

The Mainstream

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



From The Director

May is "Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, and oils" month. Remember, it's not just toxic to you.

What's the issue? Anti-freeze, household cleaners, gasoline, pesticides, oil paints, solvents, and motor oil are just some of the common household products that can enter our storm drains. Help keep these out of our lakes and streams. Instead of putting these items in the trash, down the storm drain, or on the ground, take them to a local hazardous waste center or collection day.

What are some helpful tips? Here are some simple steps you can take to carefully dispose of household wastes and help keep our water clean. Give them a try. A few simple changes can make a big difference!

Identify it. Be aware of household products that can harm children, pets, and the environment. The words "danger," "caution," "warning," or "toxic" indicate that you need to be careful in how you use and dispose of the product.

Less is better. Reduce waste and save money by purchasing only the materials you need. When possible, choose less toxic alternatives. For example, try cleaning your windows with vinegar and water.

Store properly. Keep unused

products in their original containers with labels intact. Select cool, dry storage areas that are away from children, pets, and wildlife.

Disposal is key. Never dump motor oil, chemicals, and other toxic materials down storm drains, sinks, or on the ground. Contact your local community for disposal locations, guidelines, and dates.

Don't forget the RV. Dispose of recreational vehicle sanitary waste at a nearby drop-off location. Never put it down a storm drain or roadside ditch! For more information on locations and requirements go to www.rvdumps.com/mi.htm.

Visit 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 or 313.961.4266.

For questions about the "Our Water. Our Future. Ours to Protect." program contact Iris Steinberg at steinberg@semco.org or 313.961.4266.

- YCUA Director

Notice to Customers: Preventative maintenance on our valve system this summer may cause some temporary, periodic water cloudiness. If you have any questions or concerns about the appearance of your water, please contact YCUA Water Distribution Supervisor Jeff Castro at 734.484.4600 x305 during business hours or our emergency service line during evenings and weekends.

YCUA Receives the Wendell R. LaDue Utility Safety Recognition Award

The Michigan Section Safety Practices Committee of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) recently awarded YCUA with the 2007 Wendell R. LaDue Utility Safety Recognition Award. This award is given to YCUA to recognize our water utility for having a distinguished safety program, and for showing a dedication and progress in providing a safe work place.



It is the goal of the Authority's safety department and the entire YCUA family to continue to build upon the safety conscious culture that is YCUA. By continuing along this path, the Authority shall not only provide for a safe environment for its employees but also continue to deliver the quality service that its customers deserve.

The purpose of the safety practices committee of the AWWA is to promote safety consciousness and encourage safe work practices in the water works industry.

Summer Water Main Replacement and Improvement Projects

In an ongoing effort to enhance service to our customers and to provide preventative maintenance to our water distribution system, a number of water mains will be replaced or repaired between June and October of 2008 in cooperation with the City of Ypsilanti and Charter Township of Ypsilanti road re-paving projects.

Areas receiving water main improvements will be Holmes Road and the City Housing Project.

The Holmes Road project has a total estimated construction cost of \$1.3 million. The project will replace the existing six- and eight-inch water mains with an estimated 7,500 feet of 12 and 16-inch water main. The affected area is Holmes Road between Rue Deauville and Spencer Lane.

The City Housing project has a total estimated construction cost of \$421,500. The project will replace the existing four and six-inch water mains with an estimated 2,100 feet of eight-inch water main. The affected streets are Armstrong Court and First Court.

YCUA staff appreciates your patience while these projects are under construction and expects the upgrades will result in marked improvements to the water service in those areas.

YCUA Employee is MWEA's 2008 Health and Safety Professional of the Year

YCUA Health and Safety Supervisor Scott Robinson was recently selected as the Michigan Water Environment Association's Health and Safety Professional of the Year for 2008. This award was presented to Mr. Robinson based on his outstanding dedication to YCUA and to the MWEA, his professional excellence, and his commitment to promoting the health and safety profession. This is greatly deserved recognition for a YCUA employee who goes above and beyond the call to ensure that everyone at the Authority can enjoy a safe and healthy working environment. Congratulations, Scott.

YCUA Enters Into New Water Contract with Detroit

In January of 2008, the YCUA Board of Commissioners authorized the Authority to sign a new 30-year contract with the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) for the purchase of our community's drinking water.

The contract guaranteed a long-term source of the highest quality drinking water for our communities for the future. It also allows YCUA more flexibility in the operation of its distribution system. This operational flexibility provides the Authority with the opportunity to control usage patterns of water transferred from the DWSD system. This, in turn, allows YCUA to better control the price it pays for water.

The price at which YCUA purchases water is dependent on peak demand, which varies greatly throughout the day. This contract allows YCUA to take better advantage of the storage facilities it has in its distribution system in order to reduce the affects of our peak usage on the DWSD system. This translates into lower rate increases to the Authority.

YCUA Water Distribution Department Excels During MDEQ Annual Visit

Recently, a representative from the State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) visited the YCUA water distribution department and was very impressed with the distribution system and the operators who run it. She indicated that YCUA's system operation is head and shoulders above the others she has seen.

She toured the Holmes Road storage tank and booster pumps, observed the operation of the SCADA system and its reporting capabilities, and reviewed the Authority's backflow prevention data and water main break procedure. Throughout her visit, she was impressed with the physical and written systems that are in place at YCUA and with the level of expertise of the Authority's staff.

Visit our website at www.ycua.org for more information on these and other topics.

Prescription Drug and Personal Care Product Disposal Safety

Have you wondered whether you dispose of leftover prescription drugs and personal care products (PPCPs) properly? What is the proper disposal method? Why should we be concerned?

Increasing amounts of PPCPs are being detected in U.S. rivers, waterways, and groundwater. Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to filter out these chemicals, so drugs like cholesterol reducers, blood pressure medication, sleeping pills, hypnotics, hormone replacement therapy, and antibiotics are being detected in drinking water supplies. These medications endanger aquatic life in waterways all across the country. While the risk to humans and animals of long-term exposure to these contaminants in drinking water is unknown, increased concentrations of antibiotics have produced "super bugs," bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics.

The United States Geological Survey recently found that 80% of the watersheds they sampled nationally contained at least one type of pharmaceutical chemical, with half of the streams containing seven or more. Human excretion is responsible for the majority of pharmaceutical pollution in our waterways. Animal feedlots also release antibiotics from waste outflows after storms. Antibiotics from cleaning products end up in local streams as well. However, a significant portion of the pollution is a result of the improper disposal of unused drugs and personal care products.

Previous information campaigns encouraged consumers to flush leftover pharmaceuticals down the toilet because of the potential harm they posed to children when left in the home or placed in household trash. But we now know that wastewater treatment plants were not designed to remove PPCPs. In the United States, there is presently no national guidance for the proper disposal of PPCPs. However, there are measures you can take at home to prevent the contamination of waterways from unused medication and personal care products.

If you are instructed by your physician to finish a prescription, do so. For any unused portions, follow the steps below. Remember to first remove any personal information on the label to protect privacy, but ensure the drug name is still visible.

Capsules and Tablets in Containers:

- Secure the cap on the bottle.
- Cover top with duct tape, fully sealing the container to prevent breaking or leakage.
- Double wrap the sealed containers in opaque plastic bags. Tightly tie or secure the bags to prevent leakage and place in trash.
- Do not open or alter the original contents if possible.

Blister-Packages Capsules and Tablets:

- Wrap package with several layers of duct tape, allowing visibility of the product name. This will prevent blister packs from breaking.
- Double bag the sealed packs in opaque plastic bags. Secure the bags to prevent leakage and place in trash.

Liquid PPCPs:

- Seal the container with duct tape to prevent leaks and breakage.
- Double bag in opaque plastic bags and place in the trash. Carefully seal the bag to prevent leakage.
- To take further precautions, add salt, a pungent spice such as nutmeg or mustard, or a bitter tasting additive. Kitty litter, sawdust or an absorbing agent can also be added to the liquid to repel animals. Then double bag in a tightly sealed opaque plastic bag and place in the trash.

Prescription Drugs:

- At present there are few, if any "take back" programs for prescription drugs.
- Call your local pharmacy to confirm information on the disposal of prescription drugs.

Ampules, Vials, and Needles:

- Call the Washtenaw County 24 hour home toxics hotline at 734.222.3950 for information and drop off hours at 705 N. Zeeb Road. Also check the *Turning Trash to Treasure* guide on www.ewashtenaw.org for a pharmacy drop off location near you.
- Residents outside Washtenaw County should call their Solid Waste Department or Waste Hauling Services for instructions on proper disposal.

Getting Help:

- Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's Office - 734.222.6833 or 734.994.2525
- Washtenaw County Home Toxics Program - 734.222.3950
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality - 800.662.9278
- See the Washtenaw County website at www.ewashtenaw.org