be worthwhile.

During the pilot project, staff experimented with different amendments such as wood chips, sawdust, and yard wastes. They also varied mix quantities and ratios, and equipment operations to evaluate their impact on health, environmental, and cost-benefit issues. Ten trial batches of compost were made during the course of the pilot project. All have been tested, analyzed, and reviewed, and the results have been promising.

At present, various alternatives are being considered for implementation during the YCUA plant expansion, which is in the planning stage. Location, cost, and health/environmental issues will all factor into the final decision. For more complete information on the compost facility and the results of the pilot project, please visit our web site at www.ycua.org.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Q. Why is some drinking water stored in large tanks high above the ground? **A.** Two reasons. First, elevated water storage ensures that water pressure and water volume are sufficient to fight fires, even in the event of a power outage, when water pumps are not fully operational. Second, to provide an extra source of drinking water during the day when water use is high. The water storage tanks are then refilled at night when drinking water use is low.



Q. Why does drinking water often look cloudy when first taken from a faucet and then clear up? **A.** Cloudy water is caused by tiny air bubbles in the water similar to the gas bubbles in carbonated soft drinks. After a while, the bubbles rise to the top and are gone. This type of cloudiness occurs more often in the winter when the water is cold and is brought into a warm, indoor environment.

Q. Why doesn't YCUA have a drop box? **A.** The drop box would have to be installed outside the gates at the YCUA headquarters or Service Center, and would not be in a secured place to guarantee receipt of payment. Current bills can be paid at some local banks, as listed on the front page of this newsletter under, "Did You Know..."

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

In its pursuit of excellence, YCUA and its employees participate in a number of professional certification programs. Our wastewater treatment operators are required to be certified by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). In addition, our water distribution operators must be MDEQ-certified by taking a series of training courses designed to help operators effectively understand and operate water distribution systems.

YCUA also offers an internal certification program for its water line repair personnel, and earlier this year we began a certification program for our maintenance mechanics. YCUA's maintenance mechanics repair and maintain the facilities at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and sewage pump stations. The certification they receive indicates their level of demonstrated expertise in repairing/maintaining wastewater facilities. YCUA is proud of its staff's dedication to quality service and certification.

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Kudos?

**ALL WELCOME! - Contact YCUA at
734.484.4600 or www.ycua.org**