

# The Mainstream

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



Your water and wastewater service providers

## From The Director

YCUA recently hired consulting engineers Tetra Tech MPS do an energy and process optimization study at the Authority's wastewater treatment plant. The results of that study indicated 10 projects that would be beneficial to the Authority.

YCUA is now in line to receive \$1.2 million from the Michigan department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for "green projects" relating to energy conservation relating to the Authority's operations and equipment. The projects potentially qualify for next year's American Re-

Act (ARRA) funds, which will include 40% principal forgiveness.

The green projects proposed at the wastewater treatment plant will reduce energy usage by 1,000 kilowatt hours.

The energy saving is projected to pay back the capital cost in about three and one-half years. The project will not only save money for the Authority and its customers but will reduce our demand on our area's electrical infrastructure.



YCUA Director

## MDEQ Inspection Kudos

On September 23, 2009, Charles Hill and Shannon Jones of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) inspected the YCUA wastewater treatment plant. They toured the entire plant, including the laboratory, under the guidance of YCUA staff members Perry E. Thomas, Kurian Joychan, and Kevin Dupuis.

The MDEQ personnel commented that the wastewater treatment plant was operating and being maintained very well and they found everything to be in compliance. They also commented on the cleanliness of the YCUA facilities.

## YCUA Receives AWWA Safety Award

At the October 27, 2009 regular meeting of the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority Board of Commissioners, Paul Retel, Trustee and Chairman of the Safety Practices Committee the Michigan Section American Water Works Association, was on hand to present YCUA with their 2009 Class III Award for Safety Excellence.

Each year, the Michigan Section AWWA sponsors a safety award competition for Michigan drinking water utilities. The award recognizes outstanding safety programs in four utility classifications. Each classification is based on the number of employees in the utility.



The selection of this award was based on YCUA's excellent safety record as well as its outstanding safety program and safety management.

"YCUA has a culture of safety that is excellent," Mr. Retel said. "Not only does it protect the men and women that work (at the Authority) but, it translates into dollars and cents savings for YCUA's customers."

YCUA Health and Safety Supervisor Scott E. Robinson accepted the award on YCUA's behalf. "This is actually an award for everyone." Mr. Robinson said.

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) is an international organization that is dedicated to providing safe drinking water.

## 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.

## Washtenaw County Recognizes YCUA's Pollution Prevention Efforts

Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority has received Washtenaw County's Honorable Mention Award for Pollution Prevention for 2009. The Washtenaw County Pollution Prevention Program is responsible for inspecting facilities that store, manufacture, or use hazardous, toxic, or polluting materials. Inspectors ensure that facilities utilize and dispose of hazardous materials properly, thereby preventing environmental contamination.

During the recent award ceremony, Washtenaw County Environmental Program Supervisor Jeff Krcmarik stated that YCUA's chemical inventory reporting details all chemicals stored at the Authority's facilities, even if they are below the reporting threshold limits. This reporting aids the local police and fire departments in preparing their staff members for any emergency at YCUA's facilities. Jeff Krcmarik also mentioned that YCUA treats more than 8.0 billion gallons of wastewater annually before discharging into the Rouge River.

This particular award recognizes the efforts of YCUA in the area of pollution prevention and expresses how those efforts are appreciated by outside agencies. YCUA management thanks the employees at the Authority for a job well done and for their continued efforts.

## Annual Hydrant Inspections Begin

YCUA recently began its annual inspection and flushing of over 3,000 fire hydrants. The procedure involves a employee completing an inspection of the internal workings of each fire hydrant, making repairs and getting water out of the hydrant barrels to prevent freezing. Each completed hydrant will get a yellow sticker to ensure that all hydrants have been winterized. YCUA will also flush or run each fire hydrant to insure that it will operate properly during an emergency.

Area residents should be advised that as crews flush hydrants, there may be some discoloration of the water. If you experience rust-colored water, simply run the cold water tap for a few minutes to let the water clear. Please keep in mind, not to wash any light colored clothing until the water is running clear. The rust coloring is caused by a natural build up of minerals in the water system. Some natural mineral deposits are stirred up in the water pipes when fire hydrants are first turned on.

The fire hydrant inspection program helps insure that all our fire hydrants are ready in the event of an emergency. If you have any questions about the program please contact YCUA Director of Service Operations Jeff Castro at 734.484.4600 ext. 305.

## Tips for Cold Weather Activities

During the winter months, homeowners may be required to work in cold environments and sometimes for extended periods. Cold stress is a common problem encountered in these types of situations.

When in a cold environment, most of your body's energy is used to keep your internal temperature warm. Over time, your body will begin to shift blood flow from your extremities (hands, feet, arms, and legs) and outer skin to the core (chest and abdomen). This allows exposed skin and the extremities to cool rapidly and increases the risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Combine this with cold water, and trench foot may also be a problem.

Proper preventative measures are important. Drink plenty of liquids and avoid caffeine and alcohol, smoking, certain medications. If possible, heavy work should be scheduled during the warmer parts of the day. Try to work in pairs to keep an eye on each other and watch for signs of cold stress. Avoid fatigue since energy is needed to keep muscles warm. Take frequent breaks and consume warm, high calorie food such as pasta to maintain energy reserves.

Protective clothing is the most important way to avoid cold stress. Cotton loses its insulation value when it becomes wet. Wool, silk and most synthetics, on the other hand, retain their insulation even when wet. The following are recommendations for working in cold environments:

- ◆ Wear at least three layers of clothing. An inner layer of wool, silk or synthetic to wick moisture away from the body. A middle layer of wool or synthetic to provide insulation even when wet. An outer wind and rain protection layer that allows some ventilation to prevent overheating.
- ◆ Wear a hat or hood. Up to 40% of body heat can be lost when the head is left exposed.
- ◆ Wear insulated boots or other footwear.
- ◆ Keep a change of dry clothing available in case work clothes become wet.
- ◆ With the exception of the wicking layer do not wear tight clothing. Loose clothing allows better ventilation of heat away from the body.
- ◆ Do not underestimate the wetting effects of perspiration. Oftentimes wicking and venting of the body's sweat and heat are more important than protecting from rain or snow.

Source: <http://www.osha.gov>

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