



WAUSAU WATERWORKS

FOR YOU!

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Bull Falls Tappers Take 3rd In WWA Tapping Competition

Wausau's Bull Falls Tappers competed at the Wisconsin Water Association Tapping Competition held as part of their annual conference. The event took place on September 17 in LaCrosse.

The competition took place in the exhibit hall where a section of 6" water main was pressurized with water and set on stands to stabilize it. Each team consisted of a Cranker, Star Man, Copper Man and Coach who worked in concert to drill and tap a 6 inch corporation stop into the pipe, attach a section of flared copper pipe from the corporation to a curb stop with a second section of copper running from the curb stop to a meter setter. The action was fast and furious as the teams raced the clock having two chances to achieve the best time. Penalties were assessed for leaks, safety and procedural violations.

The Bull Falls Tappers team, which consisted of Shannon Lane, Ryan Fischer, Rick Dorn and Brandon Ball, were the first team up finishing their first round in a respective 2 minutes and 43 seconds. After the first round they were sitting in second place. The second round produced a better time of only 2 minutes and 30 seconds, a time that only a few years ago could have sent them onto the National competition. Oconomowoc, who had a bad first round, rallied and shaved their second round time to 2 minutes 17 seconds pushing Wausau to third place with a deficit of only 13 seconds. Madison won the competition, coming out and firing on all cylinders, posting a blistering time of 1 minute 33 seconds. Madison will move on to compete at the American Water Works Association Annual Conference next June in Anaheim, CA to compete against teams from around the country.

This was only the second year of competition for the Bull Falls Tappers, with only one team member returning from last year's team. The team hopes to compete again next year, improving their tapping skills, which also helps them in their day to day utility operations. Congrats to the team on an impressive third place finish.



The Bull Falls Tappers took third place in a recent competition held at the Wisconsin Water Association Annual Conference. Participants (L-R) were Ryan Fischer, Star Person; Shannon Lane, Cranker; Troy Braswell, American Cast Iron Pipe; Brandon Ball, Captain; Rick Dorn, Copper Person.



Copper Man Rick Dorn and Cranker Shannon Lane make the final connections to the corporation while Star Man Ryan Fischer tightens the tap. Captain Brandon Ball looks on, while keeping tabs on the team's time.

Water Division Conducts Lead and Copper Testing

The Wausau Water Works Drinking Water Division has been performing their lead and copper testing which is required every 3 years under WDNR rules. The utility is required to test 60 homes that are known to have either lead service lines or lead solder. The homes are selected from a list of 100 properties approved by the DNR. All homeowners that participate are provided with the results of the tests to help understand the concerns with lead in their drinking water. Wausau Water Works appreciates the cooperation of homeowners who participated in this important testing.

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and it can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by lead levels more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

There are ways you can reduce exposure to lead in drinking water:

- *Run your water to flush out lead.* Run the water until it becomes cold. That ensures that you are getting fresh water from the mains, rather than water that has been sitting in the home's piping.
- *Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.* Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily in hot water.
- *Do not boil water to remove lead.* Boiling water will not reduce lead levels.
- *Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.* If your lead result is above 15 ppb, you may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010, or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards on water filters.
- *Identify whether your plumbing fixtures contain lead.* New faucets, fittings, and valves manufactured prior to 2014 may contribute lead to drinking water. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

According to the EPA, homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder. However, new homes are also at risk: even legally "lead-free" plumbing may contain up to eight percent lead. Beginning, January 2014, changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act will help to further reduce the maximum allowable lead content in pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures to 0.25 percent. The most common problem is with brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and fixtures with lead solder, from which significant amounts of lead can enter into the water, especially hot water.

Although the primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, and lead-contaminated soil, the U.S. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of human exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

For more information, contact Deb Geier, Wausau Water Works at 715-261-7262, or for information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit the U.S. EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.

City Employees Feted For Years of Service

Three Water Works employees were among City employees honored for years of service during an appreciation picnic held over the lunch hour on September 3rd.

Those honored included: Tom Stieber, Meter Technician, 30 years; Deb Geier, Utility Resources Manager, 25 years; and Ken Rye, Senior Sewer Maintainer, 20 years.

Thanks to all the employees for their many years of dedicated service to Wausau Water Works and the City of Wausau.

Dorn Takes 2nd Place in DPW Winter Kickoff

Rick Dorn, Water Distribution Maintainer, finished in 2nd Place at the Wausau Department of Public Works Winter Kickoff Rodeo on Wednesday, October 1. Winner of the rodeo was DPW employee Chad Stockinger. Brad Wendtland from the Wastewater Division took a fifth place finish.

The Rodeo consists of a variety of obstacle courses and other driving tests all while being timed. The annual event helps ready snowplow drivers for the challenges of the winter plowing season.

Congrats Rick on the great finish!



Delinquent Notices to be Issued

Properties with past due water and sewer bills will be receiving Delinquent Notices by mid-October. Delinquent bills for rental properties are sent to the property owners. Past due bills not paid by November 1 will be assessed a 10% penalty. Delinquencies not paid by November 15, including the 10% penalty, will be transferred to the property taxes.

In 2015, changes will be made to the procedure to include sending delinquent notices to both tenants and property owners, and delinquencies that are transferred to the tax roll will also be placed on the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access Program (CCAP) website.

FEMA Denies Disaster Declaration Request for Severe Winter

Utilities from around the state participated in a request to FEMA for disaster declaration funds for the severe winter of 2013-2014. FEMA denied both the initial request and an appeal. In April, Wausau Water Works submitted nearly \$800,000 in costs during the preliminary filing period, while incurring additional costs to repair mains and services that are found to be leaking over the summer months as a result of the severe winter. Unfortunately, budgeting for these types of winters is difficult, and as a result has required the utility to file a rate application with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

Water Storage Facilities to be Drained and Inspected

Residents who live around Wausau's water towers and reservoirs may experience a temporary drop in water pressure when these facilities are drained and inspected later this fall. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requires storage facilities be inspected every 5 years, with a complete draining and inspection every 10 years.

Drinking Water Division Files Rate Application with PSC

In July, Wausau Water Works filed an application with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) for a rate review. The PSC, which sets rates for public water utilities in Wisconsin, does a thorough review of expenses and revenue sources as well as debt service and anticipated projects to determine if revised rates are warranted. A public hearing is expected to be held in early January, 2015, with any increase in rates to be put into effect around the end of the first quarter of the year. The last full rate increase requested was in 2006, with a Simplified Rate Case of 3% put into effect in 2010.

The amount of increase to customer bills is unknown at this time, as the application is still being reviewed by the PSC. Watch this newsletter for more information on the upcoming public hearing and the PSC determination on the rate case.

Preparations Being Made For Another Challenging Winter

The *Farmer's Almanac* is predicting another unseasonably cold winter. After last year's Polar Vortex, it's not something any of us in Wisconsin are looking forward to.

There are precautions that home and business owners can do help alleviate concerns of water freeze-ups. Make sure properties, especially properties that are vacant, are heated. As the temperatures start to drop, make sure to check these properties regularly. Owners of a property that is expected to be vacant for any length of time should consider having the water meters removed, the service turned off the street and plumbing winterized. Although there is a fee to turn everything back on, it is considerably less than the damages a frozen or burst pipe could cause. Ensure that all windows and doors in basements or crawl spaces are closed tightly, and if you have a finished basement, open up the wall around the water meter to allow adequate flow of warm air.

The winter of 2014 was definitely one for the record books, and it had been 20 years since we had seen a similar winter. The water utility thawed 425 homes and businesses, and had water running at a total of 800 properties throughout the city in an effort to keep service lines and mains from freezing or refreezing. Some homes were also asked to run water to help with sewer laterals and mains that were also freezing. We did not need to run water city-wide since only certain area of the city were experiencing freezing issues, and most of those were in areas where there were sandy soils.

Lessons were learned from the Polar Vortex of 2014 that will change how we go into this coming winter. We will be monitoring water temperatures earlier to be prepared to advise property owners if they will need to run water. It is important to understand that only property owners who are requested to run water will be given credits. We take readings at the time we ask you to start running water and again when you're advised to stop. These readings help our billing department determine how to equitably bill for water that was used for day to day functions. Running of water on your own, without direct contact from utility employees will be done at your expense. Whenever our staff thaws the service line at a property, you will be advised to run your water. Those who are asked to run water will need to do so until notified by the utility to stop. If you turn off the water and it refreezes, there will be a charge to re-thaw the service. Even though other communities in the area may issue community-wide water running orders, that does not mean Wausau will be doing so. If in doubt, please contact the water utility at 715-261-6530 before assuming that you should run water. Please also understand that if we do have a winter like last year and we have a considerable number of freeze-ups, we will make every effort to address your situation as soon as possible, but each thaw that we do varies and time appointments are impossible to accommodate.

So, keep warm thoughts and hopefully we won't have another winter like that last one for another 20 years.